



contents:

- Editorial..... p1
- Programme news..... p2
- Future perspectives..... p3
- Announcements..... p3
- Conferences and seminars..... P4
- Project meetings..... p5
- Contacts..... p8

Newsletter

Issue n° 8 - October 2005

Editorial

Dear readers,

The 53 projects running under Interreg III B Alpine Space Programme are sailing full steam ahead and as last year and the year before, many efforts are being made to prevent automatic de-commitment of ERDF funds, which however is still haunting all of us.

Presently, the last call for project proposals of the Programme is open and shall run in a two step application until December 23rd 2005. Since only very limited ERDF funds are remaining, projects selected under this thematic focused call shall be of strategic dimension, address specific issues and involve key actors as set in the terms of reference.

Our commitment is not only to catch up with the past and deal with issues of the present. We also have to think of what will come "next". In this perspective, all stakeholders of the Programme are dedicating

time and energy to future oriented activities. At all levels we are actively participating to the ongoing discussions and negotiations on the "shaping" of the future European Objective on territorial cooperation and more specifically the transnational cooperation programmes. In other words the preparation of the programming period 2007-13 and the definition of the framework of a possible Alpine Space follow-up Programme are on top of our agendas.

As you will see it while reading this newsletter, the JTS composition has been redesigned and new staff members have joined the team. The new constellation seems to have generated its own positive dynamic, which we hope will confirm being an adequate service provider, satisfying the high expectations of the Programme and providing quality support to all Projects.

The Coordination Unit
Antonia Leitz / Thomas Fleury

- **Warning on “n+2”**

According to the so called “n+2” rule, the Alpine Space Programme should have spent all of its budgetary appropriations up to 2003 by the end of 2005. Should this not be the case, the Programme’s budget will be automatically cut and amounts unspent will be “de-committed” (lost). In order to avoid this unpleasant Christmas “gift”, serious action is required.

The Managing Authority and the Secretariat have taken adequate steps to carry out a precise risk analysis on which they informed the Project lead partners.

Much will now depend on the discipline of project partners. The Programme relies on making scheduled, regular payments to projects, but is ultimately dependant on

partners ensuring consistency in both their spending and reporting.

Every approved Alpine Space project application includes an annual budget breakdown. The yearly requests for payment of the ERDF funds are set in §3 of each project’s Subsidy Contract. Should a delay occur, projects not meeting their spending target risk losing some of their allocated ERDF.

In order to enable projects to fulfill their budget commitments and to minimize the ERDF de-commitment, all projects have been given the possibility to submit certifications of expenditures and/or declaration of incurred expenditures until December 10th 2005 at the very latest.

- **4th call for proposals**

The 4th Call for project proposals of the Alpine Space Programme was launched on October 7th 2005. This time the call is dedicated to projects following a strategic approach and covering the topics of “rural development”, “Transport” and the “impact of climate change”. Only applications meeting the criteria outlined in the specific terms of reference will be considered.

To foster a targeted proposal selection the 4th call for proposal follows a two step application procedure.

Step 1: “Expression of interest” has to be posted through online registration on www.alpinespace.org until October 21st 2005 at the latest.

A selection board will decide on 22nd November 2005 which project applications will be invited to submit the complete application documents.

Step 2: Submission of the complete application package. The deadline for sending the documents to the JTS is 23rd December 2005.

Further information on the application procedure and documents as well as the specific terms of reference is available on the focused call section of the programme website.

Future perspectives

- **Views into an uncertain future?**

In the last months the discussion about the future of the Structural Funds has been mainly influenced from the failure of the June summit in Luxemburg, when the Council could not agree on a financial perspective for the period 2007-2013. The effect on the programmes has been a growing uncertainty about their future. In the meanwhile the perspectives have changed and for trans-national co-operation areas the EC has organised a follow up of a strategy seminar with the member states early in October.

Due to the reduced financial perspectives and to the results of the first seminar on these questions in April the EC proposed a reduction of the original four themes of the Lisbon Strategy in the co-operation programmes to three: networks of R&D/innovation including SMEs; prevention against natural risks; integrated maritime cooperation and maritime safety. The Commission's proposal for the Alpine Space is even more restricted: Prevention against risks of avalanches and flooding; RTD, innovation and SME networks; Environment in link with the Alpine Convention.

At the seminar the partner states of the Alpine Space programme argued that this approach would not really justify the needs of the Alpine Space, that a cross-sectoral approach seems to be completely lacking although it could add value to operations or that the mention of the Alpine Convention only in combination with environment seems strange. Above all, however, the member states complained about the absence of an accessibility theme in the proposal. Accessibility is a major theme of the Alps and trans-national cooperation for coordinating, facilitating, improving and implementing activities seems vital. Moreover, a sustainable approach towards accessibility questions is a main challenge for various sectors of policy as well as a major concern of the population.

The coming months, in which the discussion with the EC will continue on various levels will show if in a future programme questions of accessibility will find space to manoeuvre.

Christian Salletmaier
Managing Authority

Announcements

→ The brochure of the "transnational workshop on rural development" is available. In the download section of our website, under the title "workshop on rural development"- 7/8 April 2005 - Innsbruck, you will find a brochure containing the main proceedings and outputs of the workshop.

→ The "Event" section of the Programme website has been updated recently. Please visit it you will find numerous hints on upcoming events.

Conferences and seminars

- **Transnational Workshop
"Transport in the Alpine Space Area"**
16/17-06-2005, Venice



On June 16th -17th, the Alpine Space Programme held the Transnational Workshop in Venice/ Italy. This workshop was the third of the series launched last November in Rosenheim (Germany) dealing with "climate change", and the second organized in April in Innsbruck (Austria) dealing with "rural development".

The purpose of this conclusive event was to foster confrontation, analysis and proposals for common solutions to shared problems by the 7 alpine countries involved (Italy, Austria, France, Germany, Slovenia, Liechtenstein, Switzerland), in the delicate field of transport (local traffic, tourist traffic and transit).

The workshop was articulated into 5 working sessions, dealing with topics both on the local level (the role of local authorities within the European policy for transport), and the European level (transport policy

and internal cohesion within EU). Specific attention has been dedicated to the projects developed within the Alpine Space Programme, like "AlpenCors", "Alpfrail", "AlpsMobility II", "Monitraf".

The pretest of the tragedy in the Frejus was the starting point for stressing the necessity of improving the dialogue among the alpine countries in order to offer shared and common solutions, in a real transnational spirit, to the problems connected to security, transit and mobility. With this respect it has been emphasized that Regions must undertake the role of "trait d'union", having a comprehensive knowledge of their own territory and urging for shared plans of action and memorandum of understanding, with an active and participated involvement of the local population.

In the view of finding experimental solutions to these problems, the event aimed at stimulating the design of strategic projects to be financed by the Alpine Space Programme, in the frame of the last call for project proposals. It has been highlighted that the Programme will preferably be funding strategic projects that within their framework of action, are proposing innovative approaches for a unilateral interpretation of relevant data coming from all the different alpine countries.

For further information on the Workshop, please visit the Programme website. MC

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- **Seminar "Assisting and networking"**
30-6/1-7-2005, Salzburg

On the 31st June and 1st July 2005, all the Lead Partners (LP) were invited to participate to the seminar "Assistance and net-

working", coordinated by the JTS, the MA and the NCPs.

This two-day summer event of the Alpine Space Programme was the opportunity to meet and served as a platform for exchange. The aims were multiple: for project developers to receive individualised assistance and answers to their questions, for the participants to give their comments, share their experience and obtain advice from both Programme team and other LPs.

The seminar was divided into two parts. The 1st day was focused on the reporting methods. While the projects close to an end concentrated on the Final Report methodology, the other LPs focused on the financial reporting procedure as well as on I&P methods. The second's group demonstration by two project LPs, of their own experiences was already, by the inspiration it offered, setting the tracks for the next day: "exchanging and networking".

For the "networking" day, thematic work groups were set with the intent of fostering synergies between projects and underlining possible networks. For those who had the chance to visit the four thematic groups, it was very interesting to observe the rich discussions and constructive brainstorming. It was fascinating to see the intensity of the discussions gained. Indeed, once the projects had been presented, the ideas of op-

timising partnership and to go further in the cooperation have been lively expressed. This workshop was an excellent starting point, for well-grounded and promising on going cooperation.

By this combination of technical information and thematic work groups, we do hope all participants have been able to gain knowledge, to share and to discover about the programme, its actors and the different projects. From the great work atmosphere and active participation of all the attendees, once again, the strong bonds of the Programme were visible, and most of them have been enhanced and strengthened. We do hope that these "first steps" in the networking will develop and will emphasize the cooperation and exchanges within the Alpine Space Programme. A meeting, where perspectives of further cooperation and where new strong ideas of projects have been shared and discussed is the lively expression of not only the good basis but the well founded ambitions of the Programme.

We wish to take this occasion to thank all the participants, hoping for next coming events to meet again and to meet those who unfortunately couldn't attend this time. LB

Project meetings

-  **AlpCity Meeting**
27/28.06.2005, Milano

The **AlpCity Trans-national Scientific Meeting** was organised in Milan (27-28 June 2005) in the framework of the AlpCity project (Interreg IIB/Alpine Space Programme) by the 3 Project Partners - Regione Lombardia, Regione Veneto and Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia - with the overall support of Regione Piemonte (AlpCity Lead Partner).

This trans-national meeting represented a key and successful project's event during which AlpCity project (2004-2006) was widely presented in terms of strategies, activities and concrete results. A special focus was on the project's case studies also exploited through a dedicated posters' session.

The ambition of this meeting was to set-up a platform for discussions and exchanging information, experiences and lessons learned in order to provide an added value and some concrete inputs to the overall successful project's implementation, development and follow-up.

The participants were almost 70 including: the Project Partners, the Institutions involved in the AlpCity case studies (Universities, NGOs, Research Institutions and some case studies' local counterparts). Representatives of key institutions such as CIPRA were present.

A special guest of this event was Mr Vincent Kitio - UN Habitat Best Practices Officer from Nairobi who presented the strategy and results of the UN Habitat programme 'Best Practices and Local Leadership'.

The AlpCity Scientific Steering Committee presented at the first plenary session an overview on the 'Status and challenges of the small Alpine towns' conceived as the

basic framework for the project's strategy and action.

A working groups' session was led by the WPs Co-ordinators and the Experts of the SSC.

Further information concerning this event at the AlpCity web site: www.alpcity.it



From the left: Mr Kitio - UN Habitat - Ms Guarini and Ms Rosa - Polytechnic of Turin - Ms Sena - AlpCity project manager

●  **AlpNaTour Meetings**

The aim of the project AlpNaTour is to make a significant contribution to the sustainable development of Natura 2000 sites in the Alpine Region considering the important role of recreation and tourism in this region. The suitable instrument is the management plan for Natura 2000 sites.

By developing guidelines and checklists for the management planning process in Natura 2000 sites, under special consideration of recreation and tourism, a co-operative implementation of the directives of the European Union will be fostered. AlpNaTour will be concluded by the end of 2006.

Three meetings of all project partners have already taken place. Project partners selected seven Natura 2000 test sites in four countries of the Alpine Region (Austria, Germany, Italy and Slovenia). At the mo-

ment, guidelines and working tools for the management planning process in the different countries are compared and analysed. Several new developed and adapted visitor monitoring methods are tested in the Natura 2000 test sites, in order to assess disturbances and impacts on species and habitats of European interest. Adapted to regional circumstances, an appropriate approach for participation is developed.

The first of two conferences "Tourism and Protected Areas" will take place on the 24th and 25th of November 2005 in Vienna. Please find further information about the conference program on the website <http://alumni.boku.ac.at/weiterbildung/>. Conference language: German. More information about the project AlpNaTour can be found on the website: www.alpnatour.info.



Neprovalter Meeting 06/07.06.2005, Udine

The project Neprovalter (“Network of the local agricultural production for the valorisation and the knowledge of the Alpine area”) under the Community Initiative Programme Interreg III B Alpine Space aims to integrate farmers’ income in order to protect the mountain territory by maintaining the existing production activities in the mountain area. The project involves the regions of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Stiria, Carinzia, Slovenia, Veneto, Valle d’Aosta, Liguria and the Province of Bolzano.

Among the actions of the project there is also the introduction and diffusion of organic livestock productions in the Alpine area. For this reason pilot areas have been selected within each region where surveys and checks are being conducted.

The preliminary results were discussed during the technical meeting held in Malborghetto Valbruna (UD) on 6th and 7th June 2005 (Malborghetto Valbruna is one of the pilot areas of Friuli Venezia Giulia which is currently under investigation). It was one of the scheduled periodical meetings held in the different partner regions and which aim to exchange experiences in order to define a unique model which is applicable to the whole Alpine area.

The participants were welcomed by Ivo Del Negro, president of the Comunità Montana del Gemonese, Val Canale e Canal del Ferro, and by Sonia Venerus, technician of the Agricultural Sector Experimental and Demonstrative Farms of the Province of Pordenone. In the afternoon the partners visited 2 breeding farms in the neighbourhood: the organic farm for beef production of Kanduth Kristian and the organic farm for milk production of Kanduth Manfredo. The technical and economic elements noticed in the farm were then discussed by the project partners. They were welcomed by Alessandro Oman, Mayor of Malborghetto

Valbruna, by Renzo Francesconi, Councillor responsible for agriculture of the Province of Pordenone, by Francesco Miniussi, of the Regional Direction of Agriculture of the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia and by Josef Parente, Project Manager of Neprovalter, who also introduced the meeting.

Each partner of Neprovalter briefly explained the organisation of animal husbandry in its region, focusing in particular on the strengths and weaknesses of the diffusion or the maintenance of organic productions. The Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Lead partner of the project, made a comparison between production costs of milk and meat (organic or traditional) in different areas and illustrated the financial supports received by the farms in the different partner regions.

The data collected by project partners about the marketing of organic meat, milk and milk by-products in their territory were illustrated by the Regions of Friuli Venezia Giulia and Liguria. The partners’ reports and the following discussion have highlighted the technical, economic and social difficulties for the diffusion of organic productions in mountain areas.

The choice of strategies that could be used and the definition of a model to be applied in the whole alpine area are the objectives of the Neprovalter project, whose results will be presented in Tarvisio during the final conference. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Councillor responsible for Agriculture of the Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Enzo Marsilio, underlined the need to develop a sustainable model for the management of mountain areas from the environmental, social and economic point of view, a model including the total quality of the production chain.

WELCOME TO THE JTS!



Pozdravljeni,

Let me introduce myself. My name is Anuška Štoka and I am one of the two new Project Officers at the JTS of the Interreg IIIB Alpine Space Programme. I graduated in Economics at the University of Trieste with a thesis on *Euroregions* and soon after I obtained a Post-graduate Specialization in Translations between the Slovenian and the Italian language. After gaining experience in a consultancy company where I had the opportunity to work with SMEs and public bodies both from Italy as from Slovenia (on projects co-funded by Interreg IIIA, pre-accession instruments and structural funds), I moved to Rosenheim in August. I enjoy working within an international team and I must admit I am astonished by the beauty of the city and its surroundings.

I am interested in transnational and international cooperation, innovative solutions developed for/by SMEs, environmental issues and new ideas concerning the protection and enhancement of cultural and historical heritage.



If we do not meet on the cycling routes in Rosenheim, I look forward to meeting and working with you in the following weeks and months.

Anuška Štoka

Born in Trieste 31 years ago, after the Degree in Law with a dissertation about Minority Rights, I had different experiences with the Community Initiative Programme Interreg in its different strands both from project and Programme level. After three years spent in Rome where I had the opportunity to work for different national and regional authorities (and to enjoy the unique atmosphere of the sunny capital and its people) I am here in Rosenheim, at the JTS premises, where I started to learn about the projects implementing our CIP Interreg IIIB Alpine Space. So, I am looking forward to meeting you all in the next weeks! With my best regards!

Ivan Curzolo

Contacts

Joint Technical Secretariat
Stadt Rosenheim Postfach 1209 D - 83013 Rosenheim
Tel.: +49 8031 362770 - Fax: +49 8031 362779
jts@rosenheim.de - www.alpinespace.org