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Interreg III B



Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

# AlpCity Project Final Report

A trans-national project implemented by



in collaboration with





Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

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# AlpCity Project

## Final Report



Regional Budget Planning and Statistics  
Division 8.3



Interreg III B

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## acknowledgements

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AlpCity is the first project in the framework of the Interreg IIB Alpine Space Programme, which takes care of the alpine population's life and working conditions.

For this reason the transnational partnership among seven regional and local authorities belonging to five different countries has gained a pivotal role and put the premises for a future collaboration aimed at empowering the small alpine towns as link between rural/mountain areas and metropolitan ones.

The work carried out records through the case studies and the working groups, that the role of Regions is essential to voice the needs of the small alpine towns as vital essence of the Alps. Regions have to look after the future of the Alps, since the small alpine towns develop thanks to the regional policies.



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President of Piedmont Region



Sergio Conti  
Regional Councillor for Spatial Planning



Bruna Sibille  
Regional Councillor for Mountains





## **preface**



The AlpCity Project Final Report provides a comprehensive analysis and policy discussion developed within the AlpCity Project (2003-2006) - Interreg IIIB - Alpine Space Programme on local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns.

This issue is particularly relevant because of the critical socio-economic development and the inadequate quality of life and urban environment in the small alpine communities and towns, often characterised by economic decline, ageing population, abandonment of villages, loss of cultural vitality, buildings decay and a limited community participation.

The AlpCity trans-national partnership aimed at facing these processes of decline by supporting and matching 21 pilot initiatives launched by small alpine towns and targeting the definition of a common strategy for local sustainable development in various and integrated environments through a broad programme of cooperation.

Above all the AlpCity Project was intended to contribute to the setting-up of a mutual knowledge and a common strategic perspective by addressing some key areas of the Interreg IIIB - Alpine Space Programme including the support to a polycentric and sustainable local development, the creation and development of new and existing networks, the promotion of innovative initiatives and cooperation activities at a trans-national level.

Moreover, the creation of a shared knowledge and vision has been enhanced by the collection, creation, dissemination and transfer of good and best practices implemented in mountain areas. The Project provided all partners with information and materials about the concept of best practice as established by the main international agencies, but tailoring them to the processing of issues related to AlpCity and its case studies. The AlpCity network assumed a strategic direction toward the set up of a Regional Urban Observatory/Laboratory, which is meant to be member of the UN Habitat Global Observatory Network. For this purpose part of the AlpCity resources were committed to propose definitions, criteria, indicators and guidelines in order to create a proper framework for consolidating the AlpCity future position and function in the European and international environment.

Major issues discussed in this Report are:

- The AlpCity Project in the framework of the Interreg IIIB Alpine Space Programme with detailed considerations about the peculiarities of the Alpine Space and the most important features of the Project.
- The AlpCity empirical approach through the development of 21 pilot cases within the four

topic areas (economic development, services and quality of life, urban environment, cooperation among towns) together with the specification of their aims, results, outputs and lessons learned.

- The policy implications and guidelines with prospects of future scenarios as result of the interaction among the AlpCity initiative, the partners' expectations and the development policies at regional, national and international levels.

In discussing these issues, the Final Report seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the importance of transnational cooperation in the European development and, in particular, its implications for the Alpine Space.



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Turin, October 2006



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## Chapter I **introduction**

### 1 . The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) as an overall framework of AlpCity

In order to achieve a sustainable (for society, environment and economy) spatial development, a cooperation among different governmental and administrative levels is necessary. This purpose requires the coordination of different measures on local, regional, national and European level. Cities and regions are more and more dependent, both on global trends and decisions at the European Union level.

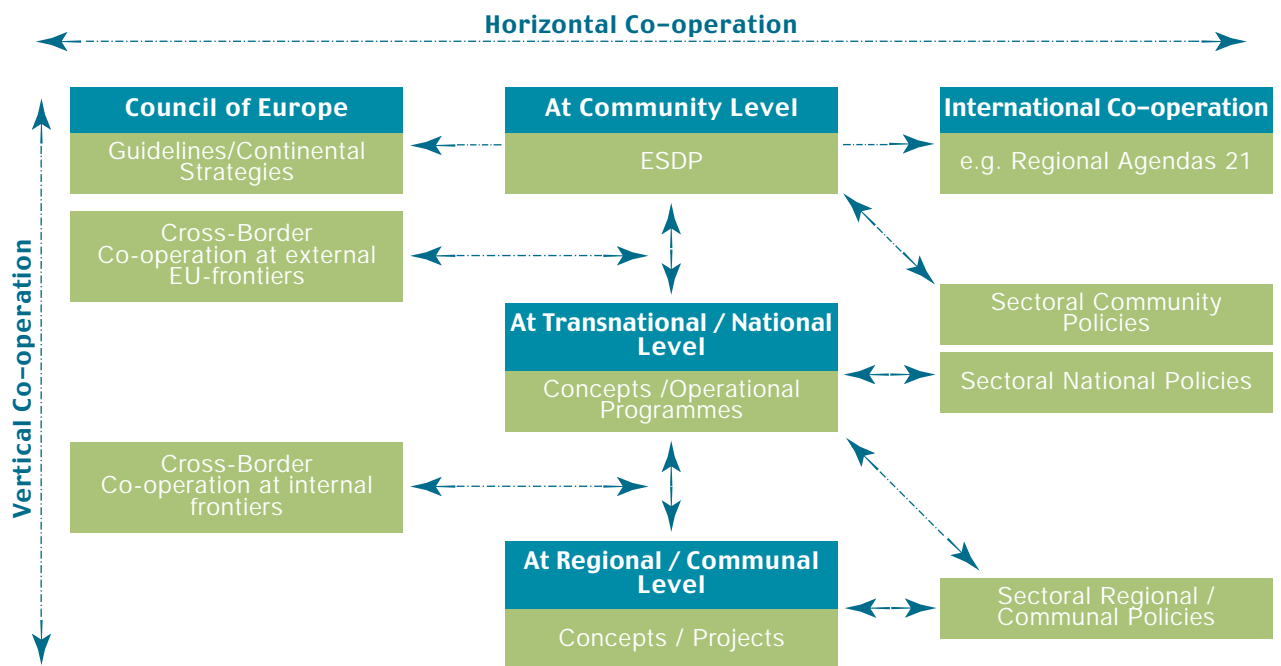
The AlpCity Project has been conceived to establish exchanges and innovative experiments on the following issues: “economic development”, “services and quality of life” and “urban environment”. Moreover new local and European networks have been devised to benefit the alpine small towns. Development projects in different Member States complement each other at best, if they target common objectives for spatial development. Therefore, the national spatial development policies of the Member States and the sectorial policies of the European Union require clear and transcendent spatial development guidelines. These ones are presented by the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), drawn up by the Member States in cooperation with the European Commission.

Though the ESDP is not a legally binding document, it is a policy framework for better cooperation between the Community sectorial policies with significant spatial impacts and the Member States, their regions and cities. This aspect implies new ways of cooperation, which should be developed on a voluntary basis according to the ESDP principles. The application of the policy options is based on the principle of subsidiarity. For this reason there is a need for close cooperation amongst the authorities in charge of sectorial policies; and amongst those ones responsible for spatial development at each respective level (horizontal cooperation); and between actors at the Community level and the ones at trans-national, regional and local level (vertical cooperation - as described in **Figure 1**). Cooperation is the key to an integrated spatial development policy and represents an added value over sectorial policies acting in isolation.

On the basis of the ESDP objectives, which comprise among others:

- the development of a balanced and polycentric urban system and a new urban-rural relationship;
- securing parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge and
- sustainable development, prudent management and protection of nature and cultural heritage;

the European Commission has established different treaty headings providing itself with the basis for action with implications for spatial development in the European Union.



**Figure 1** • Ways of cooperation for spatial development • Source: ESDP, 1999

## 2. The Alpine Convention

The Alpine Convention is a framework convention, which aims at the preservation of the natural ecosystem of the Alps and the promotion of sustainable development in this area, protecting, at the same time, both the economic and cultural interests of the resident population in the alpine region. It requires contracting parties to pursue a comprehensive policy for the protection of the Alps through the application of the principles of prevention, payment by the polluter and cooperation. The Convention stipulates that the parties will cooperate in carrying out research activities and scientific assessments, develop joint or complementary systematic monitoring programmes, and harmonise research, monitoring and related data-acquisition activities. It also provides for legal, scientific, economic and technical cooperation in areas relevant to the Convention.

The Alpine Convention was signed by the alpine states (Germany, France, Italy, Slovenia, Liechtenstein, Austria, Monaco and Switzerland) and the European Economic Community on November the 7th 1991 in Berchtesgaden (Germany).

The Convention arose from a general acknowledgement of the inestimable value of the Alps as a source of natural, cultural, historical, economic and social heritage. Moreover, it is well known that this heritage, due to its sensitivity, vulnerability and irreproducible nature, was at risk of suffering severe and irreversible damage as a result of growing exploitation by human beings. The member countries have agreed to "pursue a comprehensive policy for the



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preservation and protection of the Alps after careful consideration of the interests of all the Alpine States, their Alpine regions and the European Economic Community, and through the prudent and sustained use of resources" (art.1).

The Convention is made up of an initial treaty and a series of Implementation Protocols signed from 1994 onwards. Now the Alpine Convention comprises protocols on the following topics:

- **Spatial planning and sustainable development** - the objective is to ensure the economic and rational use of land and the sound, harmonious development of the whole region, particular emphasis being placed on natural hazards, the avoidance of under - and overuse and the conservation and rehabilitation of natural habitats by means of a through clarification and evaluation land use requirements, foresighted integral planning and coordination of the measures taken. Thus this protocol lays much emphasis on the need to draw up regional plans and programmes for sustainable development. Where these plans are concerned with regional economic development, they are to be aimed at creating job opportunities and supplying the goods and services required for economic, social and cultural growth. In rural areas, these plans and programmes aim at supplying suitable land for farming, forestry and animal husbandry, to conserve and manage areas, which play an important environmental and cultural role, and to reduce the risk of natural disasters. In urban areas a balanced approach will be pursued, by conserving and managing green areas in built up zones and suburban areas considering leisure time, and taking care of striking a balance between new urban expansion and the need to preserve traditional urban features. Nature reserves should also be established, as well as waterways and other vital natural resources need protection. As for transport, better regional and inter-regional links will be adopted by favouring environmentally compatible means of transport. It will be necessary to improve coordination and links among different transport systems, and promote traffic restrictions. Better public transport facilities should be provided for the local population and for tourists.
- **Soil conservation** - the objective is to reduce quantitative and qualitative soil damage, in particular by applying agricultural and forestry methods, which do not harm the soil, through minimum interference with soil and land, control of erosion and the restriction of soil sealing. This protocol states that, where required, soil should be included in the elements protected by conservation areas. Soil and land use is to be restricted like also the use of ore and mining or quarrying in the areas. Humid, wet areas and turfy areas must be protected. Areas at risk, and especially, the alpine areas at risk of erosion, need to be identified. Contracting parties will farm the land, raise animals and work the forests according to the most suited methods for the area. Fertilisers and plant treatments are to be applied only in accordance with agreed shared criteria and good technical practices. Forestry should also bear soil conservation issues in mind. It will be necessary to prevent tourist activities from having a negative effect on the alpine areas. In those areas, which have already been damaged as a result of tourism, further expansion of the tourist industry will be forbidden. The use of pollutants is to be limited, and the use of antiskid products restricted to environment-friendly products. Pollutants in contaminated soils, be they in use or no longer in use, will also be dealt with.
- **Conservation of nature and landscape** - the objective is to protect, conserve and, where necessary, rehabilitate the natural environment and the countryside, so that

ecosystems are able to function; animal and plants species, including their habitats, are preserved; nature's capacity for regeneration and sustained productivity is maintained, and the variety, uniqueness and beauty of nature and the countryside as a whole are preserved on a permanent basis. The protocol expresses the need for in-depth reports on the actual state of environmental protection and landscape management. Programmes and/or plans have to be developed with a view to identifying the measures required for the conservation of nature and landscape. When actions affecting nature and landscape are taken, all avoidable damage should be prevented. In the event of unavoidable damage, measures should be taken to offset and counterbalance, by restoring nature and increasing the value of landscape. All possible measures must be taken to conserve or, if need be, to re-introduce natural or quasi-natural structural features of the landscape, biotypes, ecosystems and traditional rural systems. Existing protected areas should be maintained, managed and, if it is necessary, extended, according to their protective role. Where it is possible, new conservation areas, such as national parks, should be set up. These conservation areas should be connected forming national and trans-national networks. Local animal and plant species must be conserved, respecting their diversity and guaranteeing a sufficient population as well as ensuring adequate habitats. Comprehensive alpine Region lists of species requiring special protection, as they are threatened by specific situations, must be compiled. The reintroduction and increase in the population of local animal and plant species has been taken into consideration.

- **Mountain farming** - the objective is, in the public interest, to maintain the management of land traditionally cultivated by man and to preserve and promote a system of farming, which suits local conditions and is environment-compatible, taking into account the less favourable economic conditions. In other words the protocol aims at encouraging mountain farming, through the reorganisation and improvement of land use, respecting nature and the countryside. Farming compatible with the environment and suited to the location are considered of the utmost importance, as is the conservation or regeneration of the traditional features of the rural landscape (woodland, woody boundaries, hedges, thickets, wet, dry, or low yield pasture, upland pastures, etc.). Special measures for the conservation of traditional farms and rural architecture are also included and an increased use of traditional building materials and methods is to be encouraged. The protocol favours the use and increase of extensive farming best suited to the nature and features of the area at the same time as emphasising the need to protect and appreciate the local farming produce, typical of the area. Animal farming, including traditional animal husbandry, will be maintained as best suited to the area, and will be limited to land which is available for such purposes and which will not suffer environmental damage as a result. Necessary agriculture, farming and forestry facilities and premises are to be maintained. Technical research and assistance must include the necessary measures to conserve bio (genetic) diversity of plant and animal life in farming. Favourable marketing conditions for mountain farming produce should be encouraged both to boost sales on the spot and to enhance their competitive value on local and international markets, adopting quality guarantees and COD-DOC labelling. Environmentally sustainable mountain forestry farming will be an additional source of income. As fundamental principle of this protocol living and working conditions on mountain farms should be improved.
- **Mountain forests** - the objective is to preserve, reinforce and restore the role of forests, in



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particular their protective role, by improving the resistance of forest ecosystems mainly by applying natural forestry techniques and preventing any utilisation detrimental to forests, taking into account the less favourable economic conditions in the alpine region. Actions need to be undertaken to guarantee a planned and carefully implemented access, safeguarding both nature and the countryside. Contracting Parties to the 'Mountain Forests' Protocol promise to establish a sufficient number of properly large natural forest reservations or conservation areas. Signatory parties also undertake to set up the instruments necessary to fund incentive and compensation schemes.

- **Tourism** - the objective is, by restricting activities harmful to the environment, to harmonize tourism and recreational activities with ecological and social purposes, in particular by setting aside quiet areas. The protection of nature and the countryside has to be taken into account when offering incentives to the tourist industry. The Contracting parties undertake to encourage projects, respecting the landscape and compatible with nature. The Protocol also makes provisions for ongoing comprehensive research activity into the ways consumers' demand is met by the tourist industry, bearing environmental issues in mind. The Protocol encourages an exchange of experiences and the development of common action programmes aimed at raising quality standards. Tourist flow plans and measures will be included considering that tourist growth may have to be suited to the special features of the environment and of the resources available in the area or the region involved. Contracting parties undertake to define conservation areas on the basis of environmental criteria: such areas will not have any tourist facilities. As for lifts and other mechanical climbing equipment it is necessary to implement a policy accomplishing ecological and environmental requirements, in addition to economic and safety demands. New authorizations of mechanical climbing equipment will be granted on condition that old equipment no longer in use can be dismantled and the areas returned to nature. Programmes for reducing the use of motor-driven vehicles in tourist resorts are encouraged. The protocol promotes improved tourist access to resorts using public transport. As far as possible, ski slopes should blend into the landscape, whose changes should be limited. Open-air sport activities will be carefully monitored in conservation areas. Sports making use of engines or motors will be limited, and, if need be, forbidden. Apart from airports, airborne vehicles landing and picking up passengers for leisure purposes, will also be limited as far as possible, and, if need be, forbidden. In addition to development plans for economically poor areas, for staggering of holidays and for innovation incentives, cooperation between tourism, forestry farming and crafts will be encouraged.
- **Transport** - the objective is to reduce the volume and dangers of inter-alpine and trans-alpine traffic to a level which is not harmful to humans, animals and plants and their habitats, by switching more traffic, in particular freight traffic, to the railways, in particular by providing appropriate infrastructure and incentives complying with market principles, without discrimination on grounds of nationality. The Protocol intends to ensure a rational, safe and coordinated development of transport through an integrated trans-national network. Carriers, means and types of transport will be coordinated, in order to encourage inter-modal transport. Existing transport systems and infrastructure should be made more efficient, with external and infrastructure costs being paid by those who generate them. Spatial planners should favour the transfer of people and freight transport towards the most environment-

friendly means of transport; encourage the development of inter-modal transport systems and reduce the overall volume of traffic. Steps should be taken to protect transport routes against natural hazards and to protect the local population and environment, particularly high-impact areas. As far as public transport is concerned, environment- and user-friendly means of transport are to be promoted. Rail network systems will be improved, by building and developing the main trans-alpine lines, included nodes and terminal facilities. Furthermore, the network should be upgraded and its management made more efficient. Long-distance freight transport should make use of rail networks and the costs of rail transport for such purposes should be adapted in order to make this possible. With regard to road transport, no other major trans-alpine roadways will be built, without exception. Major communication roadways for intra-alpine transport will have to be carefully considered and allowed only on certain conditions. Air traffic noise and environmental pollution will be reduced as far as possible. Tourist resorts should, preferably, be accessed by public transport. Low or no traffic areas will be established and maintained, and some tourist areas should be pedestrianized, in order to encourage tourists to come without bringing their cars. The Protocol dictates that costs must be covered by those who have generated them. Taxation must be progressively introduced to promote the use of more environment-friendly means of transport. Supply and demand within the transport system will be monitored, as will environmental objectives, standards and indicators.

- **Energy** - the objective is to introduce methods for the production, distribution and use of energy, which preserve the countryside and are environment-compatible, and to promote energy-saving measures. Actions will include: the insulation of buildings and the efficiency optimisation of heat distribution; optimisation of heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems; regular monitoring and reduction of polluting heating systems; high-tech methods for energy recycling; consumption-based calculations of heating and hot water costs; planning and promotion of new buildings employing low energy consumption technologies; and promoting and implementing local and municipal energy and climate plans. The Protocol encourages the use of renewable energies. Hydroelectric facilities must not tamper with the natural ecological functions of waterways and must not be detrimental to the overall integrity of the landscape. It will be necessary to set up minimum output thresholds, and to adopt regulations aimed at reducing artificial variations in water levels and defending animal migratory habits. Furthermore, subsidies may eventually be provided to help existing hydroelectric facilities to remain competitive. It will prove necessary to protect waterways in areas, where there is a lack of drinking water. Buffer zones, nature reserves and other so far unspoiled areas will be protected. Fossil fuel energy production will make use of state-of-the-art technology and, in the event of fossil fuel thermal plants needing to be replaced, the option of switching to other energy sources should be considered. Existing energy distribution and transport facilities will undergo cutbacks and improvements, always bearing in mind the need to protect the environment. Environmental regeneration, natural engineering and environmental impact will be considered when assessing projects with cross-border implications, and the relevant contracting parties will be consulted before initiatives are allowed to proceed.
- **Dispute settlement** - this Protocol has been added to the existing twelve: it stems from the idea and from the need to complete the provisions of the Alpine Convention, which was



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lacking in provisions addressing the possibility that two or more Parties to the convention could disagree on the interpretation or the implementation of the Convention.

The system foresees an initial consultation procedure, when the Parties try and peacefully solve the dispute, and a second procedure with arbitration or court of conciliation. Contracting Parties will resort to this step once consultations have failed.

Further documentation on the Protocols is available on the website of the *International Commission for the Protection of the Alps* (CIPRA) ([www.cipra.org](http://www.cipra.org)).

Progress achieved during the implementation of the Convention is discussed, as a rule, in the biennial *Alpine Conference*, which is set up and chaired by an executive body, the *Alpine Conference Standing Committee*.

Following the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat, the Multi-Annual Work Programme of the Alpine Conference represents a medium-term framework over a period of six years, that defines the main tasks.

The Alpine Conference has resolved that the joint implementation activities would revolve around the following priorities:

- Public relations
- Exchange of experience and cooperation
- Trend monitoring and interpretation (Report on the state of the Alps)
- Joint projects on key issues (mobility, accessibility, transit, traffic/society, culture, identity/tourism, leisure, sport/nature, agriculture and forestry, cultural landscape)
- Completion of the set of agreements
- Cooperation with other mountain areas.

Further measures in other fields (population and culture, prevention of air pollution, water management and waste management) are already planned within the framework of the Alpine Convention. One of the reasons why the Alpine Conference has not made a decision on drawing up further protocols is that, so far, only five of the alpine countries (Germany, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Austria, Slovenia) have ratified all existing protocols. At least for the time being as concerns "Population and culture", the question will be addressed by means of a political declaration, which is, however, subject to the mechanism of the compliance regime. In contrast to the overall framework, which is signed by the European Union and all alpine states, the protocols, as mentioned above, have been only partially signed and ratified. Nevertheless the Convention is of great importance and influenced the development of the Alpine Space Programme. What makes the treaty original and interesting is the characterization of a mountain range as an international region to be protected along natural, cultural, historical, economic and recreational lines. Thanks to this statement the Alps become the first mountain range to be protected - in some way - in its entirety and also as a defined "region" within Europe.

### 3. The System for Observation and Information on the Alps (SOIA)

The Alpine Convention imposes the obligation on its contracting parties to coordinate their activities and to undertake joint actions in the areas of observation and research on the Alps (Art. 3 and 4) relating to all the twelve themes covered by the Convention. It has been



necessary to set up a system providing pertinent information and disseminating it properly. During the third Alpine Conference of Chambéry held in December 1994 the decision to create a System for Observation and Information on the Alps (SOIA) was undertaken.

SOIA must fulfil the following tasks:

- producing documentation on research results;
- defining and pursuing priority research topics;
- constituting harmonised indicators;
- defining and pursuing priority topics for observation;
- cartography;
- catalogues of data sources;
- thesauruses;
- defining a common framework for the report on the state of the alpine environment.

The above activities may refer both to general topics concerning the alpine area and to particular topics under each Protocol.

The main obstacle to carry on the development of an information system is connected with financial resources as well as with the Contracting Parties' commitment. Alternative funding sources for European projects are necessary. The European Union Interreg III B - Alpine Space Programme is therefore an important programme, which could be used to develop further projects.

## 4. The Community Initiative INTERREG

The Community Initiative Interreg III is one of the Community Regional Policy tools. This third phase follows the successful ones of Interreg I (1989-1993) and Interreg II (1994-1999). It is one of the four Community Initiatives realized by the European Commission in order to define common solutions to specific problems. Mainly conceived to favour a harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of the European territory for the 2000-2006 period, Interreg III recommends the constitutions of partnerships beyond national borders to allow a balanced set up of multi-regional territories.

With a budget of 4.875 billions Euros for the 2000-2006 period (exclusively backed by the European Regional Development Fund - ERDF), and based on previous Interreg Programmes, this Community Initiative is structured in three fundamental strands:

### Strand A

*Cross-border cooperation:* between contiguous territories and also with the external borders of the European Union and some maritime areas, in order to put common development strategies into action.

### Strand B

*Trans-national cooperation:* between national, regional and local authorities within main geographic areas determined by the European Commission and the member states. The Commission defined the areas, such as the Atlantic Area, the North Western European Area,



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the South Western European Area, the Western Mediterranean Area.

### Strand C

*Interregional cooperation:* between actors gathered in sets of multiple not adjacent regions of the European Union that involve the presence of regions located in third countries, in particular the ten new member states. Hence, four areas have been defined: North, South, East and West.

From a spatial development standpoint, the Community Initiative Interreg is one of the most significant measures of the structural funds, as it provides an integrated approach to spatial development. Priority is not given to individual sectors, such as shipbuilding, mining or textiles, but it is given to the relationship between the factors influencing territorial organisation in an integrated development approach in border regions and larger trans-national cooperation areas.

The cooperation led in the framework of Interreg III is defined by the following principles:

- **Programming:** the regions or the territories, wishing to cooperate, present to the EU Commission a "Community Initiative Programme" (CIP), which defines the common strategy of development and highlights the added value of cross-border and trans-national cooperation of the foreseen interventions. The Programme takes into account the general guidelines of structural funds and community policies: production of workplaces, competitiveness improvement, sustainable development, respect of the environment, equal opportunities between men and women, respect of community competition standards.
- **Partnership:** is created among national, regional and local authorities and socio-economic partners; it allows "bottom-up" development models. Moreover some transparent information concurs to achieve maximum levels of participation of the population and of public and private actors.
- **Prior consultations:** the performance of Interreg III must be realized in a coherent and coordinated way with the other relevant financial instruments. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is in charge of all the operations conducted within the framework of the European Union (other financial instruments of external policy of the Community can finance participations outside the European Union territory). The main challenge for the new phase of Interreg is therefore to take advantage of the positive experiences of cooperation made within the current Programmes and to gradually develop structures destined to extend this type of cooperation to the whole European Union and its neighbouring countries.

## 5. INTERREG IIIB – Alpine Space Programme

Within Interreg the Alpine Space Programme represents a common strategy of all European alpine partner states aimed at achieving a higher degree of territorial and socio-economic integration within the Alpine Space following the guidelines expressed by the ESDP (for instance "polycentric spatial development and new urban-rural relationship") and other relevant

community policies as, for instance, the Alpine Convention, which in contrary to the ESDP is a legally binding paper. As defined in the European Commission's guidelines for Interreg III, the "Alpine Space" comprises not only the alpine region in a narrow sense (as specified in the Alpine Convention), but includes also the adjacent regions and urban agglomerations. Keeping in mind this aspect, the AlpCity Project deals also with other mountain regions such as Jura Mountains and Central Massif.

The objectives of the Alpine Space Programme are:

- to establish the Alpine Space as a powerful area in the European network of development areas. This would make it necessary to develop a common understanding of the role of the Alpine Space in terms of sustainable spatial development.
- initialisation and support of sustainable development initiatives within the Alpine Space under consideration of the relationship between the alpine core region and the fringes of the Alps.
- promotion of sustainable modes of transport and communication.
- protection of the richness of the natural and cultural heritage, preservation of population and infrastructures from natural hazards by the development of common tools, exchange of methods and information.

These general goals have been translated into a set of priorities and measures detailed in the Programme Complement.

## 6. AlpCity within the framework of INTERREG IIIB

The aim of the Alpine Space programme consists in the development of the Alpine Space and its overall reinforcement in the general context of territorial competition, regulated by the globalisation process and accelerated in Europe, in the last years, through the completion of the European single market.

The programme strategy is guided by the following principles:

- the basic principle of sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimension;
- providing equal opportunities for men and women;
- innovating orientation as base for all activities;

The objectives listed above should be achieved through:

- trans-nationality;
- building on existing networks, previous programmes and experiences;
- achieving a wide spread commitment of the alpine population;
- focusing on integrated approaches;
- tangible results.

In order to maximize the benefits and its output the AlpCity Project is positioned into a broad context. According to the ESDP and the Alpine Space Programme, vertical and horizontal cooperation is the key to an integrated spatial development. Therefore one of the main objectives of the AlpCity Project is promoting long and short networks and new forms of



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cooperation. Across all project activities vertical (especially between regions and towns) and horizontal cooperation (between regions themselves, towns, universities) will be sought for, so that not only the Project Partners (listed in **Figure 2**: The Alpcity Project Partners) do have the best possible benefit, but also other alpine towns and regions can learn from the results and experiences of Alpcity.



**Figure 2** • The Alpcity Project-Partners • Source: [www.alpcity.it](http://www.alpcity.it)

The Alpine Space Programme focuses (amongst others) on the existing socio-economic disparities, which - in the alpine area - often exist within small distances. Concerning the objectives of AlpCity the two faces of the alpine space can be summarised as follows:

Unspoiled nature and valuable landscape with high importance for tourism	Depopulation processes in peripheral areas with significant deficits of services, infrastructures and accessibility
Richness of natural and cultural heritage	Economic and social disparities on a small scale level
Dynamic small and medium sizes towns and cities	Difficulties of the inner transport and connections
Mixed economic structure with declining primary sector	High risk for natural disasters (avalanches, floods, landslides)

The positive and negative aspects shown in the table above reflect the situation in the alpine area and in the small towns interested by the AlpCity Project. Problems characterising the alpine area and opportunities for a sustainable development have been taken into account in developing the AlpCity Project. The work packages represent the tentative to propose a solution (even if only at local level and as a first step toward implementation) to decision makers and civil society through the adoption of different methodologies.

## 7. The AlpCity case studies as a central contribution to the objectives of the Alpine Space Programme

As stated above, the strengths and the opportunities, which affect the alpine space are strongly connected with the AlpCity development concept. The case studies of the participating small and medium-sized alpine towns represent various approaches to deliver solutions for the structural problems of the alpine regions described in the Alpine Space Programme.

In particular the different case studies can be linked to the Alpine Space Programme as follows:



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Alpine Space Priority 1	AlpCity Work Packages
<p>Promotion of the Alpine Space as a competitive and attractive living and economic space in the scope of a polycentric spatial development in the European Union.</p>	<p>The topics developed within the four Work Packages and the projects included in each WP have been built up according to the needs and recommendations expressed in the Alpine Space Programme Documents.</p> <p>In particular:</p> <p><b>WP 5 • Economic development</b> includes six case studies aimed at promoting the alpine area as a competitive space from the economic standpoint.</p> <p><b>WP 6 • Services and quality of life</b> includes four case studies focused on the improvement of services in mountain areas aimed at limiting the disadvantages and improving the attractiveness of the alpine area.</p> <p><b>WP 7 • Urban environment</b> includes eight case studies focused on improving the image and the quality of life of the small alpine towns inhabitants.</p> <p><b>WP 8 • Cooperation among towns</b> includes three case studies focused on the exchange of knowledge and common perspectives among the involved regions and the territory.</p> <p>All the case studies have been developed in a way to favour the integration of small and medium-sized alpine towns with the surrounding territory. Particular attention has been paid to the set up of common perspectives and exchange of knowledge.</p>
<p>Measure 1</p>	
<p>Mutual knowledge and common perspectives This measure promotes contact and networks among territories of the Alpine Space in order to draw common visions and to address specific development topics in a context of European social and economic integration</p>	

## 8. Synergies between AlpCity and other Alpine Space Projects

There are several links to other projects within the Alpine Space Programme. In order to maximize the output of every single project all the potential linking points have been taken into account during the work process. On one side it proved to be necessary to build on existing networks and to use the information and experiences coming from the previous projects; on the other side it has been useful to establish new information networks in order to build up a quality database for the future (follow up projects).

To facilitate a more effective work process and improve the synergies between different projects a central hub for the search and exchange of information should be established. The JTS might overtake this role and equip the existing database on its webpage with a powerful search engine, which permits the user to look up for specific information related to a certain topic (e.g. his project objectives). The search results should be presented in a compact and homogenous form (i.e. abstracts), which gives the user a basic idea about the objectives of a specific project and its thematic work packages. This would allow the information-seeker to find out very quickly whether a project is interesting for his needs, and in a second step to gather more information (e.g. by contacting the officers in charge of the project or visiting the projects webpage). Furthermore synergies might result with other European and national funding programmes. In order to optimise the use of the existing resources, a very desirable information add-on would consist in a thematic quality survey (or at least a screening) and rating of steps (running projects) and results (finished projects) of each individual project. This procedure would allow a learning process from problems and deficits, which have already been faced during the implementation phases, simplifying the transfer of "successful stories" to other projects and delivering precious inputs for future decisions and improvement measures. As regards the AlpCity Project a more in-depth information exchange with the projects listed in the table below might deliver positive synergies.

It is also worthwhile mentioning Switzerland as a country with a large surface included in the alpine area, which has set up national programmes dealing with topics developed by AlpCity. We refer to the National Research Programme (NRP 48) and to the Regio Plus Programme. The first one adopts the objectives of the Federal Government's research policy in the fields of sustainable development and forms a general framework for Alps-oriented research in Switzerland. The second one can be compared to the Interreg Programme and consists in promoting projects aimed at improving structural changes in rural areas.



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Name	Description	Lead Partner	Website	Approved	Priority/ Measure
<b>ALP-I-VILLE</b>	The project aims at developing e-villages to counter the disadvantage of peripheral settlements in the alpine area by the development of extensive electronic networking. The project goal is to prepare "Home-office jobs", providing access to public services by information technologies as well as the simplification of the tasks of regional development by IT and enabling distance education and training measures.	University of Augsburg (Germany)	<a href="http://www.alpiville.org/wdeutsch">www.alpiville.org/wdeutsch</a>	October 2004	1.2.
<b>PUSEMOR</b> Public services in sparsely populated mountain areas	The project aims at improving the offer of public services in sparsely populated mountain areas (e.g. optimising the efficiency), in order to stop the brain drain, and to strengthen the quality of life as well as the economic structure in the model areas.	Bundesamt für Raumentwicklung ARE, Bern (Switzerland)	Armand Monney <a href="mailto:armand.monney@are.admin.ch">armand.monney@are.admin.ch</a>	October 2004	1.2.
<b>DYNALP</b> Dynamic rural alpine space.	DYNALP stands for "enhanced value for nature and landscape for marketing and tourism in the rural Alps". The project encompasses 52 towns and villages. Most of them are members of the "Alliance in the Alps", a network of towns and villages. The towns and villages, which jointly run the project are concretely implementing the Alpine Convention in the following areas: tourism, conservation of nature and the countryside, mountain agriculture and sustainable development and regional planning.	Community of Mäder (Austria)	<a href="http://www.dynalp.org">www.dynalp.org</a>	April 2003	3.2.
<b>CULTURALP</b> Knowledge and Enhancement of Historical Centres and Cultural Landscapes in Alpine Space	The aims of the project are at protecting and enhancing the common alpine heritage, improving the knowledge of characteristic features of historical alpine settlements and promoting integrated sustainable policies for interventions, taking into account different aspects of the cultural, historical, social and economic environment.	Lombardy Region (Italy)	<a href="http://www.culturalp.org/">www.culturalp.org/</a>	July 2002	3.2.



Name	Description	Lead Partner	Website	Approved	Priority/ Measure
<p><b>QUALIMA</b> Quality of life improvement by supporting public and private services in the rural areas of the Alps</p>	<p>The goal of this project is to contrast the process of marginalization and depopulation of the rural areas of the Alps. QUALIMA has defined an innovative approach of goods and services supply and management</p>	<p>Veneto Region (Italy)</p>	<p><a href="http://www.qualima.org">www.qualima.org</a></p>	<p>May 2002</p>	<p>1.2</p>
<p><b>NEPROVALTER</b> Network of the local agricultural production for the valorisation and the knowledge of the Alpine area</p>	<p>The project aims at developing a network of public institutions and farmers in the Alpine Space at a trans-national level, in order to enhance the social and economic conditions of local populations, to preserve the environment of marginal mountain lands and to increase the value of Alpine cultural heritage and traditions with sustainable models. The objectives are achieved by the following intervention: enhancement of the organic livestock production, considering the increasing market demand of these products, support for typical Alpine products, identifying a number of local activities to be improved and sustained in each area, promotion of typical Alpine areas through the development of welcoming facilities for student/groups of interest (didactic farms) and for disadvantaged people (social farms). The results will be the increase of farmers income, the creation of new job opportunities, the application and diffusion of economic models compatible with the environmental quality and the Alpine traditions, the dissemination of the rural and environmental culture especially to young people, the training of new operators.</p>	<p>Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy)</p>	<p><a href="http://www.neprovalter.org">www.neprovalter.org</a></p>	<p>July 2002</p>	<p>1.2.</p>



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Name	Description	Lead Partner	Website	Approved	Priority/ Measure
<b>CRAFTS</b>	The project aims at bringing out arts and crafts through the creation of synergies with tourism in order to train a new profession: the arts and crafts tour operator. After a careful analysis of the traditional activities, rules and regulations will be worked out concerning how to award the title of "Shop of Excellence" and methodologies for the development of synergies among the different sectors will be developed. The activity of animation and awareness-raising have been followed by experimentation, through pilot projects such as the "School Shops", which started up training courses for young people and tourists; the creation of tourist itineraries for the re-discovery of arts & crafts traditions; the exchanges between masters of arts & crafts from partner regions; the organization of thematic trans-national exhibitions.	Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy)	<a href="http://www.alpinespace.org/approved-projects+M5c304ddb1a0.html">www.alpinespace.org/approved-projects+M5c304ddb1a0.html</a>	July 2002	3.2.
<b>ALPINETWORK (ANT)</b>	The goal of the project is to improve and create the conditions for e-Work workplaces in the member regions. These workplaces can be developed in small and medium-sized enterprises or in the form of self-employed work in the area of company-related services. In addition, the differing technological ICT applications in the member regions are analysed and linked; an intensive exchange of know-how occurs and trans-national cooperation among regions can be institutionalised.	Tiroler Zukunftsstiftung (Austria)	<a href="http://www.alpinetwork.com">www.alpinetwork.com</a>	April 2003	1.2

Name	Description	Lead Partner	Website	Approved	Priority/ Measure
<p><b>ALPINE AWARENESS</b> Transalpine Awareness Raising for Sustainable Mobility</p>	<p>Alpine Awareness deals with the provision and dissemination of information about sustainable development in the transport and mobility sector, which are important instruments for the creation and the strengthening of awareness for problems related to the impacts of transport on environment and health. Measures in the field of eco-mobility can only be successful, if they are carried by a strong awareness for the meaning of "Sustainable Mobility" for stakeholders, transport enterprises and the population. The project aims at contributing to sustainable development by reducing traffic-related emissions, thus implementing the strategies of EU and national policies, by taking specific target groups.</p>	<p>Province of Belluno (Italy)</p>	<p>www.alpineawareness.net</p>	<p>October 2003</p>	<p>2.1</p>
<p><b>Regio Market</b> Optimising Regional Marketing and networking for development of a corporate marketing and branding strategy for the entire Alpine Space</p>	<p>The project aims at developing and implementing a corporate sustainable branding and marketing strategy for the Alpine Space based on the available experience within this area. In particular the strategy focused on 3 core economic sectors: agricultural food products, services (tourism and gastronomy) and renewable energies. It will contribute to the promotion of top-quality products and services inside and outside the Alpine Space and to the establishment of a Unique Selling Proposition which will increase the competitiveness and promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises and new business investments within the Alpine Space.</p>	<p>Landesanstalt für Umwelt, Messungen und Naturschutz Baden-Württemberg (Germany)</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>February 2006</p>	<p>-</p>



## 9. Synergies between AlpCity and the Alpine Convention

The Alpine Convention foresees, among others, a new Protocol on "Population and culture"; the objective is to respect, preserve and promote the cultural and social independence of the indigenous population and to guarantee the basis for their living standards, in particular environmentally sound settlement and economic development, and promote mutual understanding and cooperation between alpine and extra-alpine populations. A working group, led by Prof. Annibale Salsa, has been set up with the aim at preparing a thematic framework for a political declaration on this topic: the first step towards the Protocol.

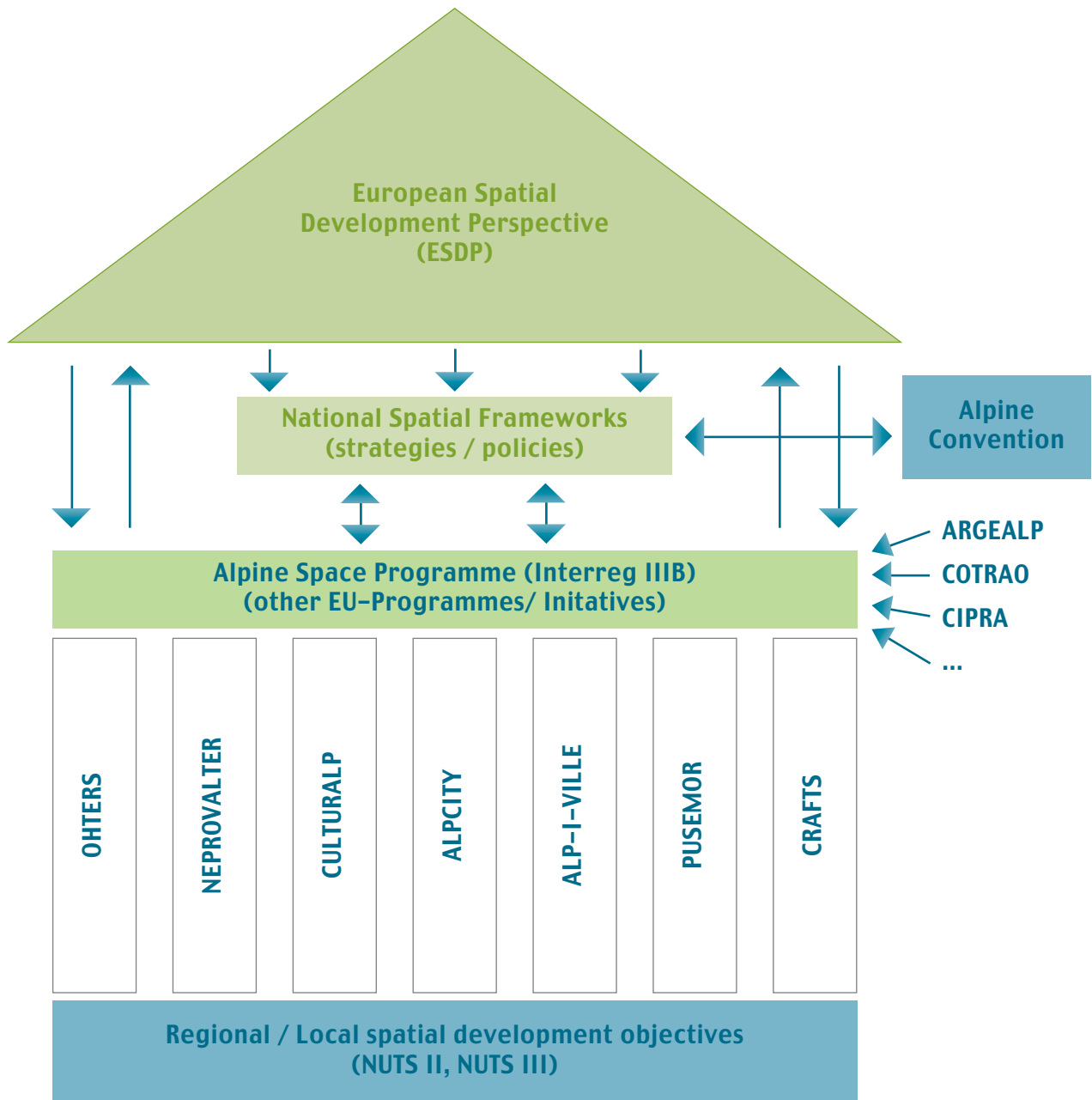
The AlpCity Lead Partner team has been invited to join this working group and to start a cooperation based on the experience achieved through the project. The role of small and medium-sized alpine towns becomes more and more interesting, new settlement models are raising with consequent changes, which influence not only the town but also the countryside. As Prof. Bernard Debarbieux explained, during a session of the Alpine Conference held in Villach on the 26th of April 2005, the decreased cost of means of transport (especially low cost flights) has created incentives for urban citizens to move to small and medium-sized alpine towns creating new jobs and introducing their culture. At the same time they have partially absorbed the local culture: the result is a dynamic cultural model. As regards these transformations AlpCity has the opportunity to contribute inputs derived from its case studies. Another important task would consist in providing the Alpine Convention with the Database on Best Practices of the AlpCity Regional Urban Observatory. This contribution can be seen as a follow up activity of the project and a concrete result of the AlpCity Project.

## 10. The AlpCity overall strategy

One of the aims of the AlpCity Project is represented by the development of recommendations and transferable solutions on major problems of the alpine space through collecting best practices. Establishing a network of cooperation and learning is an intention aiming at providing also the small alpine towns not directly involved into the project with a database of the gathered information. The various case studies implemented within the project deliver a bandwidth of possible approaches to the individual problems of small alpine towns resulting from the current trends the alpine area confronts with. Such as:

- overage population and depopulation,
- increasing disparities in employment,
- growing competition in agriculture,
- growing competition and concentration in tourism,
- europeanization and globalization,
- polarization in central and peripheral areas,
- increasing land use conflicts in central and peripheral areas,
- economic and infrastructural problems

**Figure 3** (The AlpCity overall framework) illustrates where the AlpCity Project is positioned in the overall context and summarizes the above stated explanations.



**Figure 3** • The AlpCity overall framework



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Although the project can be only a rather small source for the development of European and/or national overall strategies and policies, nevertheless it is of great significance and a precious piece of work to contribute to a positive, future improvement of small alpine towns. Politically the participating nations share common views on sustainable development (e.g. Alpine Convention as the “smallest common denominator”). But the speed of policy implementation varies among countries and is mainly determined by the administrative structures (e.g. Germanic area: usually basing on federal structures, Romanic area: usually basing on centralized structures) and the political support. There is definitely the necessity to combine both of them: the bottom-up approach (regional/local polity) and the top-down approach (European/national polity) in order to enhance the efficiency of the common policy measures. At present the different structural conditions and given standards in the alpine countries require a very specific adaptation of the overall policies and strategies.

In order to formulate some policy recommendations it has been very useful, within the AlpCity Project, to face the challenge and enlighten the different national policy-making structures as a first step. It resulted remarkable to answer the following questions:

- Which competences are located on which level (local, regional, national)?
- Who has the power to make decisions on what (spatial planning topics)?
- To what extent do local authorities influence decisions impacting the local and regional level?
- How are the costs divided up into (infrastructure) investments (i.e. who is responsible for financing different investments)?
- Does the budget competence (question of responsibility of financing) have influence on decisions concerning regional (spatial) politics? And to what extent?

After having collected the answers on these questions - as a second step - some policy recommendations have been formulated in order to describe an ideal policy-making structure reflecting the needs of local and regional administrative bodies. Obviously these guidelines outline the relevance of the top-down and bottom-up processes necessary for the successful implementation of the principle of subsidiarity.

## 11. Specific recommendations concerning small alpine towns

Ideas expressed under the title of detailed policy recommendations often acquire the form of a wishful request list. However the AlpCity policy recommendations are based on factual research findings (e.g. an assessment of the AlpCity case studies). This means the analyst concentrated on a limited set of matters necessarily concrete.

The aim of policy recommendations is at improving public policies, which means that they must concern matters that can be influenced in somewhat foreseeable way by decisions and actions carried out by public authorities. Therefore policy recommendations are not useful, if they only concentrate on a fairly unrealistic collection of content with the function of rallying for political support, they should be rather rational and truthful in the sense that they are anchored to empirical research.

In order to maximize the output of the AlpCity Project concerning the collection of best

practices and the finalisation of policy guidelines the existing resources and relevant documents should be sighted, as for instance:

- ESPON Project 1.1.2 (2005): Urban-Rural relations in Europe (this one and other relevant ESPON projects are available at: [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu),
- REGALP: Regional Development and Cultural Landscape Change: The Example of the Alps, Evaluating and Adjusting EU and National Policies to Manage a Balanced Change. Funded by the EU under the 5<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme, Quality of Life and Management of Living Resources ([www.regalp.at](http://www.regalp.at)),  
Nachhaltige Entwicklung im Berggebiet (sustainable development in the mountain area): Künftige Ausrichtung der schweizerischen Berggebietspolitik vor dem Hintergrund des Konzeptes der Nachhaltigen Entwicklung (Future alignment of the Swiss policy of the mountain area in consideration of sustainable development): 2000, Brig ([www.sab.ch](http://www.sab.ch)).

## 12. The case studies methodology

The criteria adopted by the involved partners for choosing the case studies were not based on similarity but on distinctiveness in order to enrich the whole project. Each partner has exhibited interesting features, for example in the logic of methodology and its scope for a wider replication in other regions or national environments (model concept).

During the first Scientific Steering Committee's meeting held in Turin in 2003 the need to find a common denominator among the projects emerged. Projects deal with different topics, have been carried out by different countries and at different administrative levels, with different languages, culture, laws, etc. In order to avoid a set of case studies, which are just a sum of single projects with no relationship among them, the Scientific Steering Committee proposed to base the connection on the methodology. The majority of projects adopted as methodological tool the participation process often combined with networking. In this way the recommendations of the European Spatial Development Programme were put into practice by the project partners through the adoption of a bottom-up approach.

**Participation process:** is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources, which affect them.

This approach is based on the people's participation in the decision-making process since the first steps; it is in contrast with the most traditional top-down procedure, which is based on a hierarchical structure. Bottom-up approaches ensure stronger effectiveness of promoted social/economic/environmental changes due to the commonly shared decision-making process. Within the AlpCity case studies the principle of sharing has always been kept in mind, in order to have a real dialogue among the different actors.

**Networking:** consists in establishing cross-sectorial groups of stakeholders, who find solutions in order to improve opportunities. Common goals and interests lead to enhance synergy and speed up development. Networking at regional, national and trans-national level represents a strategy used in several AlpCity case studies as a tool for wide spreading information and favouring exchange of experiences.



**Model concept:** consists in exporting the project/experience to other contexts and showing the successful project as a best practice. This is the main aim of AlpCity. In each work package there are case-studies, which include model concept as methodology and a specific work package is dedicated to best practices. Becoming a model should be the first aim of a project; this concept has been widespread by UNESCO through the "Regional Management strategy applied by the MAB Programme". Several European regions have adopted the proposed method, which includes participation process and creation of regional networks. The choice of AlpCity to join this approach shows the will to build up concrete proposals based on sustainable development.

### 13. Evaluation of the project under theoretical aspects and the observable global and local processes: the scientific value of AlpCity<sup>(1)</sup>.

AlpCity was a very heterogeneous project which supported initiatives also in very peripheral parts of the Alps, none of them was a city. Therefore the AlpCity Project can be seen as an example of dynamics running partly independent from global macro trends (which strengthen real cities) and also from European spatial planning guidelines (which want to implement strategies of spatial organisation). So, in some way this project eludes from current logics of spatial organisation. This begins with the heterogeneous finding of a common red line and ends with a pragmatic proceeding of each individual case study independently from higher strategic interests.

#### 13.1 The development of sparsely populated regions and small towns in the short run and in the long run

Meanwhile there exists some literature about the development of small towns inside and outside the Alps<sup>(2)</sup>. Furthermore, in the frame of AlpCity a short study was worked out about specifics and potentials of small cities in the Alps focusing on identity and relationship between town and countryside (GUÉRIN, FOURNY, 2004).

##### 13.1.1 Main trend

Nevertheless, the ongoing global main trend has gathered also Europe and shows a direction which is not favourable to sparsely populated regions and small towns. The ongoing metropolisation process has accelerated the differentiation between growing big cities with jobs and high tertiary functions and small and medium-sized towns on the one hand and small and medium-sized towns (SMESTOs) losing their industry and changing to commuter towns on the other. Tourist towns in the Alps up to now have resisted in keeping an own profile but

1) Author: Manfred Perlik (AlpCity Scientific Steering Committee's Expert)

2) E.g.: COMMERÇON/GOUJON, 1997; FOURNY, 1999; PERLIK/BÄTZING, 1999; PERLIK, 2001; PUMAIN, 1999; ELSAS-SER/BÜHLER, 1992; ÖIR, 2006; GAIDO, 1999; TORRICELLI, 2000.



under a strong competition. In general, the economic and cultural structural change has pushed the dynamic of all regions. While the big cities (as Turin, Glasgow, Bilbao) turn from their industrial base to tertiary based steering centres on national or global level, SMESTOs risk to loose old functions without getting new comparable ones (Ivrea, Domodossola, Biel/Bienne etc.).

### 13.1.2 Possible trend reversals

This trend may be seen as an everlasting process which runs since when towns exist. Denise Pumain (1999) explains this with the development of cities by "functional necessity" which may not allow the same number of cities in the future. As this necessity depends on technological progress, accessibility and productivity, it underlies a continued concentration process in time. The process of hierarchy building is explained by the theory of economic evolution (PUMAIN, 1997). But there are ups and downs and towns on decline may regain with a new specialisation after a shrinking and stabilisation process. This development on global level could be observed also in Switzerland. In the long run, productivity grows by ongoing (social and spatial) division of labour, causing a centralisation of regional structures and functions. However, this historic main-trend was broken again and again in the past. We could show for Switzerland that in a relatively long period between the 1970s and the 1990s the regional development was inversed and population and job growth favoured rural areas. (SCHULER/PERLIK/PASCHE, 2004). The decline of agriculture in the 1960s had enlarged regional disparities, which caused since the beginning 1970s discussions about regional and mountain policies for compensation. Those were established by law in 1974 as a societal consensus. In the mid 1970s a first trend reversal occurs: since then, the population growth and the job growth is stronger in rural parts of the country than in its agglomerations. This disproportional growth persists until the end of the 1990s. This is a relatively long period, especially when is considered that since the mid 1970s (after the oil crisis) the societal model of an equilibrated development began to loose its

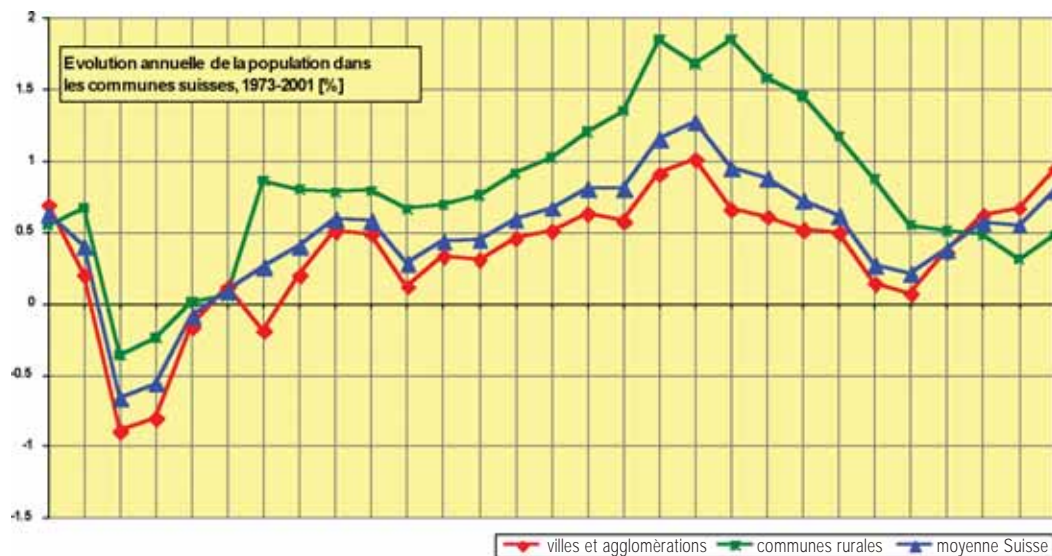
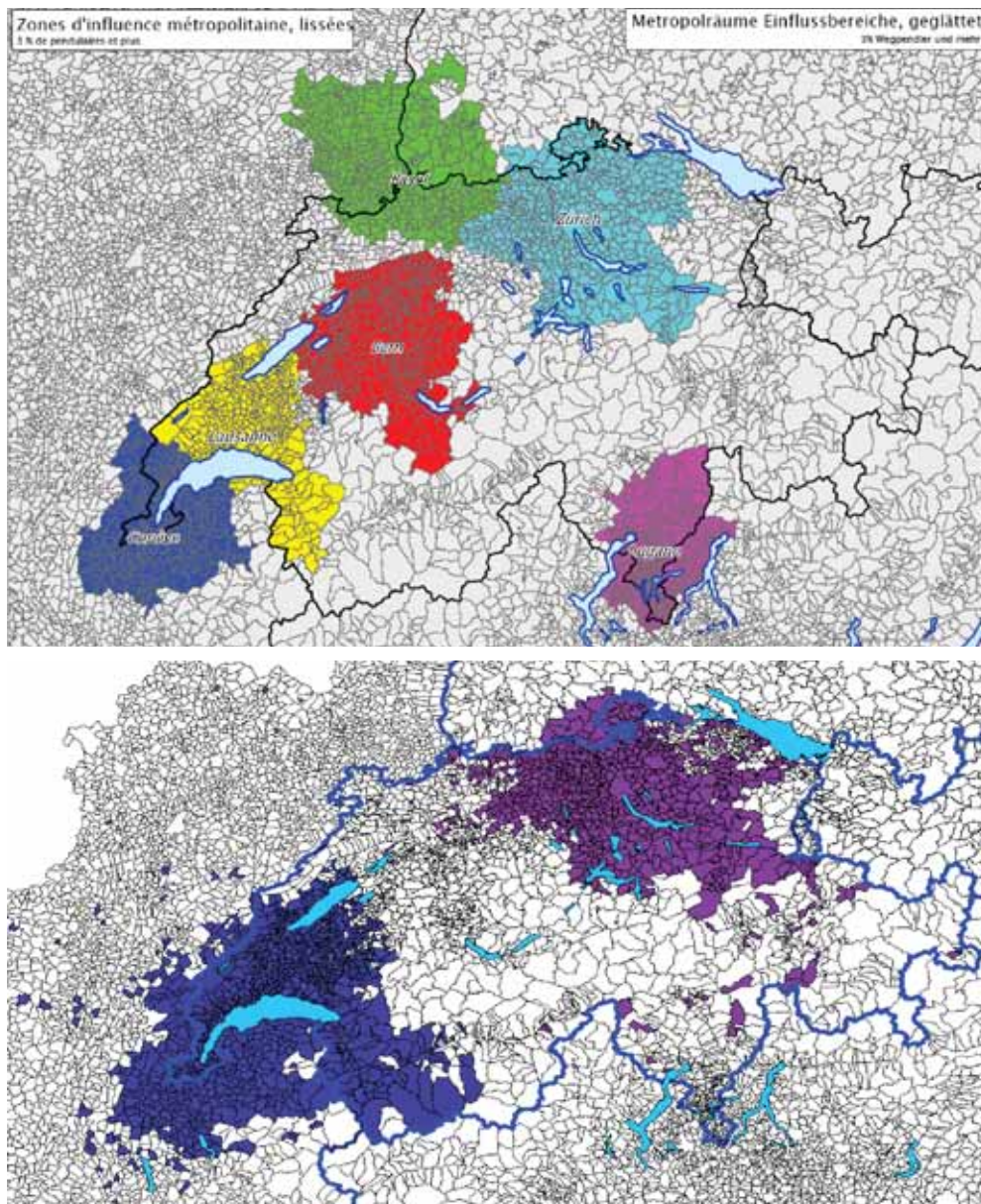


Figure 4 • Yearly evolution of the Swiss municipalities • Source: SCHULER, PERLIK, PASCHE, 2004: 57



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influence and the return to the main trend is announcing. It establishes not until the end of the 1990s, then causing a new trend reversal. Since 1998 growth is shifting towards urban regions and now definitely in favour of the metropolitan areas.



**Figure 5 a/b** • The zones of influence of Swiss metropolitan areas depending on pre-defined metropolises. The thresholds for the inclusion of a municipality into a metropolitan area are in both cases the same (out-commuters from a municipality in one of the 6 respective 2 metropolises). Compared to a demarcation of 12 regional cores there are already missing important towns as St. Gallen, Lucerne or Chur. In the scenario of 2 cores the polycentric structure of Switzerland is wiped out. The (political) definition of metropolises and metropolitan areas is decisive for their expansion in the future, their advantage of location and the centralisation of societal functions. Calculations: SCHULER/PERLIK/DESSEMONTE, 2004 (2a published in BLÖCH-LIGER, 2005).

This tendency can be shown also for other regions in Europe, e.g. the demographic development of Austria between 1991 and 2001 (ÖSTAT, 2001).

The example of Switzerland shows that hierarchies and regional significance is time - and space-dependent, which means that social relations at certain time in a certain space are crucial for the relationships between town and countryside and between towns and economic branches (which are located in certain towns and regions). These relationships constitute a more or less stable regime under which accumulation of value added takes place and under which rules of repartition are established.

### **13.1.3 Today's main disadvantage of small structures**

In the concrete every-day life this leads to a diversification of economic branches, the uprising of new ones and the decline of old ones. It leads to a changing of relationships between regional actors/stakeholders which devaluates old relationships and creates new ones. In this relationships building densely populated regions and especially metropolitan areas have great advantages compared to small ones. Additionally, in the Alps the costs for infrastructure and access, especially its maintenance per capita are extraordinary high. Therefore, actually a tendency can be seen in the most peripheral areas that neither new enterprises offering jobs nor the stabilisation of residents takes place. Furthermore, politicians will to subsidize the maintenance of the whole infrastructure and the traditional public services loses ground (EISINGER/SCHNEIDER, 2005; THIERSTEIN/ABEGG, 2003). This can be explained as an interdependency between a changed regime (change to Post-Fordism) which creates new conditions in social relations and economic functions.

### **13.1.4 New functions for environmentally and culturally attractive small and medium-sized towns?**

Many authors (also GUÉRIN, FOURNY 2004; GAIDO, 1999) state that the special advantages of small towns lie in the special relationships between town and environment, which includes neighbourhood, landscape and natural resources, all together creating identity and quality of life. This leads to the conclusion that a certain specialisation into residence and leisure qualities may attract new functions and inhabitants to small towns suffering population and job decline, a process which is described as amenity migration in the North American literature (MOSS, 2006). Up to now this is still not a dominant phenomenon in Europe and there are many open questions whether this could be a solution for the Alps (PERLIK, 2006). Especially the ongoing character of identification may be doubtful as people, who easily move to mountains to live, may also quickly move away which has also been the case in the pioneer town of amenity migration, Santa Fe in New Mexico (MOSS/GLORIOSO, 2006).

### **13.1.5 Europe between cohesion and competition**

As according to the observable main trends the former density of the city-system in Europe does not seem to be "necessary" any more, there are nevertheless strong reasons to maintain a decentralised structure of settlement and production. When there is no need one may argue that it is in the interest of European development to have a highly functional grid of metropolitan areas by reasons of global competitiveness in the competition of globalisation where existing metropolises are enforced in the European global interest. Europe's big towns and regions



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themselves have a strong interest to stay in this position and do not want to run down as well as the small/medium ones want to escape from the downward twist, both accelerating a competition between towns and regions which makes towns collective actors.

But this argumentation runs too short, as this constellation does not lead to a win/win situation at all. Those who loose ameliorating the chances of the remaining ones and viceversa. Supplementary argumentation is necessary. Denise Pumain (1999) argues with the possible regain of declining cities (see above) to maintain the potential of small towns as much as possible. The European Union sees it under the aspects of maintaining socio-cultural heritage and quality of life, social cohesion and sustainability (ESDP, 1999). The above mentioned example of Switzerland shows that there may be temporal windows with societal constellations in which the stakeholders are favourable to lean functional hierarchies between regions.

### 13.1.6 Conclusion

#### Which interpretation of the ESDP

After all it may be stated that history and political standing of peripheral regions give them a better position than in other continents which is also guaranteed to a certain degree by the policies of the European Union and the "polycentricity" guidelines of the ESDP. But "polycentricity" is not a defined category which guarantees neither the degree of decentralised settlement nor the survival of every local centre or mountain community. On the other hand the constraints of global metropolisation lead European Union to a certain centralisation of its model focussing on topics which should ameliorate Europe's position in the world which was mainly decided at the Lisbon summit in March 2000. Therefore it can be expected that also Europe's "polycentricity" model will get in the next years a centralising push by economic processes as well as European policy.

#### Which role for the small cities in the Alps?

Small towns and regions have the big disadvantage of a lack of critical mass. The problem is not the number of persons but the lack of interactions and networks which is the result of a small population basis. The advantages are at agglomerated structures and cities with high economic or administrative functions. It is observable that near dynamic metropolitan regions the small towns are more and more integrated into these metropolitan regions as it takes place at the alpine fringe in the case of the peri-alpine metropolitan regions as Munich or Milan (already 1990 18% of alpine population commuted in these metropolitan regions; PERLIK, 2001). If the development path runs positively, the development of these towns should lead - after a period of residential mono-functions - to a more diversified economic structure, based on different tourist and non-tourist services. In peripheral regions these problems do not exist but there may be the whole regional structure at risk. In a strategic task, these regions should enlarge existing urban structures (on the basis of existing historical towns) by creating a unifying project delivering identity and regional development potential by offering more high qualified jobs, high level distribution and good primary, secondary and tertiary education to avoid the described brain drain (EGGER/STALDER/WENGER, 2003). To assert this, inter-municipal cooperation has to be enforced especially in those regions suffering actual decline. This task will succeed only when existing structures have not been run down before. Therefore, all measures and instruments (as e.g. Interreg Projects) which help to stabilise the situation are welcome and useful.

## **13.2 In which way does AlpCity contributes to these questions from the scientific point of view?**

### **13.2.1 The value added of AlpCity from the view of the Scientific Steering Committee**

#### **Participation and Best Practices**

The overall main qualities of AlpCity concern the important issues of participation, confidence-building and mutual understanding as well as the cooperation to define Best Practices. Nearly all projects count the participation process as one central element in their agenda. This is especially important as the common alpine interest often is claimed, but in reality often is reduced to neighbouring regions in the same cultural context.

#### **Local development**

On the case study level each region should have got a local value added in the sense that they could have financed issues estimated as important by their own estimation. This is important in the sense of "learning regions" (MORGAN, 1997) where a region changes under the conditions of internal and external pressure. It masters this situation by developing skills and experiences and in adapting its own knowledge on internal and external needs. In this way, the municipality of Tschlin, for example, could gain profit by exposing their local development project on an international arena, getting feed-back and ascertaining their decisions. This makes them able to fulfil there daily tasks in keeping the responsibility for their territory.

#### **Urban development**

In an early state of the project it was clear that there were no city-specific issues in this project as most of the involved candidates were municipalities with less than 10,000 inhabitants which are normally not seen as towns, least of all cities. Therefore the items of "city" and "urban" had creatively to be adapted in the sense of enforcing the urban element. This makes sense as the history of the Alps sees many local centres which were not towns but centres with urban functions and urban culture (as e.g. the 17 diocesan domiciles in the French Alps in Middle Ages). Furthermore many agricultural regions in early times, especially in the Latin culture area can be recognised as "urban" as they were based on community structures in densely built villages with community rules similar to urban constitutions (as decisions about the localisation of the church or measures against the danger of fire). So, the regaining of a someday lost urban element (during the myths of agricultural era) is certainly an important point in the reinforcing of the sparsely populated areas. Furthermore, as the measures in ameliorating the public services and the local offer aim at catching up the gradient to urban standards of qualities of life as it was done in the Lower Austria's case study.

#### **Network of local centres**

The French partner Rhône-Alpes started an effort to unify small centres of less than 10.000 inhabitants in a network to exchange knowledge and to promote own interests towards the central areas. This is an interesting attempt to ameliorate the network basis of small entities and peripheral regions. It was done on the Rhône-Alpes level and brought together common experiences in receiving regional engineering advice. Anyway, it is not yet clear whether it will be useful to enlarge this network building on a supra-regional or even European level. Costs



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and benefits of such an enlargement are not clear and were discussed controversially as these local centres may not get national or international functions which make them to actors on this high level. It would be fruitful to discuss these questions in workshops in cooperation with other existing networks on a regional demarcated area as e.g. "Alliance in the Alps".

### Strategic goals of enforcing small and medium sized towns

Concerning the overall benefit of the project for European spatial development the evaluation is more differentiated: according to the aims of enforcing small cities, the strategic goal of AlpCity should have been to strengthen a polycentric system of small and medium-sized towns (SMESTOs). This goal could not be achieved. Caused by the great heterogeneity of the different case studies AlpCity could not contribute to this goal. Furthermore, the project partners had other interests. As there were no real cities implicated in this project it was soon clear that this task could not be achieved although implicated by the name of the project.

As these aspects are important for the European spatial system, there should be made in future projects more attempts in bringing together SMESTOs. For the moment the AlpCity Project delivers some information about this topic indirectly via its great heterogeneity. In AlpCity the differences between villages, centres, towns and cities remained unclear and therefore also their possible functions in future. Every partner had different visions of polycentric and decentralised development. The typical national patterns were visible:

- Central places concept in Austria
- Focussing on accessibility and infrastructure in France
- Enforcing peripheral mountain valleys (mountain communities) in Italy
- Defending the interests of individual municipalities in the context of a high municipal autonomy in Switzerland
- Defending the rural-tourist image of the German Alps

This reflects that for the Alps in the whole there is still not enough common knowledge about urbanisation processes and strategies to deal with in the direction of a sustainable polycentric spatial pattern in Europe.

## 13.3 Conclusion

Balancing these points of value added, it may be stated that there is at the same time a strength and a weakness: the project in its heterogeneity shows that there is a sort of unpredictability which guarantees the diversity of European cultures and a creative, large innovation pool against all macro-trends of levelling by top down approaches. On the other hand this occurs as a problem as the macro-trends of polarised development are holding on and the European Union has problems to deal with in counteracting deindustrialisation and centralisation. In this situation the contradiction rises between the focus on competitiveness (the big topic at the Lisbon Summit) concentrated in agglomerations and peripheral municipalities which are more and more depending on EU programmes like Alpine Space to get paid their infrastructure. Under the actual trends this contradiction seems to be solved by a higher differentiation and polarisation under the titles of "self responsibility", "subsidiarity" or "devolution". This solution is problematic: it risks the dropping of small entities in regional development. There remains still a missing link in moderating between the autonomous interests of a single region in developing their hinterlands by keeping their own standard of centralised/decentralised

structures and on the other hand the European Union, which has in general, to safeguard a polycentric system but thereby has to accept some more centralisation.

### 13.4 The scientific added value of AlpCity

It has to be stated that it is not the primary goal of an Interreg project to deliver new scientific results. The role of the Scientific Steering Committee was not to get scientific results but to give inputs from the scientific point of view. Whether this task was achieved has to be estimated by others.

Anyway the project delivered knowledge for the scientific process which can be named as scientific value added. This value added concerns questions of interaction, participation and governance. It concerns the issues of dynamics among different partners and the different mentalities of members of the alpine countries. This knowledge is essential for all researchers dealing topics in the transalpine context and confronted with different point of views in perception of the alpine problems and the solutions they offer. This is especially important as those different points of view exist and without knowing and considering them cooperation is not possible (even if the topics should be more homogenous than they were in this project).

The new gained scientific knowledge consists also in the assessment of European regional policies with their instruments to promote European cooperation on the level of the region. The project has shown that European institutions in their legitimate interest to prevent budget abuse have established so much administrative rules that the significance of administration in European projects gets extremely high, creating more qualified jobs in the field of project development than in regional development itself. This may be negligible in the sense that it does not matter which kind of jobs are created when they are good ones. But it is of interest as the projects aim at promoting regional development where qualified personnel is necessary for working in the field which has to be qualified and then should be able to get a job with this qualification - as much as possible in a peripheral region. The disproportion and the dominance of administrative rules also reduce the value added on regional cohesion as they exclude large segments of potential partners as small and medium-sized enterprises or researchers.

A new awareness consists in the necessity for an amelioration of lingual competences in the unified Europe. It seems absolutely necessary that on European level two foreign languages should be established as standard. Thereby it is not satisfying to use the English language as a common language in a context where it is not common as in the Alpine Space with its Latin majority. The project has demonstrated that there is a disproportion between an administration well skilled in the terms of the English nomenclature and partners who have difficulties to express. Once more the English language was degraded to a kind of bad Esperanto. Indeed this example demonstrates some of the advantages of the traditional Swiss system where it is necessary to understand at least passively the language of its neighbour so that it is possible to use the mother tongue with all its refinement being sure that the neighbour will understand it.

## Chapter II “cadrage problematique”

### A. Crisis and resources of the small alpine towns <sup>(1)</sup>

#### 1. Defining a small town

To speak about a 'small town' is to refer to a concept that is on one hand instantly recognisable. Actually, anyone could describe the characteristics and give an example of a small town. However at the same time, difficulties arise as soon as we attempt to qualify what constitutes a small town in a more objective way. A small town is traditionally defined in terms of the size of its population and the economic aspects relating to its functions (the services sector).

Today, however, the prevailing discussion on small towns is often characterised by the acknowledgement of a loss, whether in the services sector or in terms of industrial closures; a loss that public initiatives try to make up as developmental initiatives.

There is a certain disparity - both temporal and spatial - among small towns. In the French Alps, most people living in small towns stay there, the inhabitants do not want to move and the population of small towns is rising. In Switzerland and Italy, the population of many small towns is decreasing. In some cases this has been going on for a long time, in others the trend is more recent like in Switzerland, where rural areas are now in decline after a period of growth (Schuler, Perlik, Pasche, ARE report, 2004).

How, then, are we to establish a consensus on the small mountain town? Might it be that a 'crisis' in small towns is making way for a new spatial discrimination, whereby some towns benefit from being in a favourable position and others remain undervalued?

#### 2. Functional analysis and its limits

Which criteria should we use to determine what constitutes a small town, and what then constitutes a crisis-situation? The traditional analysis of small towns - by geographers, planners and economists - is based on a functional hierarchy. In other words, small towns are placed in a tree-diagram, situated between average-sized towns and rural communities. The key to the tree-diagram is the level of administrative and commercial services. Some services that are (systematically) available in small towns - such as tax inspectors, policemen, medical

1) Authors: Marie-Christine Fourny Kober (AlpCity Scientific Steering Committee's Coordinator) and Jean Paul Guerin.



services, schools, certain specialised shops (e.g. clothes shops, newsagents)... - are never found on the lower level, i.e. in villages. The opposite is true for other 'specialist' services: if they are available in a small town, then that town must be moved up to the next level.

The tree-diagram is functional: many authors writing in the sixties describe more or less explicitly the levels of redistribution between wholesalers and retailers, and between *taille critique* and facilities. (On the French Alps see in particular the theses by G. Armand and B. Barbier).

A territorial dimension corresponds to this hierarchy. The work of economists and geographers on locations - which comes out of the German tradition that can be traced from J.H. Von Thünen in the 19th century, via Alfred Weber, and through to Walter Christaller and August Lösch in the first half of the 20th century <sup>(2)</sup> - inscribed the functional hierarchy within space. The results should in principle allow us to systematise the *pavage* of space.

What is striking in these theories is the primacy accorded the position of a town in an undifferentiated space, constituting the spatial equivalent of *l'homo economicus*. But whatever the objections we can make to this approach, it does show the hierarchical structure of the relationships between villages, small towns, towns and so on. From the point of view of development, it should be taken on board that:

- i) the small town is placed on an inferior scale to the town. In a period that promotes modern urbanisation, this fact does not work in its favour.
- ii) towns maintain vertical relationships with those sites that are on a lower or higher level of the hierarchy - from the village to the local administrative centre to the regional administrative centre - rather than horizontal relationships with those sites that are on its level.
- iii) small towns structure rural spaces, providing them with indispensable 'basic' services without which they would not survive.
- iv) small towns are the driving economic force of rural spaces that now have to contribute more than before to production valuable on a national scale.

### 3. The small town between periods of stability and change

The functionalist theories have often been criticised for underestimating the weight of history. What is called the 'level-size' law, or Zipf's law, shows that over the course of the last few centuries, the hierarchical relationships between towns in a given country have changed either only very slightly or not at all. This signifies an effect of accumulation. It seems that a small town manages to change its status only rarely - either by downgrading or by acquiring the attributes of a town on the next level up - whatever the changes in the economy.

However, mountain towns experience many of the kinds of events that can disrupt urban trajectories. It is for this reason that the case of the small industrial town merits our attention:

2) Barnes, T. J. (2001) "The place of location analysis: a selective and interpretative history", *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 27, 1, pp. 69-95.



the arrival of industry has often had a dramatic impact, sometimes due to the success of a manufacturer, a resource (hydro-electricity), or a favourable economic climate (FIAT and the factories in the Piedmontese valleys). Small administrative towns, essentially military towns (Bourg-Saint-Maurice, Pinerolo) and border towns (Modane, Domodossola) can be added to the list. It is worth noting, though, that whatever else it might bring, such economic investment has not always managed to transform the 'nature' of the small town in any fundamental way. Conversely, if a major employer in a town leaves, this does not provoke a major employment crisis. The 'crisis' does not have the same impact as it would do in a city because the inhabitants of a small town can always emigrate. Paradoxically, the small town's ultimate resource is the fact that it is always possible for the inhabitants to flee to the towns on the next level up. Whether prospering or languishing, the small town therefore retains its characteristics. The changes brought about by the growth in the post-war decades ('the thirty glorious years') have justified analyses in terms of polarisation, in the François Perroux's style. 'Polarised' space refers to a way of organising space in which each space depends on a centre, without a hierarchical organisation of this relationship. The modes of production in the second half of the 20th century have effectively meant improvements in the circulation of information and in mobility, both of which have meant doing away with many relay functions. Distribution chains, which operate from just a few redistribution hubs are an example of this. The division between the living space and the workplace is another, bringing about the peri-urbanisation of space. In these conditions, the small town - from the point of view of a functional hierarchy - no longer makes much sense.

The seventies marked an abrupt transition, introducing structural economic changes, globalisation and a social and economic organisation interlinked with changes in the relations between players on a regional and global level. The position and the future of the town appeared to be linked to its position in the flux, on a local or a global scale. In this context, the small Alpine industrial towns lost out to what were or could be tourist spots. As the flux became international and more homogenous, places such as border towns, railway towns or other relay towns, where development depended a break in communication, were on the wane. In the same way, the function of the 'village' and the rural centre diminished with it now being easier to access the city and its surrounding commercial services.

#### 4. A character study of the small town

Above and beyond the question of functionalism, the scientific literature has addressed - in vague manner - the signification of the small town for those who live there, and for those who do not. In the work of geographers can be found ideas on the nature of the *cité* and its inhabitants that are more of the order of intuition or feeling than of analysis. Literature, like the cinema, has produced a number of texts - mainly novels - in which the small town is treated as a stifling setting for noble action: love, art, mystical impulses. A great number of novels and films of this type take place between the two wars, a period of relative immobility in the hierarchical functional system. We can guess at the link between this system, in which the small town is on the second-from-last level in the socio-spatial hierarchy, and the system of representation of relationships. Put differently, the small town is the province of the provinces, the lowest rung before the countryside.

The situation is, however, slightly different for those countries where space is organised in a less hierarchical way than it is in France, which is itself the result of a strong administrative tradition: hierarchical, hence centralised. In Switzerland as in Italy, people are very attached to the 'Heimat'. But there is not an equivalent term in French, where the notion of 'patronym' - which is the only possible translation - is more masculine, political, or war-like, and corresponds better to 'Vaterland'. Might it be the case that this identification with the land allows the small town to show itself in a positive light; whereby the small town can better assert itself as both the expression of the land and its centre of activity, above and beyond any functionalist determination?

## 5. The new place of the small town

What are the current trends that have come out of these different points of view? On a functional level small towns have changed their supply in terms of services. If we have seen many functions in the commercial and administrative services sector disappear, the small town has often taken on new local functions, making the most of its function as a service provider to the communes in the area. Medical facilities, supermarkets, mechanics, and primary/secondary schools, all form the backbone of a regenerated social and economic life. At the same time, we should consider the problem of employment in these small towns. By definition, any reasonably large business or activity plays an essential role in the activities (and the finances) of a small town. Because of this, there is a latent anxiety around the well-being of the economic motors of local life: the closure of factories, the end of customs operations, the departure of the army are all taken badly, and can cause a lasting slump.

Two factors, however, can alleviate the consequences:

- the mobility of the work-force made possible by improvements in the roads, and sometimes in the railways.
- Often tourism (when feasible) can cushion the effects of widespread redundancy for families: seasonal jobs, earnings from the rental and / or the sale of land. The possibility of intermittent earnings, social networks and family solidarity, the lower cost of housing and travel do not do away with the precariousness of the situation altogether, but perhaps they do make it easier to adapt to and to survive in such a difficult context.

As well as this, metropolisation has markedly changed the order of things. The way big cities have spread out has produced a diffuse urban fabric, absorbing areas of nature and small towns into a network of interdependencies and flux - both social and economic. The town-country or, to use Jacques Beauchard's term, the 'town-mountain', no longer means a hierarchical or spatial rupture. The small town is inserted into a region on a higher level, and maintains close or distant relations with bigger towns or towns of the same size. Exchange, like the value of spaces, is less a question of 'mass' than of accessibility and specialism. Situated at a socially acceptable time-distance, and hence allocated a role in the metropolitan area - whether it be economic, residential, or tourist, linked to an activity or to an agreement - the small town can take on a function within a network.

This leaves the problem of those small towns outside of the dynamics of the metropolis. In an



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economy in which resources are based on exchange, these towns have, almost by definition, no resources. More precisely, they can only hope that a resource be attributed to them by an urban region. Therefore, they can only count on their own capacity to find means of development, rather than waiting for the growth of urban centres, which would turn them into dormitory towns.

The consequence of this exclusion of some small towns is to lessen the potential of the rural spaces that they organise. The inhabitants are even more tempted to look for answers to their needs in terms of services and jobs in the bigger towns, because they are more accessible and offer more choice. And this drop in demand reflects back on the level of supply that small towns can offer, forming a spiral of impoverishment.

### 6. A new future for the small town?

In some ways, then, the crisis of the small town can be analysed not only as a crisis in functional processes but also, more generally, as an 'identity' crisis. For the inhabitants of the rural spaces that it serves, as for the inhabitants of metropolitan areas, the advantage of the small town presents itself in terms of a way of life, residential satisfaction and more generally the plus-value of identity. What do we mean by this? Most inhabitants choose to stay in or to move to a small town for the same reasons as those that lead to a big increase in communes (villages) that can feasibly be lived in. Small towns have in addition to their countryside and 'village-life' image, whether real or imagined, services and in principle easier access to home-ownership. But we also expect small towns to offer a positive self-image: in a context of mobility, of competition between territories and the rise in the number of possible choices, we give priority to a place that is socially fulfilling.

In the same way, we expect the place where we live to give us access to fulfilling social practices: space, countryside, leisure activities, sport, culture, information, education, friendships. Alain Bourdin speaks of an 'urbanisation of ways of life'. Following him, let us say that the relationships we have with the places in which we live are given in terms of 'ways of life'. Which is to say that our demands bear more upon a place's capacity to respond to representations and logics of a cultural and affinity, than to meet strictly material needs, such as jobs or facilities.

From this point of view, we note a certain number of gripes on a number of levels:

- **the inhabitants**

where should they go to get what they cannot get in the small town? Directly to the nearest big town, but they could also go to the small neighbouring town. This presumes that the towns complement one another, possibly leading to different towns having different specialisations. A cluster organisation or network of small towns constitutes in this regard a possible solution. The necessary assets, services or leisure activities would be accessible at the heart of mobility zone, without the town having to grow in size.

How can the decision to live in a small town - and, moreover, to live in this small town rather than that one - be justified? We have raised the question of territorial identity, but the issue is also one of sociability, even one of particular kind of way of life. Can the small town offer

a degree of urbanité and social relationships that are its alone? Is it possible to develop an attachment to a town which is subjective, and which would put a stop to endless moving from one place to another? This type of questioning brings us to the issue of heritage. As well as the material privilege that the requalification of centres or monuments of historical value brings, the creation of heritage sites has the advantage of creating a sense of identity. It participates in the 'construction of a common good', and can thereby create a sense of belonging to a collective, with its own place and history.

- **the elected representatives**

the traditional posture of the elected representative as an intermediary between the population and the administration is becoming a rarity. In the context of the small town in which they were elected, and often in larger geographical organisations, communities of the commune, mountain communities, and all forms of 'territoires de projet', the elected representatives see themselves as players in the construction of a territorial policy. Initiatives no longer come from the top and are hierarchical. Instead, they are multifaceted and originate in the lower, local echelons. The elected representative (the mayor) of the small town very often has a key-role to play between the initiatives of citizens and associations, the expertise of government and the conception of financial plans.

The elected representatives and local government bodies often find it difficult to master all the phases of these new forms of public action. Especially as the small towns do not have the employees or the financial resources necessary to put these projects into action.

## 7. What are the specificities of an Alpine town? <sup>(3)</sup>

By its presence and its landscape, the mountains play an integral part in the formation of identities in an area. Mountains provoke emotional reactions (attachment, indifference or rejection) which, just by being there, enter into the process of identification. The mountain is also at the same time a specific natural phenomenon, a place which brings with it different cultures and intellectual concepts and an inhabited space that is exploited or used by man. More than simply an object of geographical interest, the mountain is in itself a cultural fact. On the one hand, the natural constraints of relief, climate and altitude have influenced the inhabitants' cultural productions (habitat, costumes, savoir-faire, countryside), which have now become part of the heritage industry. On the other hand, the mountain both produces and is the product of values and images now strongly integrated into society.

We can therefore ask ourselves if the mountains can perhaps be a carrier of identity in these small towns and to what degree an identity linked to the mountains can be a factor in the attachment someone might have to a town?

These small towns have development issues that are not necessarily focused upon the

3) This section refers to the DEA thesis of Ms Sandrine Trayssac, *Identités territoriales et développement des petites villes marginalisées de montagne*, Grenoble, IGA, 2004.



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mountains. In fact, the mountains have gone from a utilitarian status (provider of materials, electricity), then restricting (problems of transport, natural risks) to a status sometimes of an economic life-saver with the importance placed on the tourist economy.

In addition, these small towns, which cannot rely on the urban dynamic, have to invent new means of development to continue to live and to support the surrounding area.

The mountains therefore take on a new role in the development of small Alpine towns, as much on an institutional as on an individual level. They have become multi-faceted stakes: a resource for the development of tourism, a setting for a network of towns, a place for new hobbies/leisure activities for the inhabitants, an object of new social representation, a factor of the identity of a city.

A second series of questions therefore concerns the links between small Alpine towns, mountain identity and development: the mountains, because of the feelings of attachment that they provoke, can they not also allow investment, personal or collective projects, which can encourage development? To what extent are the small Alpine towns, marginalized in the mountains, no longer exploited but enhanced by the positive aspects of their surrounding area?

### 8. Opening

In the opening sequence and the introduction to the AlpCity Project, more than in its conclusion, the criticisms of small Alpine/mountain towns in general will also be defined as a criticism of their capacity to reinvent a sense of territoriality. This 're-foundation of a sense of territoriality' refers to a cultural specificity from the values attributed by the society to the mountains.

The problem has little to do with the size, location or urban plan. Above and beyond these differences and these functional aspects, the small town questions its integration into the development climate, when it is not possible to integrate itself through an insertion into the regional urban centres.

This supposes that the town can develop its own means of attraction and make the most of the space which structures it. For the small town is also a local administrative centre, and if the future of the surrounding area depends on the town, it also depends upon its capacity to develop its environment.

The paths to explore are therefore:

- the creation of strong links, on one hand between the town and its surroundings for reciprocal help and synergy and on the other hand between towns to increase what is on offer and their ability to take action.
- the development of a local 'sociability'. The interest in small towns as a living space is today undeniable: in more and more cases, it is a choice of a better quality of life. Despite this, the town must improve the image it gives of itself and its inhabitants, as well as its image in the domains of culture or leisure, which are today the most socially important. There must be a sense of pride in living in a small town! The creation of cultural, heritage and environmental policies are the means by which to do this. But innovations in the political sphere, which seeks the involvement and the participation of inhabitants, are also means to create a sense of belonging and community.

- 'Territorialisation' demands that the small town reinvent its place in the mountain environment. The rejection of the density of towns demonstrates a demand for a different relationship with the surrounding area, for proximity to nature and less prescriptive lifestyles. In this context, the mountains can constitute a resource and offer opportunities for a new form of urbanisation which is both varied and of high quality.

In sum, the keyword that can be applied to AlpCity is that of 'links'. The problem of these small mountain towns, causing their marginality, is indeed a lack of links, be they cultural (in the de-valorisation of local life), economic (through their non-integration into the urban economy), or spatial (through the lack of diffusion of the benefits throughout the surrounding area, the case of tourism for example).

Therefore, these projects share the objective of creating links, in the following areas:

- Development of an identity and internal social structuring (on a local scale).
- Development of the surrounding area and the structuring of the rural zone (on a micro-regional level)
- Development of exchanges and networks (on a trans-Alpine level)

The cultural development of the mountains will also become a means of structuring, in addition to these areas already mentioned.

The projects should therefore be evaluated in light of their capacity to create links, from the values of the mountains and the Alpine area - be they on the level of the methodology (participation, networks) or on the level of the amenities themselves.

## **B. Comments about methodological aspects of projects description and analysis <sup>(4)</sup>**

In a previous document, Mrs. Fourny Kober has mentioned common points between all projects described in the AlpCity Project. All concerned cities seem to be:

- Outside metropolitan dynamics, without economic or social attractiveness.
- Inside local and regional dynamics with a structuring role notably in the field of services.

In this context, those small towns are in front of a triple stake:

- Of integration in global development dynamics
- Of insertion in their local environment
- With a constant worry to adapt their actions to social, environmental and territorial transformations.

Those comments put forward the necessity to approach those problems through a multi-scale approach with special focus on potential and capability of development (sustainable development)

4) Author: Marie Hélène de Sède (AlpCity Scientific Steering Committee's Expert).



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

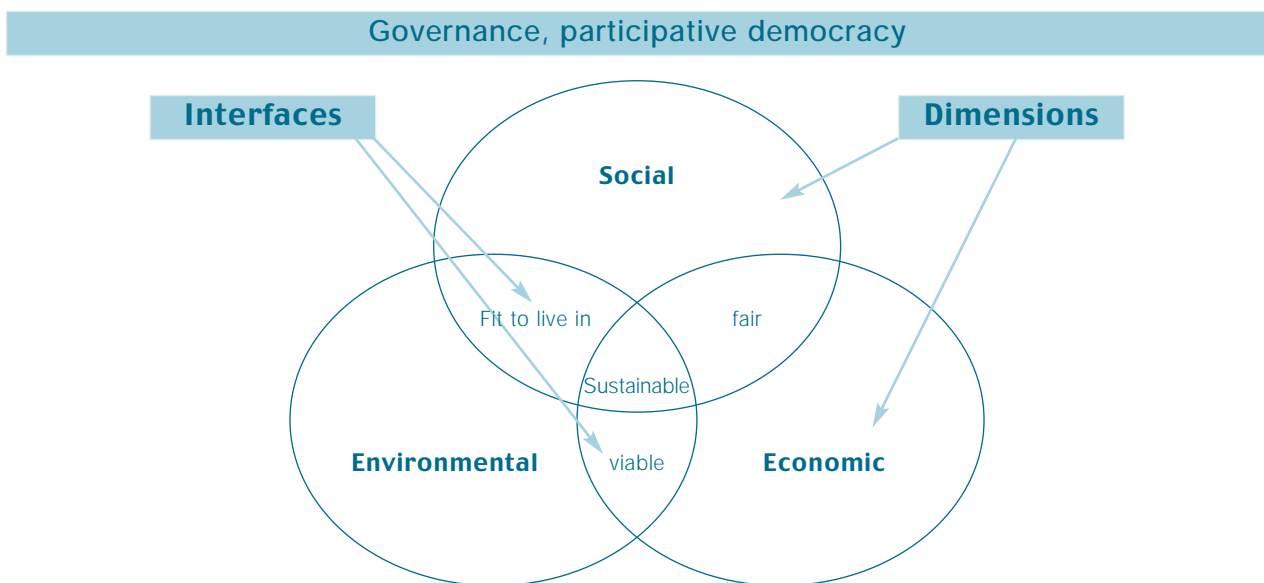
in the Alpine Space. Finally, as mentioned by Mrs. Fourny Kober, objectives are to propose functional but also structural typology for the description of all projects and to refine guidelines. So, to complete the descriptive forms of projects and to propose some guidelines it is necessary to have a good knowledge of all projects in their geographical, economic and social context and to identify differences between them. Guidelines could not be operational without this type of reflection and it seems to be a dangerous approach to transfer experiences without a very good knowledge about geographical, economic and environmental contexts, actors games, objectives, project time tables. As mentioned by Bätzing et al (1996), development in the alpine space is not homogeneous and the tourism do not play a major role everywhere. In this article, researchers pointed out the importance of accessibility and transportation in the development process, identifying different patterns characterised by their own population growth, economic development and environmental problems.

The loco-regional level appears as the most significant level to identify those patterns and to initiate sustainable development projects. The analysis of conditions at regional level can offer a good reference basis to compare projects. Difficulties could occur in the definition of the significant loco-regional context and therefore in the definition of the reference scale in the analysis.

Another dimension of this project is the sustainable development dimension. In the context of sustainable development, it is necessary to rely on three broad directions:

- Social broad direction
- Environmental broad direction
- Economic broad direction.

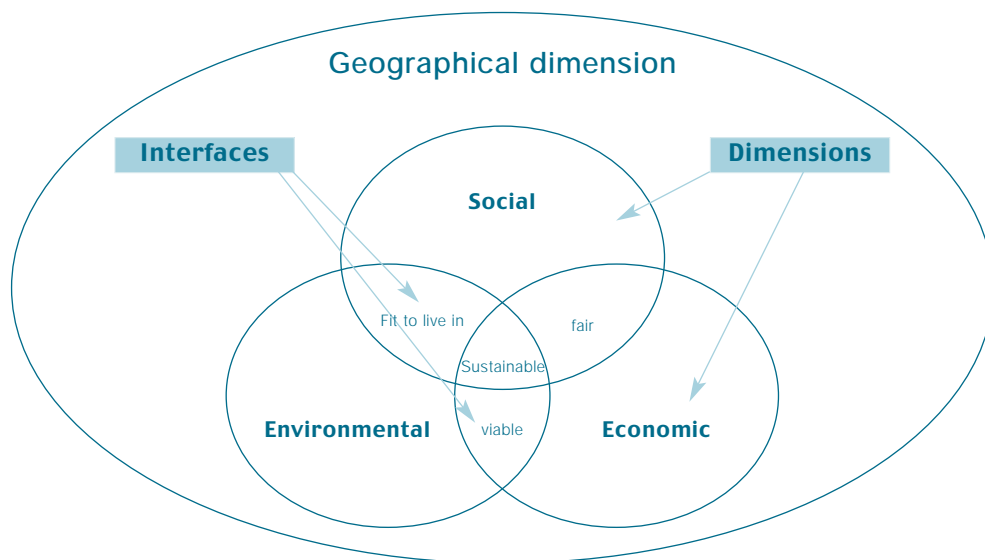
In the projects evaluation procedure, Certu defines those three dimensions and their interfaces. Those interfaces are very interesting because they could permit to decompose the global system and to identify guides to analyse and describe projects. For example, the interface between



• Source: Certu, Grille RST 01, 2002



social and economic sphere could be described with data like demographic growth or housing indicators which are very reactive (leaseholders /owners part, building dynamic, vacant housing). In theory, all those dimensions are equal and there is not hierarchical relationship between them. To complete this system, we could add in the diagram the geographical dimension which includes all other and which represents the contents with place's characteristics, notably in term of accessibility, natural capability, etc.



Today, in the context of the AlpCity Project, it is difficult to take into account all those dimensions only with the information delivered by partners as requested in the form 2 "Description of the concerned territory". So for example, in the brief description of the mountain character within the whole partner's territory, a lot of partners remains very imprecise in their reply. It is the reason why we propose to complete the important synthesis work of Mrs. Alfaré (AlpCity Scientific Steering Committee's expert), a methodological approach and an analysis grid to specify projects in their loco-regional and global contexts, with definition of different indicators like:

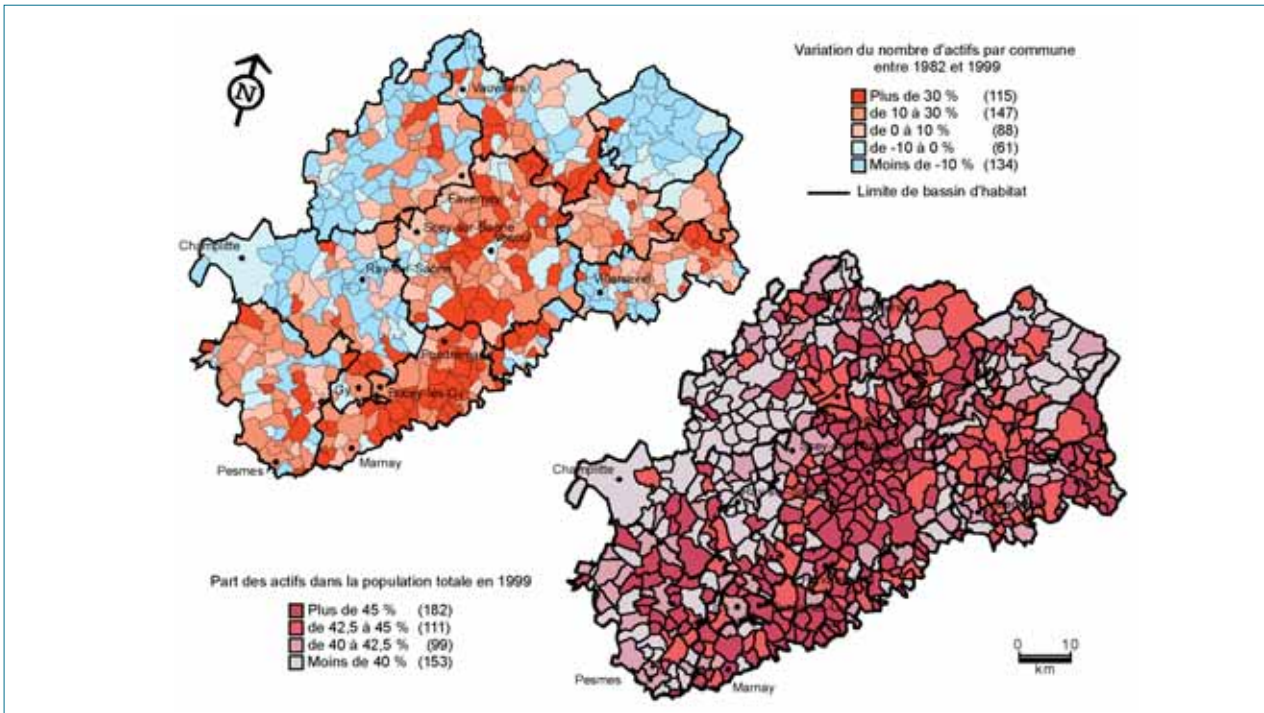
• **Geographical dimension**

- What is the level of consistency of the project? Is it a selective project or does it concern a network organization or a large perimeter?
- Does this project involve a multi-scale approach?
- In what kind of territorial context is this project localised (urban, rural, natural reserve, dynamic regions or depressed zones)? At this point it seems to be interesting to take into account accurate statistical data about demography (population growth rate, etc.), housing. I think that it would be interesting to localise projects on different maps concerning development and activities.

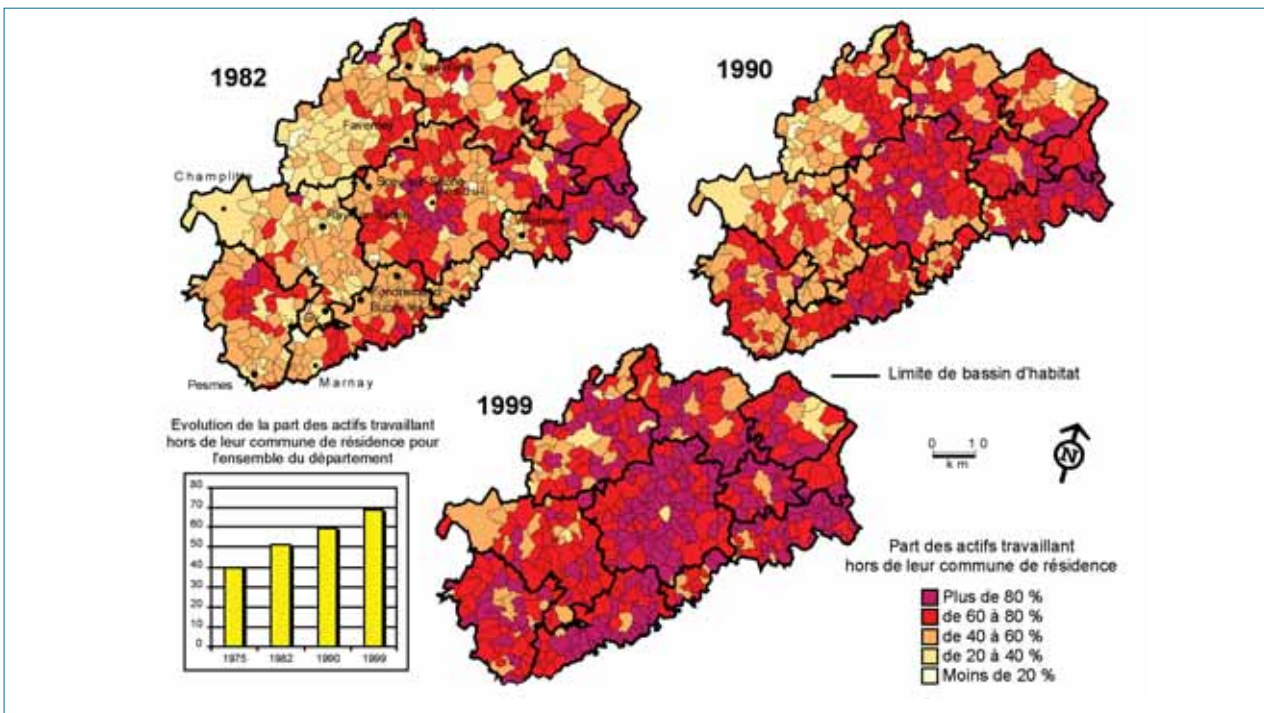
For example, we could localise the cities of the network "Petites cités comtoises de caractère" in their socio-demographical and housing context (see the following maps for cities in the department of Haute-Saône).



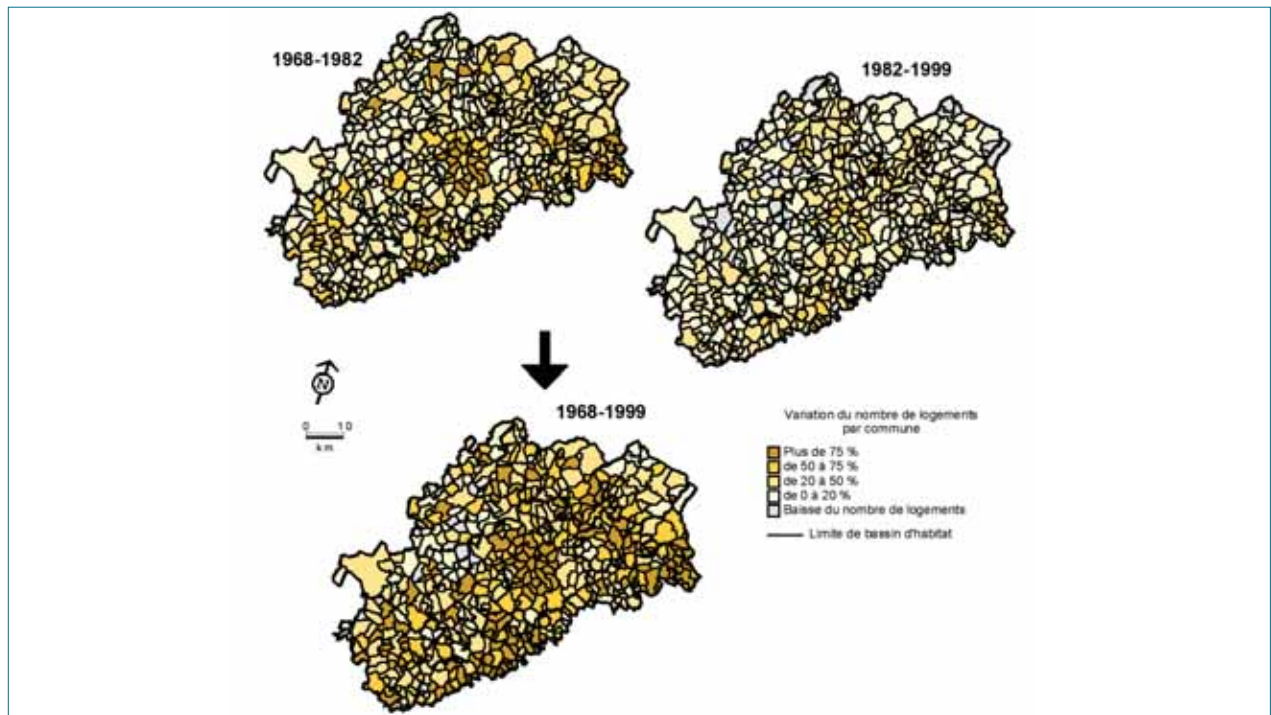
## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns



Adapted for the AlpCity Project. • Sources «Atlas du logement de la Haute-Saône», ADIL25, 2001



Adapted for the AlpCity Project. • Source «Atlas du logement de la Haute-Saône», ADIL25, 2001



Adapted for the AlpCity Project. • Source «Atlas du logement de la Haute-Saône», ADIL25, 2001

- What are the accessibility conditions? Etc.
- **Organizational aspects, expectations, constraints, stakes could be more developed to identify actors' games (les jeux d'acteurs):**
  - Is it a top-down or a bottom-up approach or a participative approach?
  - What is the role of the inhabitants, what kind of decision can they take?
  - What is the role of the actors in the project?
  - Information about the project management ("participative" approach, etc.)
  - Are there local expectations or supra-local ones?
  - What are the aims of the project?
    - concrete ones with operations like technical assistance, preservation, rehabilitation, etc.
    - Incitement
    - Is it a directive project with different obligations for local authorities?
  - What is the job distribution (steering committee, technical committee).

This type of information could permit to complete data in the partners and case studies forms. According to the author, a solution to make comparisons among the case studies and at the end to propose guidelines, consists in defining a set of accurate indicators of context and of dynamics. For this kind of methodology two problems arise:

- the problem of the comparability of statistics in the context of trans-national projects. One of the roles of the scientific committee is to give methodological directions to solve this problems and to furnish a global analysis grid filled both by partners and by local and regional studies.



- the problem of the delimitation of an adapted scale for the territory qualification. The case studies of the AlpCity Project are very heterogeneous from this point of view and it seems impossible to think about only with one scale of reference.

### C. The problems of the alpine village in their regional manifestations <sup>(5)</sup>

#### 1. Diversity and common ground of the issues affecting AlpCity

Even if it is possible to formulate in general terms the problems facing small alpine towns, the global objectives of AlpCity still have to fit in with particular local situations. The evolution of these small towns seems in effect to be connected to numerous important contextual elements:

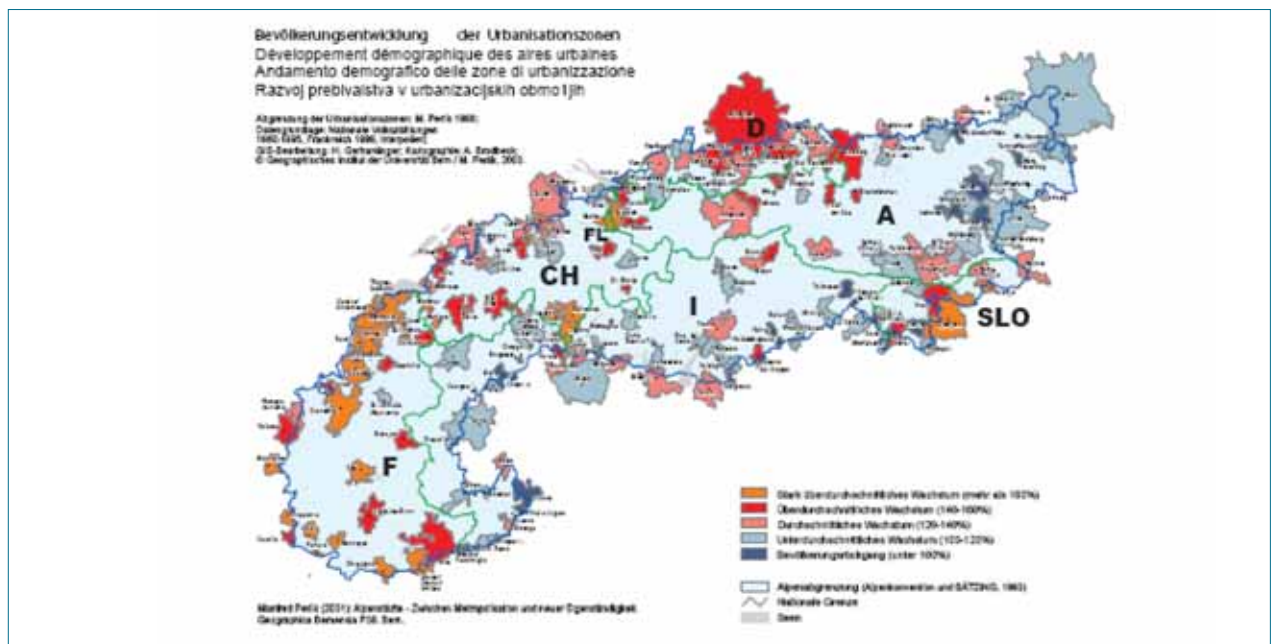
- **Geographic situation:** many large-scale analyses undertaken in recent years (Bätzing/Perlik/Dekleva, 1996; Perlik, 2001; Pfefferkorn/Egli/Massarutto, 2005 - REGALP, 2004 <sup>(6)</sup>) show higher dynamism at the Alpine fringes compared to the interior; higher growth in the western regions (with the exception of the Piedmont mountain areas), especially Switzerland and the French northern Alps which are well integrated into the dynamics of European urban areas; and stagnation or decline in the east (Slovenia, Friuli Venezia Giulia). On a small scale, the tourist regions were often run better than the industrial and agricultural regions, even though they are located at lower altitudes.
- **National and regional planning systems:** in accordance with legislation and institutional organisations, the mountains are not covered or managed in the same way. The local development capacity evidently differs according to context. The capacity is affected in two ways: by a difference in means (subvention policies, financing) and by a difference in competences. Compared with the situation in federal countries, for example, the French regions until now have had barely enough weight to formulate policies affecting the mountain regions. An important role is also played by contrasting concepts of regional planning and of regional compensation as opposed to self-reliant subsidiarity. (ROREP, 2003; Perlik M., 2004).
- **Contrasting mountain cultures** of which the policy differences are merely a reflection. The Germanic approach is generally diametrically opposed to the approach of Romance-speakers. For Switzerland, the mountains up to the present day have been closely linked to national identity, while in a centralised country such as France they have long been confined to the edge. This fact has not been unconnected to planning concepts: until the last few years, planning in France responded to questions of productivity and economic competitiveness, while in Switzerland it has fitted in with patrimonial concerns of defence and conservation.

5) This part was edited by Marie-Christine Fourny Kober, but includes information provided by the partners on their respective regions, as well as that of various experts (Luigi Gaido on Piedmont; Manfred Perlik on Austria, the Valais and Upper Bavaria; Pascal Bérion and Marie-Hélène de Sède on Franche-Comté).

6) See map 1 and map 2 (see pages 60-62).

- **Spatial scales of authority:** in countries where a national authority can marginalise an economically less important region, the local authorities have to do with the regional status quo. The development issues depend, therefore, on the level of government which defines them.

On what level, then, are the issues for a small mountain town? Certainly it's a local one, as the town itself which is confronted with the task. It's regional too, inasmuch as the vitality of the main local population centre determines the quality of life and the economic and social development of all mountain areas.



Map 1

Today it's European too, because small towns - by offering an alternative to urbanisation - determine the sustainable development of the alpine area. But these issues are not given much thought at the level of urban regions, on which they are nevertheless dependent. Level is important generally in defining the issues, but it also plays a part in the organisation of a project such as AlpCity. In effect, the way in which each partner deals with Interreg, defines their own problems, comes up with solutions and utilises AlpCity, varies depending on their own institutional level. In the AlpCity Project, we thus find partners from extremely different institutional levels, from the region to the small town, from an entity with great authority such as an Italian region to a small entity of a few hundred inhabitants such as Tschlin. These differences of institutional level have their disadvantages as well as their advantages. The lack of homogeneous situations makes it difficult to apply a procedure of real scientific analysis which would include the development of a solid comparative framework. On the other hand, it does allow us to determine the extent and the diversity of this problematic landscape in all the variety of its contexts and also the interplay between the levels - from the issues of local development which will take the form of a strategic project (such as in Saint-Maurice) to the problems of regional planning which focus on the spatial structuring of small towns (such as in Rhône-Alpes). The questions which were expanded on in the previous chapter showed that the diversity of



regional situations can be encompassed by certain common problems which take the processes into account. This diversity should be made all the more explicit so that the effects of context may be clearly identified. This is the aim of this second part. In this chapter we will attempt to give an account of the heterogeneous contexts of the cases analysed in the AlpCity Project. We will be able to go into the questions in more depth by tackling the question of the small town in all its concrete aspects and its diversity of form. We will also see the extent to which the diversity of local problems and expectations of the AlpCity Project can fit into a framework of coherent analysis and contribute to a response to scientific issues thrown up.

## 2. The geographic and institutional contexts of small alpine towns

### 2.1 Brief description of the character of the mountain areas in each partner's territory

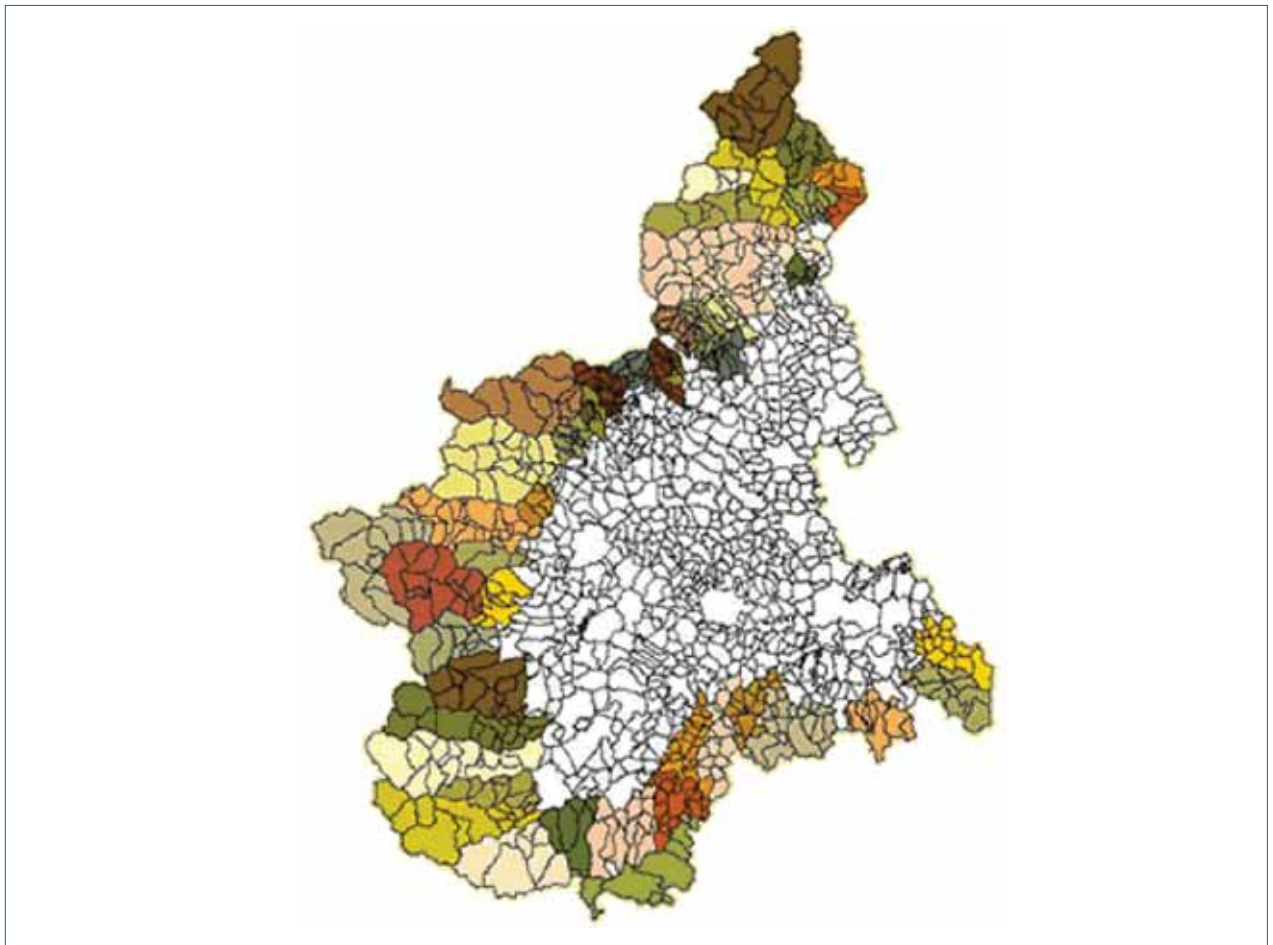
#### 2.1.1 Italy: Piedmont, Lombardy, Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG)

The role of the mountains has a strong similarity in these four regions. Differently from Aosta Valley or Trentino Alto Adige, they are not entirely mountainous regions, but large ones which extend from the plains to the mountains. As the table below shows, the mountainous portion (defined as being areas more than 600m above sea level) of the regions' total areas ranges from 31% in Veneto, 34% in Piedmont and 43% in Lombardy up to 57% in FVG. The proportion of mountain townships is similar: more than a quarter in Veneto, reaching almost half in FVG.

	Total mountain townships	Partially mountain townships	Mountain township total	Total townships	Mountain surface	Total surface	Mountain population	Total population	Mountain communities
Piedmont	504	27	531	1.206	1.316.620	2.539.997	662.091	4.289.731	46
Aosta Valley	74	0	74	74	326.339	326.339	120.589	120.589	8
Lombardy	530	13	543	1.546	1.032.322	2.386.280	1.225.264	9.121.714	30
Trentino Alto Adige	339	0	339	339	1.360.697	1.360.697	943.123	943.123	19
Veneto	119	39	158	581	588.588	1.839.067	405.062	4.540.853	19
Friuli Venezia Giulia	84	21	105	219	447.102	785.497	175.732	1.188.594	10
Liguria	167	20	187	235	441.802	541.817	343.043	1.621.016	19
Emilia Romagna	95	29	124	341	852.039	2.212.285	358.237	4.008.663	17
Tuscany	114	43	157	287	1.086.687	2.298.713	515.505	3.547.604	18
Umbria	64	21	85	92	728.860	845.604	531.120	840.482	9
Marches	103	21	124	246	571.873	969.451	307.442	1.469.195	13
Latium	174	65	239	377	760.895	1.720.792	737.019	5.302.302	17
Abruzzo	200	27	227	305	835.087	1.079.781	484.800	1.281.283	19
Molise	111	12	123	136	349.153	443.764	233.742	327.177	10
Campania	196	102	298	551	761.360	1.359.262	747.560	5.782.244	27
Abulia	26	35	61	258	479.609	1.937.226	355.231	4.086.608	5
Basilicata	106	9	115	131	712.220	999.438	403.075	604.807	14
Calabria	218	68	286	409	991.578	1.508.032	752.950	2.043.288	25
Sicily	102	83	185	390	943.457	2.570.302	662.055	5.076.700	0
Sardinia	215	19	234	377	1.793.774	2.408.989	836.687	1.648.044	25
Italy	3.541	654	4.195	8.100	16.380.062	30.133.333	10.800.327	57.844.017	350

**Table 1** • Mountain and total townships, territorial surface, resident population and number of mountain communities by region. Year 2000. • Source: Unione nazionale comuni comunità enti montani e ISTAT, *Annuario Statistico Italiano 2002* (updated April 2003)

As in most mountain areas in the West, the population distribution is exactly reversed. The overall mountain territory accounts for a population of over 2,300,000 in these four areas, but this represents only a small part of the total population (around 15% in Piedmont, 13% in Lombardy, 15% in FVG and just 9% in Veneto). This situation is reflected in their economic clout: the mountainous areas lost most of their economic and cultural role during the industrialisation and urbanisation processes of the 19th and 20th centuries.



**Map 2** • The mountain communities in the Piedmont Region • (Source: Piedmont Region)

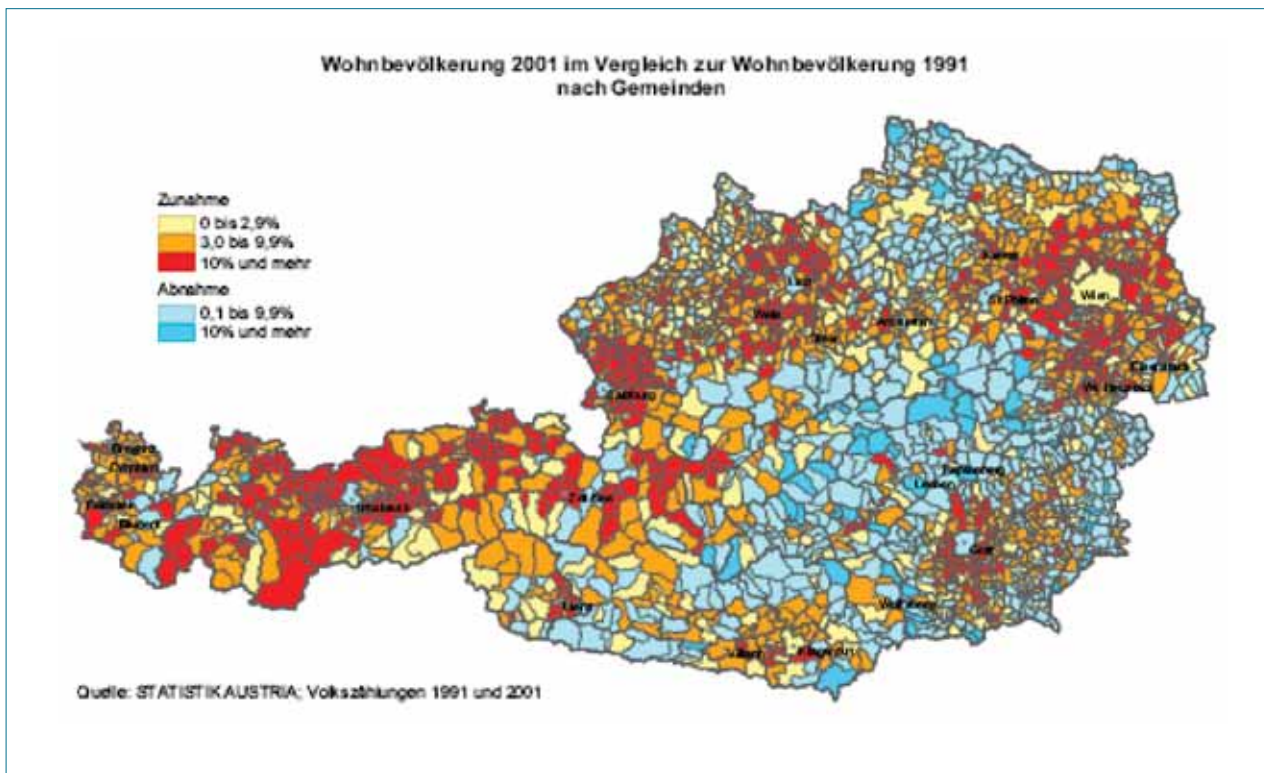
## 2.1.2 Lower Austria

The mountainous regions of Lower Austria are located in the western and southern part of the country. The eastern Alps end here at the banks of the Danube. East and south of Vienna there are rather flat areas at 200 metres above sea level; the north-eastern part (Weinviertel) consists mostly of hills up to 500m, the north-western part (Waldviertel) is covered by forest and extensive agricultural land up to 1000m while the southern and south-western areas reach altitudes of more than 2000m. Approximately 40% (600,000 people) of the population of Lower



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

Austria lives in mountainous regions. The mountains present a difficult obstacle to transport, especially to the southern parts of Austria. But until 1990, the alpine areas were in much better shape than the lower, hilly Waldviertel outside the Alps, due to strong industrialisation in the Alps. Since the 1990s, demographic development has been concentrated in the flat central areas of Austria, reflecting economic and socio-cultural change (Statistik Austria, 2001). On the other hand, many municipalities on the eastern slopes of the Alps are developing as suburbs of Vienna through ongoing urban sprawl due to the growth in second homes (SEGER, 2003).



Map 3

### 21.3 Rhône-Alpes

The Rhône-Alpes region is situated on three massifs - the Massif Central, the Jura and the Alps - which represent 73% of the territory of the region and almost three million inhabitants (according to the administrative and legal definition of a mountainous area). In the west, the slopes of the eastern edge of the Massif Central extend from north to south and mark the watershed between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. In the north-east of the region, the southern part of the Jura extends from the river Valserine - to the east of which the Crêt de la



Neige rises to a summit of 1718m - to the foothills of the Revermont and to the historical region of Bugey, sloping more gently. Thus it cuts off the arrondissement of Gex from the rest of the region, effectively moving it closer to Geneva.

Separated from the Jura by the Rhône, the alpine massif, for its part, occupies more than a third of the Rhône-Alpes region. It remains accessible due to the many valleys which leave the north-south axis, following the rivers (the Rhône upstream from Lyon, the Isère and the Drôme) and giving rise to a major offshoot (Faucigny, the Arve Valley, the Tarentaise Valley, Maurienne, the Drac Valley, the Romanche Valley). The alpine relief develops progressively from a low-altitude area which constitutes the foothills of the Alps (the Savoie foreland region, the Diois massif, the Baronnies massif, etc.), then to medium-sized mountains (Chablais, Aravis, Bauges, the Chartreuse massif, the Chaîne de Belledonne, Vercors, etc), finally rising to high-altitude massifs of crystalline rock.

The mountain relief which dominates the region has had an effect on the population distribution across the Rhône-Alpes territory: almost 80% of the region's inhabitants (or about 4.3 million people) are concentrated on 10% of the land.

There is great disparity from one region to another, however. The northern alpine districts possess a certain vitality whereas the Massif Central's population is in further decline. The highly urbanised Sillon Alpin region and Jura - which benefits from Geneva's proximity - are the richest areas in the region. The consequences of this are easy to see: the latter two regions are experiencing great pressure towards urban sprawl, whereas the most isolated regions are experiencing simultaneous demographic and social crises.

Territory	Demographic change (% in the period 1990-1999)	Inhabitants' annual income per capita (€)
Rhône Axis (outside mountainous areas)	+ 0.65	17,100
Jura (mountainous)	+ 0.87	17,600
Massif central (mountainous)	- 0.15	15,000
Ardèche (mountainous)	- 0.12	13,700
Drôme (mountainous)	+ 0.71	13,700
Sillon alpin (mountainous)	+ 0.92	18,200
Alps (mountainous)	+ 0.69	16,920

**Table 2 • The diversity of the mountain areas of Rhône-Alpes** • Source: CEDDAET, *Document pour la définition de la stratégie montagne de la Région Rhône-Alpes*, Chambéry, 2006

## 2.1.4 The Valais

Except at the mouth of the Rhône, this canton is cut off from its neighbours by a chain of high mountains (there are 51 peaks above 4000m within the canton's territory) which can be crossed by high-altitude passes (Simplon, Great St Bernard, Grimsel, Furka, Nufenen) which are often closed in winter. Communication has been made easier by the construction of long railway tunnels (Lötschberg, Simplon, Furka) and road tunnels (Great St Bernard). Tourism plays an important role in the local economy as the Valais is home to many well-known winter sport resorts.



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

Less well-known is that this region is also strongly industrialised due to the early use of hydropower for electricity which increased raw-production and finishing of aluminium as well as chemical mass production now it is turning to life sciences. The hydroelectric industry occupies large areas and contributes by paying production fees to the local economy (its importance for jobs was mainly limited to the construction period); this industry was mainly responsible for improving the road infrastructure, sometimes enabling for the first time access by motorised vehicles to communities far beyond. But nowadays it is rather the withdrawal of public and territorial services (railway and military personnel) which makes municipalities search for other economic fields such as tourism.

At the moment there is strong functional division driven by topographic location: on the high ground and on terraces, prosperous sun-drenched tourist municipalities have been developed in the last thirty years. The medium-altitude sites of this very steep region are commuter municipalities and the valley floor is urbanised.

The region is divided historically into a French-speaking Lower Valais and a German-speaking Upper Valais, which touches on questions of local identity and constitutes a very special rapport between cooperation and separation.

### 2.1.5 Upper Bavaria

Germany's portion of the Alps is only small. Compared to the other Alpine countries even this is disproportional as the Alpine Convention's demarcation in Germany took whole districts as the criteria for inclusion while in other countries it was done by municipalities. Furthermore, the districts are especially large as they were merged in the 1970s. So large areas of the German Alps belong to the foothills which are connected with the glacial outwashed plains. The summits culminate at the 2965m Zugspitze. Upper Bavaria is the most densely populated area of Bavaria and with the regional capital of Munich (outside the perimeters of the Alpine Convention), and with a GDP of 31,000 per inhabitant it belongs to one of the most prosperous regions in Europe. The proximity of the capital to the Alps assures a high provision of infrastructure and services and also a high distribution of regionally produced added value to the peripheral parts. Nevertheless, as this part of the Alps is relatively densely settled, there is an elevated risk of natural hazards.

### 2.1.6 Franche-Comté

Franche-Comté is a small region, by both area (3% of the national territory) and population (1.12 million inhabitants). Its economy contributes just 1.7% of France's GDP. Industry has left a strong impression here and the inhabitants are very productive workers.

It's a territory marked by a real situation of marginalisation, of being a stop-gap, and the region draws its identity from this situation. In concrete terms, it has been shaped by the historic presence of borders: the Swiss border to the east, but also the less material border created by the "diagonal void" to the west, which refers to the western edges of Haute-Saône. The territory is strongly characterised by the presence of a transition between the "low ground" to the west and the "high ground". i.e. the mountains, to the east. These topographical differences are accompanied by very distinct differences in climate and landscape which highlight the cultural and social transitions.

Because of this, the region comprises nuances which are expressed through a great many indicators; while the region is not poor, it cannot be said to be rich either. In short, the region benefits from an environment which does not constrain it too much (Jura is said to be a "medium" mountain), but which is quite rigid nevertheless. These facts can clearly be seen in the organisation of farm production. In this regard the facts show up paradoxes which are caused by the skill of man. Mountain agriculture has at its disposal greater vitality than agriculture on the plains because it has been able to compensate for the constraints of its environment by orientating itself - by necessity - towards activities with a higher added value such as raising cattle and producing the long-lasting cheeses which are a local speciality.

## 2.2 Structure of the towns within the region

### 2.2.1 Italy: Piedmont, Veneto, Lombardy

#### a. Piedmont

According to Census 2001, the regional population is 4.214.677. The major towns are: Turin (865.263), Novara (100.910) and Asti (71.276). The region is generally dominated by the regional capital, Turin, which grew very large in the 1950s and 1960s due to the processes of industrialisation and immigration from south and east (see map 4).

Turin is still the fourth largest town in Italy but has suffered population decline in recent years, mainly to the benefit of the countryside (de-urbanisation), but also to other parts of the country and due to internal demographic decrease. The town is undergoing a de-industrialisation process, mainly connected with the crisis of Fiat and of other major industries.

The Piedmont Region has a very high number of local authorities (1,206 out of 8,101 in the whole of Italy). Many are small: the region is home to 18% of local authorities in Italy, many with a population of less than 5,000.

#### b. Veneto

The Veneto Region is characterised by a polycentric urban structure, with small and medium sized towns (between 100,000 and 300,000 inhabitants) with a fairly high standard of living after the change-over from agriculture to industry and problems relating to the lack of services and urban infrastructure, the ageing of the population and recent phenomena of immigration. The structure of the urban mountain centres is characterised by mixture, comprising old and/or historic buildings, with some modern buildings here and there, which generally rather clash with the old buildings in terms of architecture and size (i.e. they are much bigger). In addition, during the Second World War, some renovations were carried out with some completely inappropriate architectural details.

The small Alpine centres are also not very accessible, have few services and little infrastructure. Hence many people leave both the towns and neighbouring areas and the remaining population grows gradually older, buildings are not maintained and the historical heritage declines, particularly when income can be generated.

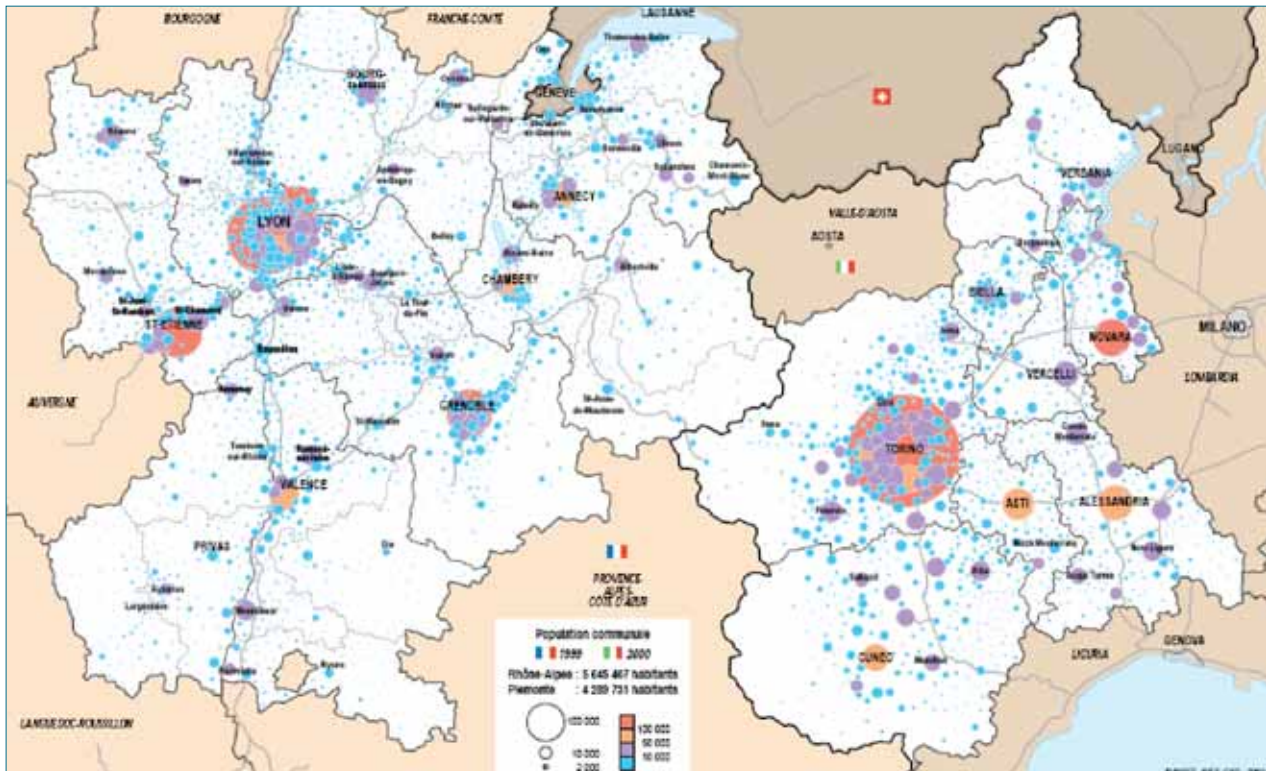
Though they were once independent, largely farming communities with little contact with the outside world, since the Second World War economic developments elsewhere - urban developments in the valleys and lowlands - have isolated the areas, making them remote and destroying their economic viability. The economy is currently based on the production of



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

spectacles, which, however, is now facing tough competition from Asian countries, threatening employment.

Winter and summer tourism does exist but the levels are poor, with inadequate and uncompetitive services compared to other resorts in the Alps (Ampezzano, Val Badia or Val Pusteria for example). Therefore tourists are few and far between, and growth is hampered by poor services and facilities.



### c. Lombardy

Regional organisation is characterised by a polycentric urban system both in Milan's inner city area and in the Lombardy Region.

On the plains belt and on the sub-mountain belt crossing the region from east to west there is a higher concentration of population and productive activities, with peaks in Milan area and along the ways connecting the regional capital to Varese, Como, Lecco and Bergamo. In the low Padana Plain there is a substantial persistence of agricultural activity. Along the lake shores and in middle and great mountain centres a strong tourist activity is reported. Ancient Urban cores are characterised by the phenomenon of demographic decay, a lack of infrastructural and services systems, and a population of which 20% are over 64 years of age. In the rural mountain area, we can note the presence of handicraft functions with historical value. (i.e. "Pietra Ollare" processing in Valtellina). These areas have always been at the edge of historical commercial roads. They now show a shortage in commercial distribution and neighbouring services systems.

## The effects of metropolisation on the alpine towns: some indicators related to Switzerland and the central-western Po Valley

Gian Paolo Torricelli

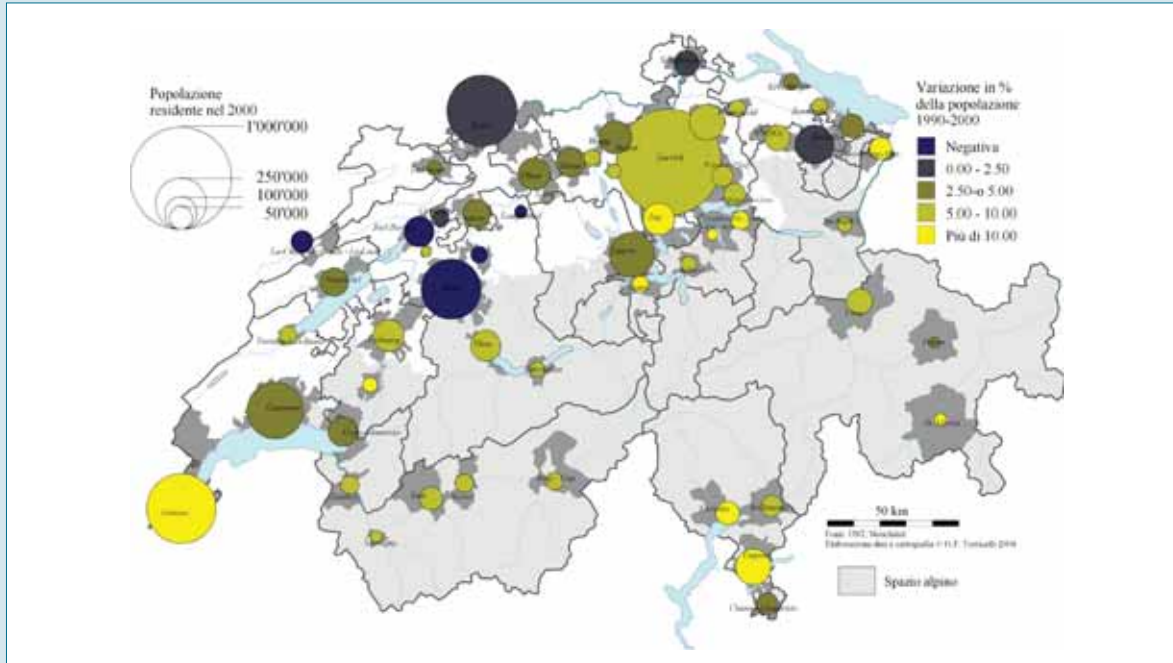
### The relationships between town and mountain in the '90s: the case of Switzerland

For some years the studies on the contemporary urban development have been inclined to show the increasing influence of the metropolitan areas on the surrounding peripheral ones, by assuming, at the same time, a growing role for what concerns the spatial development of national territories (Ascher 1995; Veltz 1996; Sassen 2003; Scott 2001). This is the case of the European metropolises situated in the marginal alpine and pre-alpine areas. In Switzerland (where alpine mountains take up more than 60% of surface) the vital, employment and income statistics outline two relatively new and antithetic trends: an acceleration of economic activities concentration in the metropolitan regions of the upland (mainly in Zurich, Basel and Geneva) and the spread of population also in peripheral areas not particularly dynamic (and sometime experimenting an economic crisis), like in the alpine and pre-alpine small and medium-sized agglomerations (figure 1 and 2). At the same time a real transformation of the political-economic environment is clearly observable through the shift from a development model, marked by protection forms of the local markets and wealth redistribution from centre towards periphery, to a model matured with globalisation, where thanks to the trade flows deregulation some important concepts come out like competition and competitiveness among regions (or big cities), while the protective barriers in the local markets tend to fade and the mechanisms of redistribution are inclined to be substantially transformed (Torricelli 2001). All these aspects belong to a general process named *metropolisation*, which charges the big metropolitan regions with a key role in the economic management of national territories. In fact *metropolisation* indicates very often spontaneous phenomena concerning the polarization of growth, wealth and economic power in some big cities and clashing with the diminishing economic opportunities of the alpine and pre-alpine areas (Perlik 2001; ARE 2005). In short the main consequence of the opportunities disappearance has repercussions on mobility. Still in Switzerland the percentage of employed, who daily went to work from the alpine area to the big cities of the upland increased from 10% to more than 15% between 1990 and 2000. On the contrary, the percentage of people going from the upland towns to the alpine area has not increased during the last decade (figure 3). In spite of the unemployment problems, this development has given a further spur to the growth of small and medium-sized agglomerations, mostly through the *peri-urbanization* processes related to the increasing demand for daily mobility. In the most easily connected to big cities alpine towns, peri-urbanization has to be considered as an external effect of *metropolisation*. Within this process, together with the disappearance of mountain economic opportunities, mobility and transport facilities (mainly highways) became the most important tool of demographic development in alpine and pre-alpine areas.

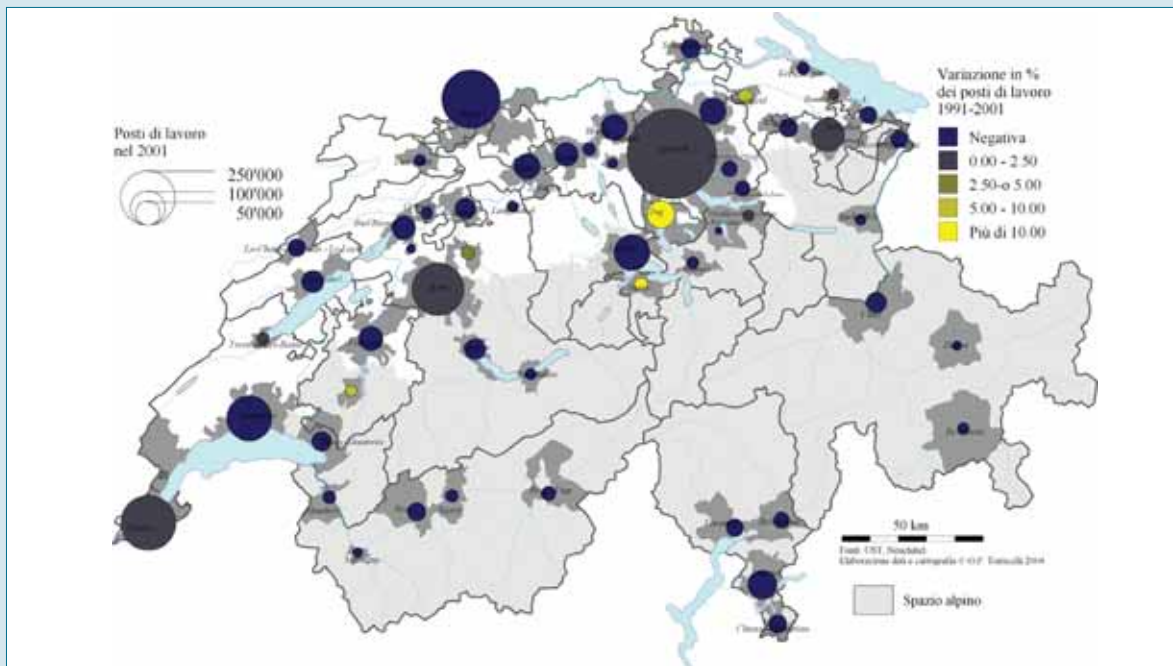


## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

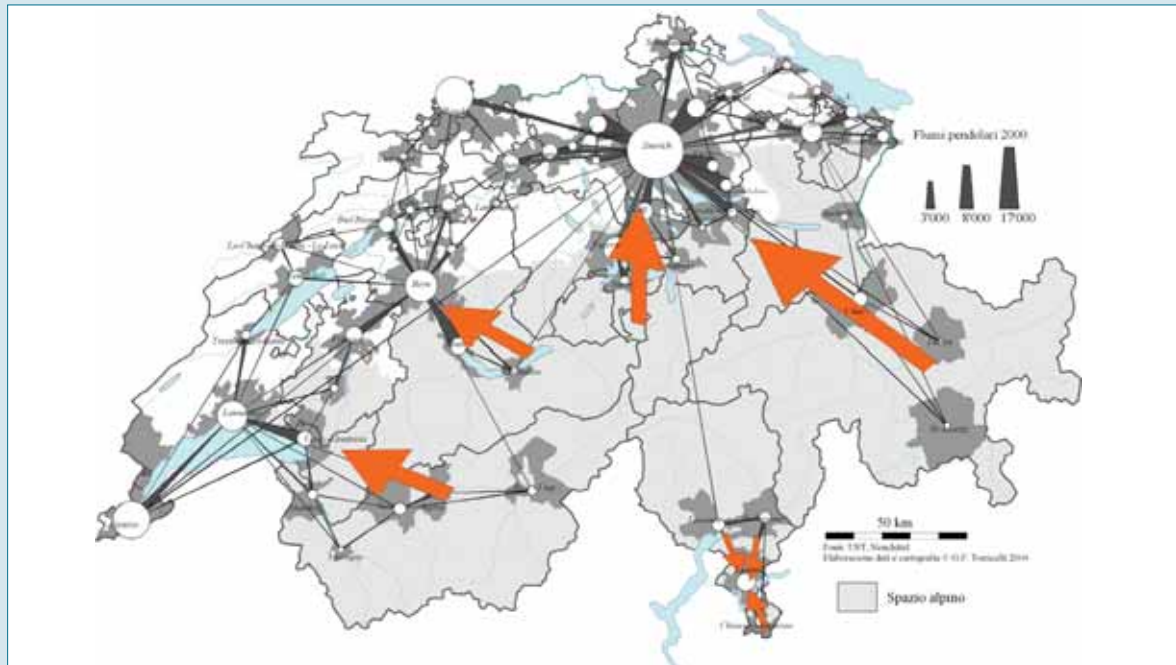
### 1 • Swiss urban areas: resident population as percentage in 2001 and as percentage variation in 1990-2000



### 2 • Jobs as percentage in 2001 and as percentage variation in 1991-2001



3 • Commuter flows in 2000/ Attraction Model of the main flows



### The central-western Po Valley (Lombardy, Piedmont and Aosta Valley)

Also in the central-western Po Valley (Lombardy Region, Piedmont Region and Aosta Valley Region, with a total population of 13.363.200 inhabitants and 5.608.000 employed in 2001) processes similar to the *metropolisation* of the Swiss upland have taken place since the '70s; it is even possible to speak about the formation of a "Po Valley Megalopolis" (Turri 2000), which is the result of a spontaneous and not planned process of urban extension - of the scattered city - along the main traffic lines. This urban space of 25 million inhabitants develops today along a double urbanization line. Starting from the historical centres of Milan and Turin and from the Genoa City-Port (the ancient industrial triangle, which still affects the western gravitation of centrality in the Po Valley), it extends eastwards and fanwise: on the one hand along the piedmont line going from Milan to Verona and Treviso, across a multitude of small and medium-sized centres, industrial and commercial areas prolonging (and connecting) the peripheries of the Po Valley cities; on the other hand along the historical line of the Emilia-Romagna conurbation going from the lower Po Valley close to the Apennine ridge towards Bologna. The Po Valley megalopolis is really a form of



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

metropolisation, characterised by a gradual concentration of the main urban functions in few main centres, but extending as built space, often without qualities, along the main traffic lines.

In this context the urban alpine and pre-alpine spaces in the central-western Po Valley seem like northern appendages of the metropolis, which passed from a first urban development - begun at the end of the XIX century with the industrialisation related to the local resources exploitation - to the current form of threadlike towns winding in valley floors, surrounded by the verticality of the alpine almost uninhabited mountain spaces.

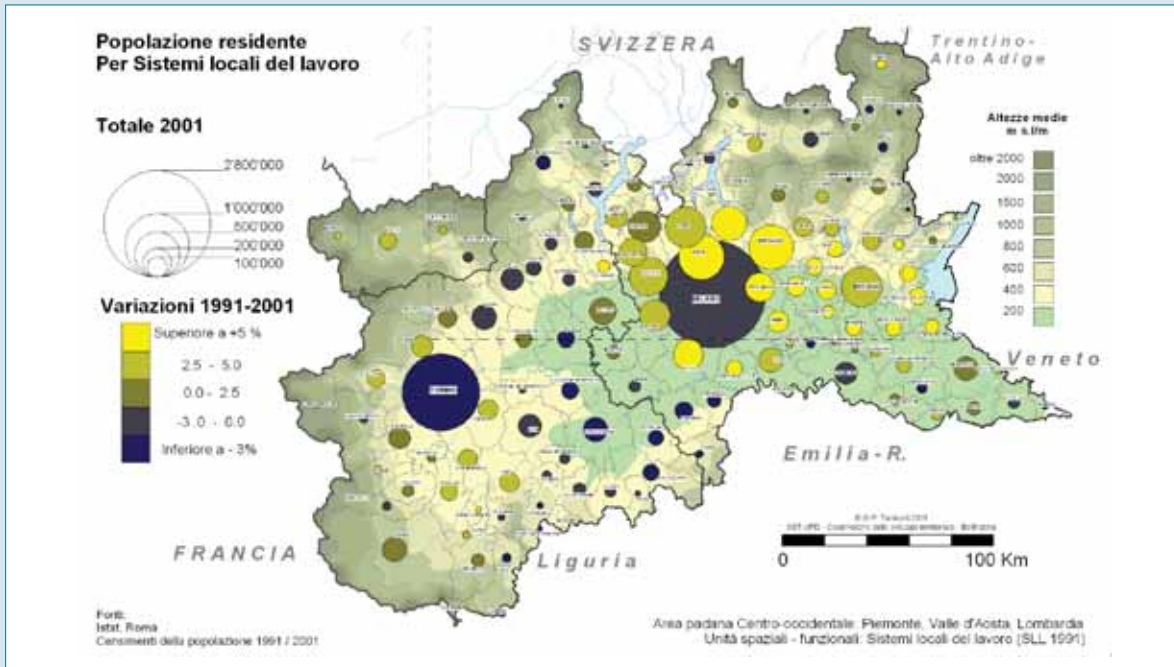
### *The demographic and economic development in the '90s: some concise indicators for Local Labor Systems (SLL, ISTAT 1991)*

Altogether the population increase has been almost null between 1991 and 2001 (0,7% with a net decrease in Piedmont Region); the spatial distribution according to the Local Labor System (SSL, ISTAT 1991) (**Figure 4**) shows a sharper increase in the metropolitan area of Milan, around the Lombard chief town, particularly in Brianza and along the Lecco - Bergamo - Brescia piedmont line. The most important reductions, apart from the two main centres (Milan and Turin) appear in the plain between Piedmont and Lombardy (Novi Ligure, Alessandria, Tortona, Voghera, etc.). In the mountain areas two different kinds of demographic development, growth and relatively pronounced decline emerge. Some western sectors seem in decline like Verzuolo in the province of Cuneo, Chisone Valley, Ossola Valley and the province of Verbania; in Lombardy: Valtellina, with the exception of Bormio and in the Orobicche Alps particularly Ponte di Legno and Edolo); there are also some growing contexts like the Upper Aosta Valley, Upper Susa Valley, Bormio. The last ones constitute tourist resorts: the tourist attractiveness can be thought as a factor detaining people in the mountains.

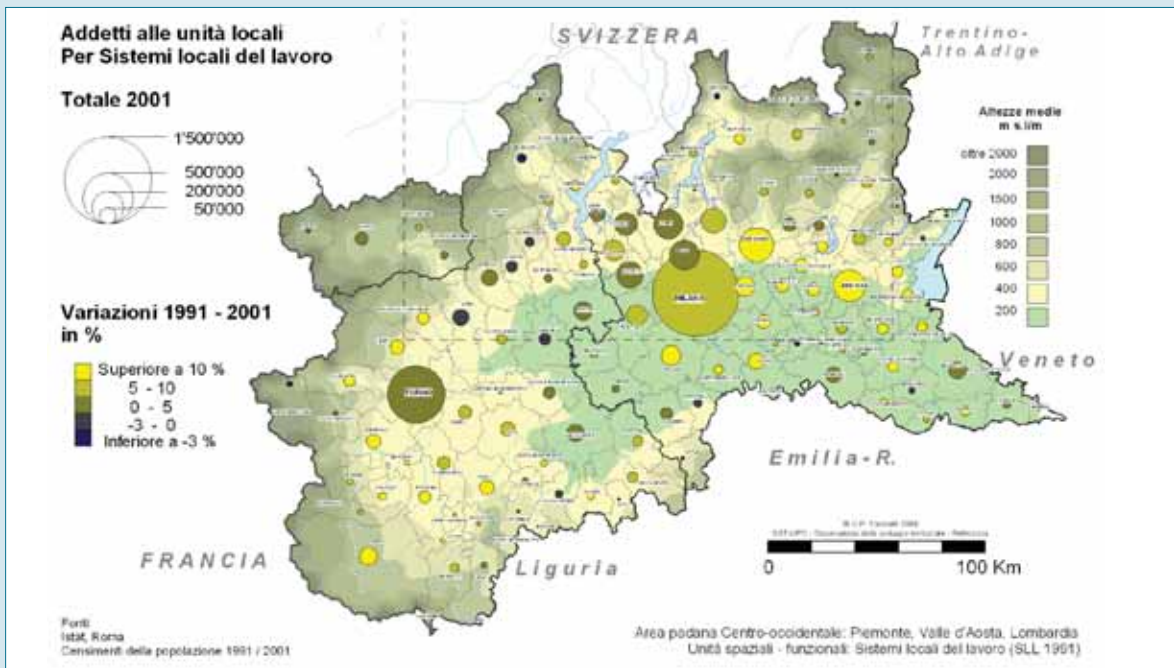
The *job creation* was altogether just a bit higher than 7,2%, with more elevated rates in Lombardy. The distribution (**Figure 5**) strongly shows a structure favouring metropolitan areas, where there are the highest rates, which diminish more and more while departing from the big centres. In this case, apart from some rare exceptions (for example Morbegno in Lower Valtellina), the mountain areas appear clearly less dynamic in comparison with their demographic increase; in several cases even in pronounced decline (Bardonecchia, Villar Perosa, Domodossola, Chiavenna, etc.).



4 • Resident population in 2001 and variations in 1991-2001 in the central-western Po Valley



5 • Employed people in 2001 and variations in 1991-2001 in the central-western Po Valley





### *The commuter mobility: a substitute to the economic opportunities of the alpine towns?*

As regards mountain areas the described trends recall in some way the ones characterising Switzerland in the same period: population increase, but stagnation or reduction of employment. For this reason an hypothesis can be taken into consideration also in this case: in the most accessible mountain zones the daily mobility partly replaces the local economic opportunities.

### **Some indicators referred to daily mobility**

The following maps deal with the employed commuter flows in 2001 and their evolution between 1991 and 2001. Per municipality data have been aggregated by Local Labor Systems (SLL); for this reason fluctuations concern only the relationships among these aggregates (internal fluctuations excluded); moreover also fluctuations external to the central-western Po Valley have been excluded. These shifts among SLL represented about 36% of all inter-municipal flows inside the area in 2001.

In spite of these restrictions, it is clear that mobility - in terms of number of shifts among SLL - increased of 13,6% on average; so this increase was evidently higher than the demographic one (0,7%) and the employment one (7,2%). Also the covered distances have been increased accordingly (13,2%).

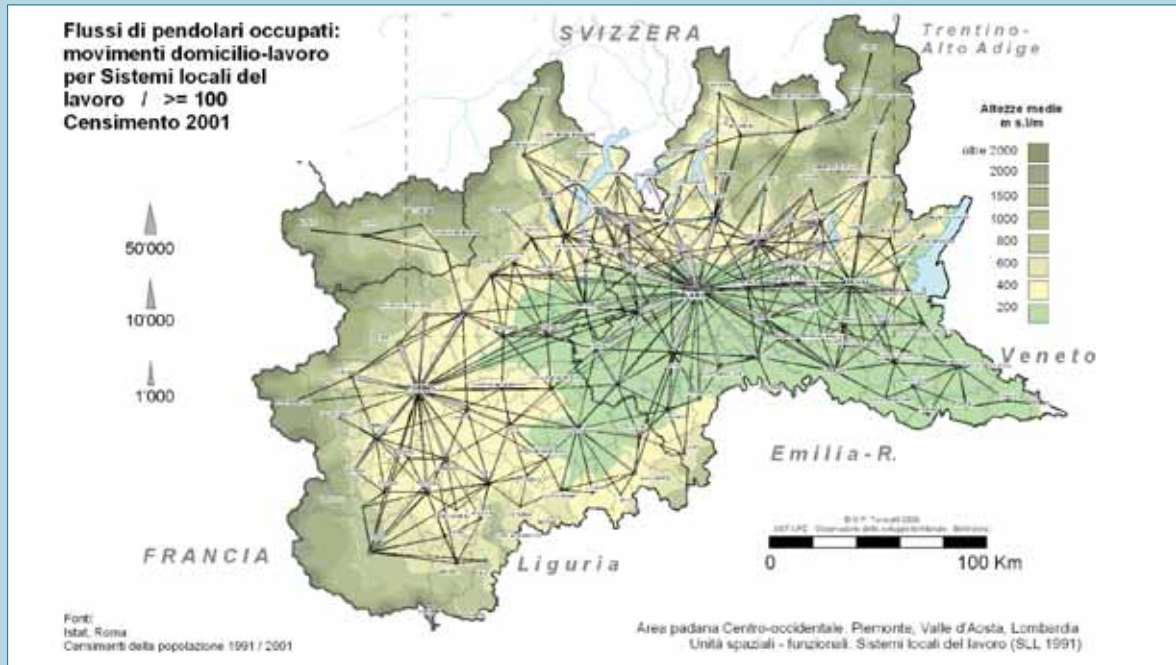
Figure 6 represents the network of employed commuters' mobility in 2001: it shows apart from the strong attraction exerted by big cities on the surrounding areas, also the structure of the flows from the mountains to the plain.

This phenomenon results to be more evident if the differences among networks in 1991 and 2001 (figure 7 and 8) are analysed. However figure 7 (positive balance) underlines that the increase of commuters going outside big centres, particularly from Turin toward the surrounding areas, but also towards Milan city-centre, and from Milan eastward and north-eastward. As regards mountain areas, with the exception of Aosta Valley (which seems to attract new flows from the outside), in general there are processes of "descent" from the mountains to the plain. These phenomena are particularly evident in Lombardy, in middle and lower Valtellina, in the Orobiche Valleys (with the exception of Zogno, whose flows towards the plain are diminishing) and in Piedmont, in the Province of Cuneo and the Ossola Valley.

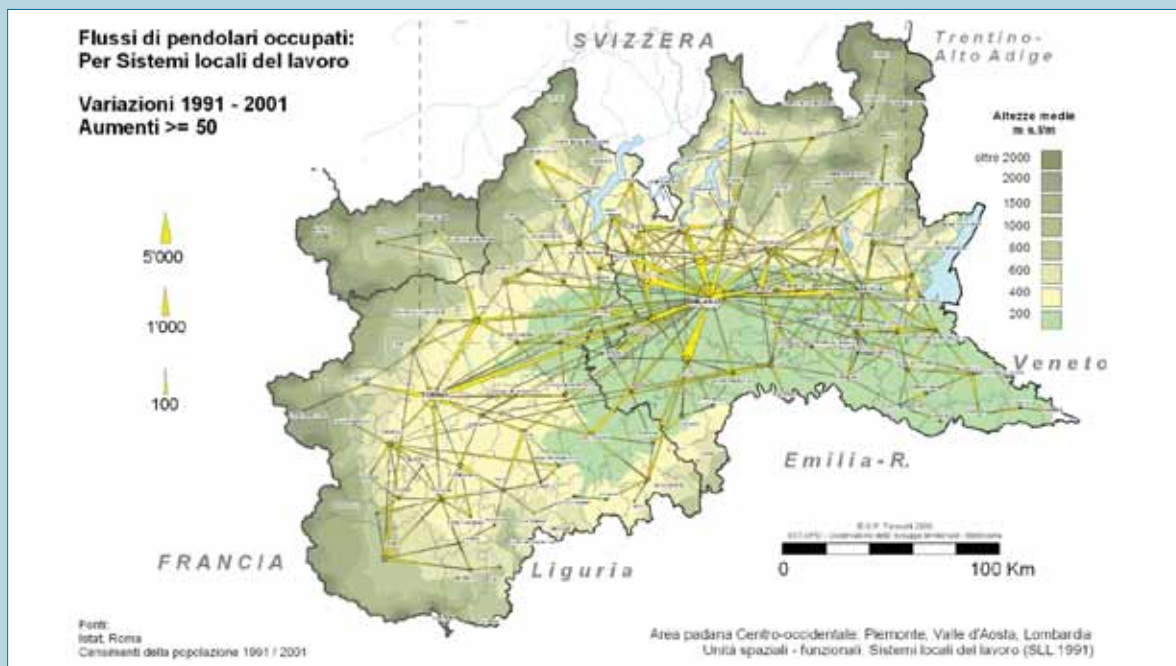
Finally the figure with the negative balance remarks a certain loss of attractiveness of the big cities (in particular Turin), but without upsetting the network structure of figure 6.

Starting from these few data it is possible to affirm that in the mountain areas of Po Valley, together with the disappearance of economic opportunities, mobility and transport facilities become the first tool for demographic development.

6 • Flows of employed commuters for Local Labor Systems in the central-western Po Valley in 2001 ( $\geq 100$ )



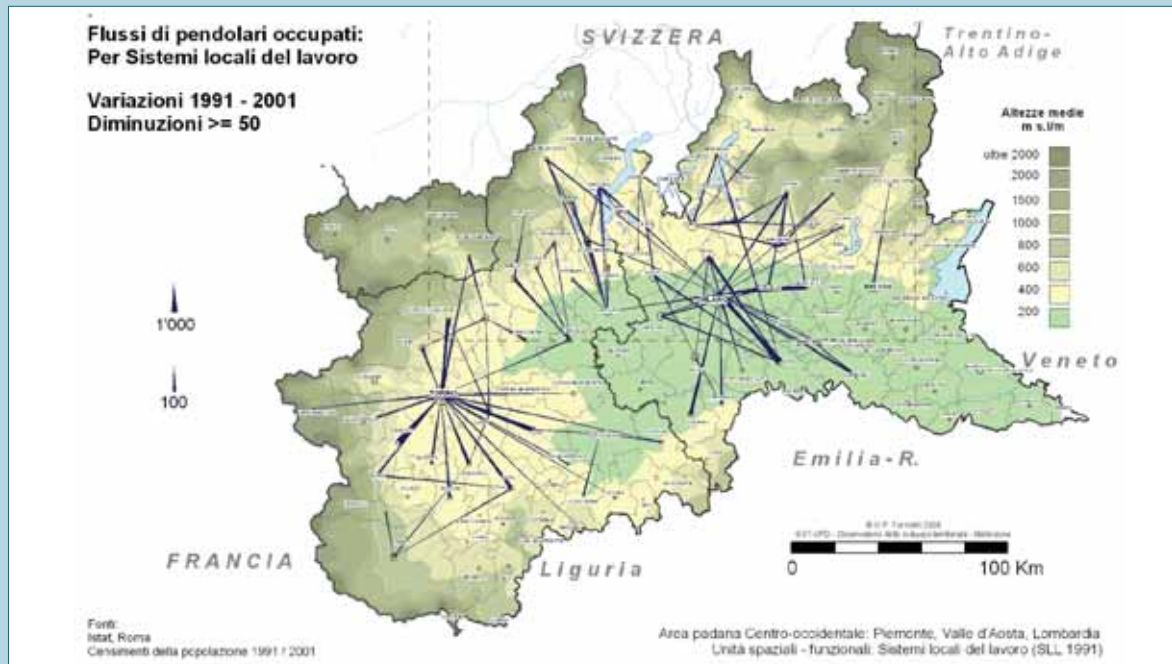
7 • Flows of employed commuters for Local Labor Systems in the central-western Po Valley: positive variations in 1991-2001 ( $\geq 50$ )





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- 8 • Flows of employed commuters for Local Labor Systems in the central-western Po Valley: negative variations in 1991-2001 ( $\geq 50$ )



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## 2.2.2 Lower Austria

In general, towns in Lower Austria gain more importance due to constant additional population from rural areas. Towns in the mountains are facing a loss of significance compared to the rather “booming” sprawling municipalities and towns in the flat areas, especially around Vienna. Typical mountain towns are centres for their rural surrounding, have a good social structure and a rich cultural life. Young, well-trained people cannot find adequate jobs and so leave to go to the strong economic areas. Sometimes these people restore their old family homes as second residences or come back when living in retirement. Economic development comes late to these towns and is the main reason for the constant drain.

The two main issues hindering progress in small alpine towns are lack of economic development and the “brain drain” through the loss of well-trained young people. The towns in the mountainous regions provide all the necessary goods and services for the everyday life of their inhabitants and the rural surroundings. Often there are still handcrafts and shops which don't exist anymore in more “booming” areas. Traditional structures are preserved by the rather conservative views of the local opinion leaders. These towns realise their importance for their region and try to face global changes in a very responsible and serious way. External professional input is highly recommended and needed for social and economic innovation.

## 2.2.3 The French regions

### a. Rhône-Alpes

The Rhône-Alpes region presents a very diverse urban structure, which is organised very hierarchically (map 3, page 10). The capital, Lyon, is France's second city. It is followed by a host of medium-sized towns each with around 100,000 inhabitants, which increases to 400,000 if all suburbs are taken into account. This urban network is clearly organised according to the relief of the land. The mountain area comprises towns organised into chains in the valleys, each with variable dynamics. The Sillon Alpin region is among the most dynamic areas of France and unites the most important *département* capitals (Lyon, Grenoble and Chambéry) and forms a continuous urban group. By contrast, in the Massif Central and in the southern Alps (the eastern part of Savoie and the mountainous part of Drôme) there is an under-representation, or even an absence, of medium-sized towns. These regions are characterised solely by small towns.

#### Small mountain towns

In Rhône-Alpes, there are 1,697 municipalities of fewer than 5,000 inhabitants situated in the mountains (according to the administrative definition used in France). Among these towns, we have attempted to determine which of these could be defined as small towns affected by the issues that Alpcity wishes to look at.

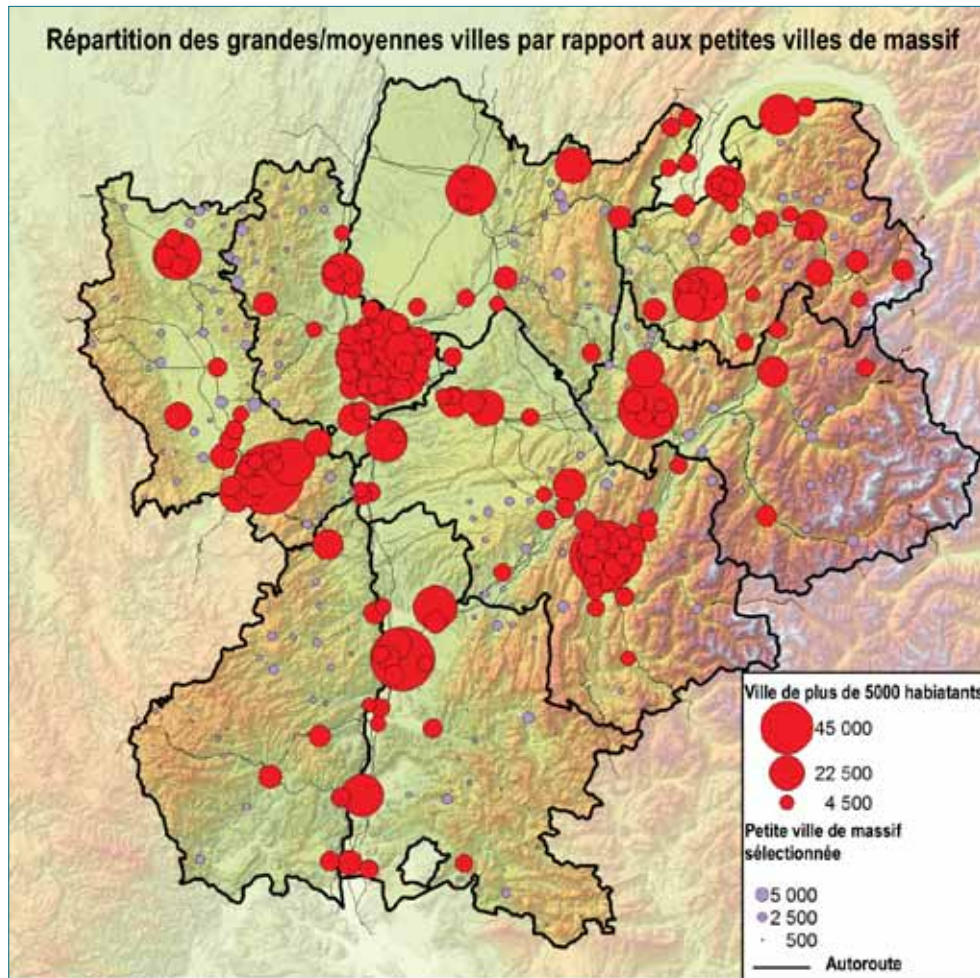
A number of criteria were considered:

- Criterion of size: communes of fewer than 5,000 inhabitants were accepted.
- Criterion of function: they must constitute a centre of rural employment, a centre of local services or a centre of intermediate services. <sup>(7)</sup>
- Criterion of remoteness: they must not belong to an urban unit of more than 10,000 inhabitants.



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

Functionality was given a higher priority than size, so that certain very small communes of fewer than 1,000 inhabitants have been included in the category, to the extent that they play the role of a centre for the neighbouring communes. And so we arrive at a total of 207 mountain centres outside the influence of big cities.



**Map 5 •** The small mountain centres among the towns of the Rhône-Alpes region

7) Definitions (INSEE - National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies):

**Local centre:** commune where the inhabitants undertake most journeys to avail of shops and services of the local range, i.e. those which serve the needs which are to be fulfilled as quickly as possible (baker, butcher, doctor etc.)

**Centre of intermediate services:** commune where the inhabitants undertake most journeys to avail of shops and services of the medium range, i.e. those services available in only 5%-20% of French communes.

**Centre of rural employment:** communes (or urban units) which do not belong to a largely urban space and which have 1,500 jobs or more.

An early analysis of a sample of sites allows us to illustrate the link between accessibility and the towns' evolution. It is precisely those towns which are not well connected to the largest network which know best the problems of remaining attractive (loss of population being a result of the distance from an urban centre). With regard to the distance between a commune and the most-visited town of over 10,000 inhabitants, we can also see that the small towns work in a hierarchical way with relation to the large and medium towns, and not in a complementary way with other small towns. Give or take a few examples, most of the towns have a good level of facilities. Even if these do not have a direct impact on the territories' economies, they do give the inhabitants access to a certain standard of living.

From the point of view of the activity of the small towns, the analysis of the change in socio-professional categories from 1990 to 1999 shows a general drop in the number of farmers, labourers and tradesmen. Most of these towns have experienced a strong increase in jobs in the service sector - following the national trend - but in an unequal manner. For the towns integrated into AlpCity (see WP8) certain common concerns arise: most of them have been highly specialised for a very long time (the important link with winter sport, for example) and are now looking for a way to diversify their activities and maintain permanent activity despite seasonal employment.

Once the residential function begins to dominate, many small towns fear that they will become dormitory suburbs. This residential character is marked by strong mobility of workers, which itself correlates to a lack of services. The role of rural centre is thus threatened by an increasing dependence on other employment centres.

## **b. Franche-Comté**

The urban structure is dominated by three cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants - Besançon, Belfort and Montbéliard - which outline and give structure to two large urban areas. Besançon's urban area comprises an area in which demographic growth is connected to the development of tertiary services (universities, hospitals and regional administration in particular). Its direct influence extends widely across the strict boundary of the urban area and affects more than a third of the region's population. Besançon generates intense commuter movement which is dependent on a good road network. For the time being, the capital of Franche-Comté forms a sort of "island" or "bubble" of development, with a radius of about 30-40 kilometres. Its borders are formed by sparsely populated, demographically deprived rural areas. To the north, the urban area of Belfort-Montbéliard-Héricourt is also home to more than 300,000 people. It constitutes the southern element of the noteworthy Rhine urban network. For all that, it is still an urban area in the process of being structured, as striking as the internal differences may be. But, despite the constant difficulties faced by industry there, this area is striving to assert itself, and above all to establish itself. The development of the tertiary sector is noteworthy in the *département* of Territoire de Belfort, where it is illustrated by the presence of universities and cultural events.

Lower down on the scale four secondary centres appear which have about 20,000 inhabitants: Dole, Vesoul, Pontarlier and Lons-le-Saunier. Each of them contributes to the cohesion of one section of the region's territory. There are several industrial plants set up there.

Further down, eight small towns of between 10,000 and 15,000 inhabitants fill in the gaps, and are relieved by about forty rural centres.

The structure of the region firstly reveals the existence of a sort of corridor between the Rhône and Rhine where the main towns and economic activity of the region are concentrated. This



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

organisation is dangerous for the region because it reduces the territory to an artery without internal cohesion, marked by the weight of inter-regional traffic on the motorways and the future LGV high-speed railway line. Such a situation represents a source of division, which will lead everyone to turn to his nearest outside neighbour.

### 2.2.4 Switzerland: The Valais

Many centres have developed on the valley floor as local centres of lateral valleys. As the urbanisation process on the valley floor continues, the classical orientation turns from a system of lateral valley centres (with a local centre at the confluent to the main valley) to a ribbon of urbanisation in the main valley setting apart the most peripheral lateral valleys. This was described as a *turning of the development axis* (MESSERLI, 1999).

The border between French and German-speakers lies in the middle of the Rhône valley near the municipality of Siders/Sierre. In an internationalising society this bilingual situation may be an advantage in concentrating a bilingual population due to the concentration of the upper valleys and at the same time by new immigrants. On the other hand it is possible that Brig-Visp will gain significance by its attachment to the new railway infrastructure of the Lötschberg base tunnel. It is to be expected that the inauguration of the new base tunnel between the Plateau (Bern) and the Upper Valais will change once more and even more significantly the relationships between this alpine area and the extra-alpine regions especially by the enlargement of labour markets, the enlargement of commutable distances, the attractiveness of residential areas and by accelerating international accessibility but may also contribute to the possibilities of draining processes (EGGER/STALDER/WENGER, 2003).

### 2.2.5 Upper-Bavaria

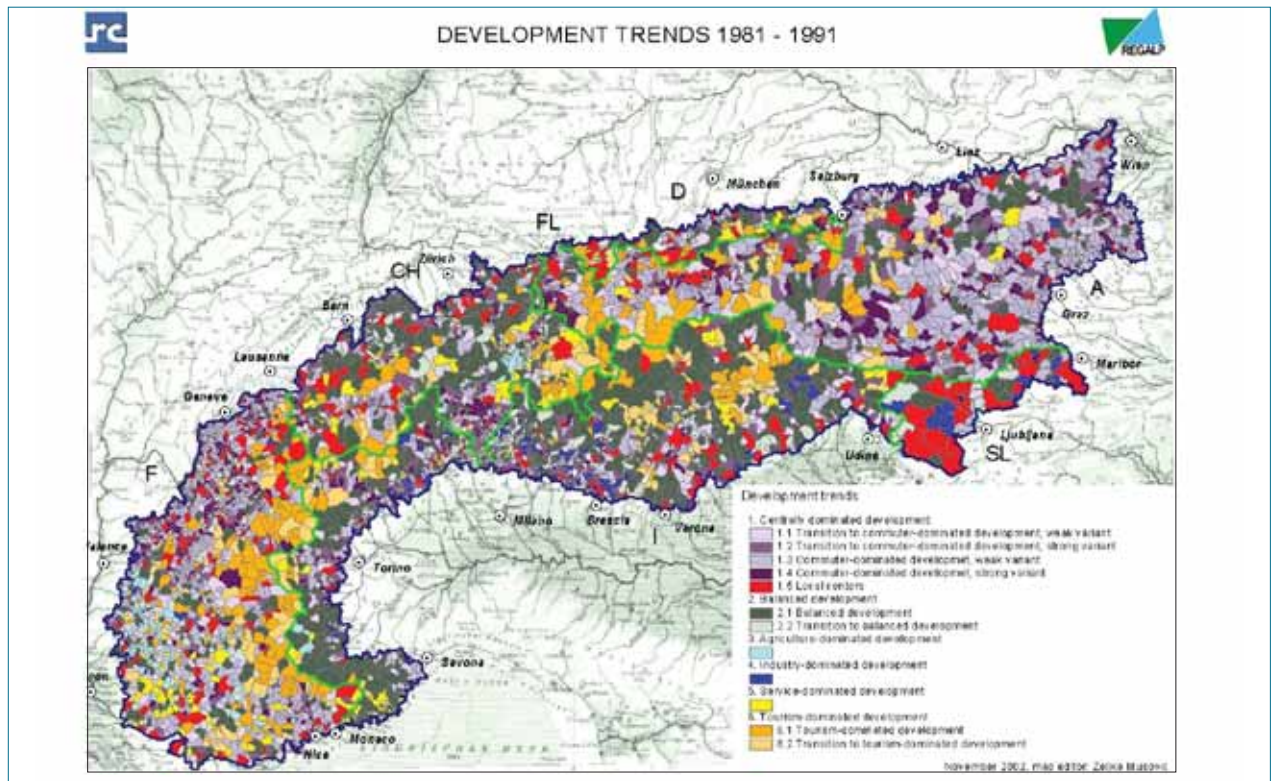
Up to the middle of the 20th century, Bavaria was the most rural state (Bundesland) in the Federal Republic of Germany. This has been changed by industrial policy since the War, and it is now one of the most active tertiary industrial regions in Germany, mostly with top-level branches. The historic towns are the head of a district and of medium or large size, reflecting the historic territorialisation. Today, they are the preferred residential areas for a highly qualified population earning money in Munich but living outside because of high flat prices, especially for families demanding more space, wanting to live in green areas yet still wanting a minimum of urban qualities. The accessibility to these towns is excellent, as they are linked by interurban trains. Meanwhile, the high dynamic of the whole region has developed a growing fringe of sprawling municipalities around the medium-sized towns.

### 2.2.6 Synthesis in the diversity of urbanisation situations

These different situations can be seen on the following map, which has been elaborated within the framework of the Regalp programme. <sup>(8)</sup>

8) *Regional development and cultural landscape, the example of the Alps*. B. Castiglioni, J. Grossietti, A. Massarutto, S. Toroiano, T. Virgilio, WP 4 report, 2004





In its outline, it is very indicative of how the urban situation varies from region to region or according to the position in the Alps. The mountain ridges - except in Slovenia - are hence marked out by an axis of single-function tourist towns. The mountain edges are structured around urban centres, the latter appearing to be relatively dispersed in Switzerland and in France, and entirely outside the mountainous areas in the Italian part. Polarisation, however, leads - especially in France, Austria and western Switzerland - to vast areas made up of localities, i.e. residential towns, which are dependent on these centres. The development of localities in Italy seems less dominated by these centres. But this independence, which the authors of the document see as a "balanced" situation, is also the source of isolation and economic and social difficulties.



## 2.3 Social image of the mountains within the region

The value attached to the mountains in terms of regional representation makes a good indicator of their potential for development. A negative position in the territorial hierarchy diminishes their attractiveness and tends to promote their decline, although of course this factor should also be considered with reference to the economic situation. The rural exodus to the benefit of towns during the nineteenth and part of the twentieth century was accompanied by social values which were very positive towards towns. This in turn consigned everything rural to the realm of tradition, and made the towns the privileged place of modernity.

On the other hand, a positive positioning of the values assigned to the areas can be a resource the developmental effects of which are becoming more and more direct. This resource naturally forms the base for the tourism economy and brings added value to local production. It also makes living there more attractive, and ensures economic development even outside the urban spheres of influence, for very mobile and communication technology-savvy sections of the population or professions. It contributes to the well-being of the inhabitants in the territory and adds to their ability to get involved in local development. Within the frame of an economy whose intangible components are growing, this favourable image makes for an undeniable developmental lever.

### 2.3.1 Piedmont

Given the variety of mountains and spread of the area covered, there are very different areas and connected perceptions. Many Piedmontese have a good knowledge of the regional mountains, they may still retain their family home there, and spend weekends and holidays there. Like in the other regions of northern Italy, quite a few people practise some form of another of trekking or alpine sport, and there are lots of organisations connected with a leisure and environmental view of the mountains.

However, beside some famous ski resorts, enclaves of second homes and a few historic exceptions, the Alps are mainly perceived as a run-down, and uncomfortable place to live in, with an elderly population and not much of an economic and social life. Even if people are very attached to it, there is still a sense of the mountains as a “world of the defeated” (from the title of a book). This is particularly true in the southern part (a few valleys of the Province of Cuneo) and in the northern part. The lack of good accessibility in some valleys reinforces this sense of exclusion.

The Province of Turin has more medium-sized centres with a younger population, successful ski resorts and gravitates also around the metropolitan area of Turin (commuting phenomenon). Awareness of the cultural richness and variety is growing, even if it might not have become an engine for economic development: for example as far as the Occitans are concerned, or the Waldesians.

### 2.3.2 Veneto and Lombardy

The environmental value of the region is very strong, with its great natural and unspoilt beauty. On the one hand, the lack of tourism has prevented economic growth but, on the other, this has maintained the natural beauty of the mountain scenery. This is partly due to the centuries-old woodland management (dating back to the fifteenth century) by “Rules” Associations, which still exist, whose practices are enshrined in national legislation. The “environmental

dimension" is important and requires maintenance of the natural beauty of the scenery. On the other hand, the gradual ageing of the population is a problem, making the ability to attract new settlers, above all young families, a priority.

### 2.3.3 The Valais

As is the case throughout Switzerland, the Valais identity is relatively homogenous and the mountain culture is an important part of this identity and has positive connotations. Let us not forget that at the birth of the federal state, the mountains were for the whole nation the visible sign of respect for God, the protecting rampart and the refuge of liberty. "Sur nos monts quand le soleil, annonce un brillant réveil, les beautés de la patrie parlent à l'âme attendrie. Au ciel montent plus joyeux, les accents d'un cœur pieux" wrote the poet Leonhard Widmer. The Cistercian monk P. Alberich Zwysig composed the Swiss Psalm in 1841, based on these words. And the preceding national anthem, "Ô monts indépendants", created by Johann Rudolf Wyss in 1811, contained the words "Nous voulons nous unir, nous voulons tous mourir pour te servir." (Schiendorfer, 2004)

### 2.3.4 Lower Austria

In general, small alpine towns are very proud of their landscape, the mountains and the good physical living conditions. They consider theirs to be a sustainable lifestyle and there is a strong relation to the possibilities offered by their environment. Mountains in Lower Austria offer a wide range of activities, for spending free time, for relaxing etc. But young people sometimes feel cut off from the latest trends seen on TV and the Internet and dream of leaving their "narrow-minded" home.

### 2.3.5 Rhône-Alpes and Franche-Comté

Environmental ideologies and the social demand for leisure activities have turned the mountains today into a region with high social importance. They represent at once a privileged place for nature activities, sporting activities or leisure activities where one tests the limits of one's experiences and emotions (by contemplating risk). All the same, not all regions have the same ability to buy into this dominant image. Others respond more specifically to aesthetic or residential desires: the view, an individual house and a natural environment are among the most sought-after advantages. This motivation does not correspond to a significant demand for services as much as a demand for accessibility, and favours those areas which are on the outskirts of the urban and tourist centres. Other areas cultivate an image of modernity and are promoted by the extent and the quality of the leisure and tourism services they offer. French ski resorts built their success on these three things - modernity, functionality, leisure activities. Some resorts founded on this model experience difficulties in reconverting, however. As soon as the "modernity" of the activities on offer is no longer up to date and finds itself made obsolete by new demands, and as soon as the leisure activities are no longer of a sufficient variety, resorts - especially the small ones - acquire a negative image. Their facilities are of too technical a nature to respond to the tourists' need for authenticity, yet too modest to compete with new forms of leisure.

Other regions are bestowed with an image of authenticity, identity, quality and environmental healthiness. This last one ties in to a certain extent with romantic visions which have been



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brought up to date by globalisation and by the increase in threats to the environment. In the face of uncertainty about progress and technology, and in the face of environmental damage, the mountain can provide a refuge and surroundings which are favourable to an alternative. These images are beneficial for local products (due to the appellation contrôlée labelling rules), for activities connected to heritage and for tourism specific to that territory. They also lead to the foundation of conservation areas such as national parks.

Depending on the area in question, the three values exist side by side or separately. The Massif Central belongs mostly to the third category, with a weaker capacity for economic development and the risk of falling easily into an unattractive attachment to the past. Aesthetic values, when they come into play alone, arise particularly in the areas of urban sprawl. The northern Alps have managed to cultivate positive images in certain massifs: the Bornes, Beaufortain, Haute-Tarentaise, the Vercors, but also the Jura are representative of this. On the other hand, the valley floors (such as in Maurienne) which are still marked by the industrial economy do not benefit from these advantages of location. There, the mountain has retained its repulsive side.

### 2.4 Policies for the mountains

The idea of a unified policy for the mountains emerges progressively on two plains. European intervention resulted from a sectoral approach, that of the common agricultural policy. The ICHN (CAHN, or compensatory allowance for natural handicaps), has supplied financial aid intend to compensate for the specific difficulties of mountain agriculture since 1975. Within the framework of regional policy, structural funds (such as LEADER and the European Fund for Regional Development) intervene for global development projects in the rural areas in crisis. These projects affect a large part of the mountains, but the division of zoning (which notably excludes tourist areas) does not contribute to the unity of the area. Parallel to these sectoral involvements, the Alpine Convention brings in unity for each massif based on the environmental dimension. The Convention, however, draws a distinction between the Alps and the rest of Europe's mountains, so much so that the measures taken in the Alps and those elsewhere do not overlap. This is not without causing some problems for countries or regions which take in several massifs (such as France and Italy, and Rhône-Alpes at regional level), where a unified approach to "the mountains" is called for in certain cases <sup>9)</sup>. This ambiguity is particularly manifest in certain examples of zoning: the alpine area Interreg being defined based on the EU's mesh of NUTS II regions, all of Rhône-Alpes was included. A part of the Massif Central, a mountainous geographic entity but not an alpine one, not showing any continuity with the Alps and not included within the area of the Alpine Convention, thus becomes "alpine" for administration purposes and for this reason becomes associated with "alpine" programmes. This is not without benefits for the region in question, but it is somewhat problematic when it comes to a geographic approach which is supposed to contain the homogeneity of the subject.

9) *It is for this reason that for the purposes of this Interreg programme the question of alpine towns has been widened in the case of Rhône-Alpes to a question of mountain towns.*

At national and regional level, political interventions are strongly linked to the institutional structure of the countries: France, a centralised country, is confronted with mostly federal countries. The first measures specific to mountain areas concerned questions of forestry and soil restoration. They rapidly developed into the agricultural domain, from the 1950s in Germany, Switzerland and Italy, and much later in France (Gerbaux, 2004). The theme of protecting nature is long established in German-speaking countries, but was nevertheless in place very early on in Italy too, with Gran Paradiso National Park (Sweden created the first national park in 1909, Italy in 1922 and France in 1963).

Recognition of entirely territorial specificity led to an even more marked opposition between France and the federalist countries. Respect for local autonomy is long established for the latter, but France had to wait until the 1980s before one territory could benefit from specific legislation.

## 2.4.1 In Italy

### 2.4.1.1 National level

Recognition of specificity for mountain territories appears in article 44 of the Constitution. The fundamental law of 1952 decreed its first law about the mountains. It defines the zone of application by criteria of altitude, of the characteristics of the vegetation and by agricultural revenue. A certain degree of political autonomy was acquired in 1971, by the law establishing the mountain communities (Legge 3 dicembre 1971, n. 1102). It was followed by the law on local autonomous administrative authorities and bodies (Legge 8 giugno 1990, n. 142, Ordinamento delle autonomie locali).

These devices were prolonged and updated in 1994, by the law on "new arrangements for the mountainous area" (Legge 31 gennaio 1994, n. 97) which lays down the new broad direction for the mountains.

The law promises the promotion of environmental qualities and of the potential for endogenous development. The policy areas given preference are:

- territorial development, more specifically transport
- development of economic activity
- social development, and to this end, services
- development of culture and local traditions

A national fund for the mountains has been established, and is being supported by regional and provincial financing.

### 2.4.1.2 Regional level

#### a. Piedmont

Among the Italian "alpine" regions, Piedmont is the only one to have in its organigram an assessorat (l'Assessorato allo sviluppo della montagna) and a general management (Settore Economia di montagna e foreste) with stated principle powers over the mountains and their development. We can also observe that other assessorats and regional managers have power over domains which relate to the mountains. To take an example without mentioning agriculture, it's the tourism *assessorat* which prepares a strategic plan on mountain tourism, and the ski lifts come under the transport *assessorat* from a technical point of view, and under



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the tourism one as far as finance is concerned.

Two approaches to the mountains internal to the *assessorat* are worthy of a specific mention, namely the Osservatorio della Montagna whose function is to study and research all the themes affecting the mountains of Piedmont (<http://www.regione.piemonte.it/montagna/osservatorio/index.htm>) and the Agenzia Regionale per gli Insediamenti Montani which was started in 2005 and which is a development agency ([http://www.sistemapiemonte.it/montagna/inse-diamenti\\_montani](http://www.sistemapiemonte.it/montagna/inse-diamenti_montani)).

All the same, it has to be noted that despite the campaigning there is not really a general mountain policy in place, even though the mountains carry a relatively high weight (46% of the towns in the region and 21% of the population, which is distributed across 48 mountain communities).

Legislative devices referenced:

- Legge regionale 2 luglio 1999, n. 16 - Testo unico sulle leggi di montagna (Incorporated law text on mountain legislation)
- Legge regionale 19/2003 - Changes to the above law
- Legge regionale 26 aprile 2000, n. 44 Disposizioni normative per l'attuazione del decreto legislativo 31 marzo 1998, n. 112 Conferimento di funzioni e compiti amministrativi dello Stato alle Regioni ed agli Enti locali
- Legge regionale 23 febbraio 2004, n. 3 Incentivazione dell'esercizio associato di funzioni e servizi comunali. Prime disposizioni (Incentive mechanisms for the joint management of functions and services)
- Deliberazione del Consiglio Regionale n. 102-36778 del 12 dicembre 2000 L.r. 16/1999, art. 4. Fasce altimetriche e di marginalità socio economica". (Levels above the sea and socio-economic marginalisation).

### b. Veneto

On 3 July 1992 the Official Bulletin of the Regional Authority promulgated Regional Law 19 with the heading "Regulations for the formation and functioning of mountain communities". This law was necessary due to the inadequate nature of previous legislation and to incorporate the principles set out in Law 142 of 8 June 1990, articles 28 and 29, governing natural resources and the role and functions of mountain communities.

The new statutory framework for local authorities included Regional Law 51 of 18 December 1993, promulgated by the Regional Authority and governing regulations for the classification of mountain communities. Less than two years after the introduction of Regional Law 19/92, Law 97 of 31 January 1994 overhauled the entire legislative framework governing mountains. The law was entitled "New dispositions for mountain areas" and reaffirmed the primary importance of Regional Authorities and local authorities in safeguarding and promoting mountain areas, which constitute "a pre-eminent national interest", as established by article 1. The regulations are the logical consequence of Law 142/90 reforming local authorities and providing extensive powers. Among other things, Regional Authorities are given the task of defining policy criteria for local authorities, dictating regulations and allocating resources.

For this purpose a National Mountain Fund was created (art. 2) with resources from the Community, state and general public, divided into regional funds adding to the resources of local authorities. In this connection, article 17 of Regional Law 19/92 was modified by Regional Law 3 of 3 February 1998, replacing the existing fund for investments in mountain areas with Regional Mountain Funds. These statutory chops and changes required an organic review,

which was enshrined in Regional Law 9 of 9 September 1999, modifying various articles of the previous law 19/92 but preserving the role of mountain areas in view of their unique geographical location and socio-economic conditions, treating them organically as a whole whilst giving powers to specific authorities to plan and implement policy. Regional Law 19/92 as modified by article 13 includes the drawing up of a long-term plan. With this programme, Mountain Communities identify the actions to be carried out and the resources required to promote the socio-economic wellbeing of the community in a 5-year plan, drawn up in compliance with statutory requirements and in line with Provincial and Regional Authority policies.

Political approach:

- Art. 19 b) of R.L. 19/92 sets up the "Permanent Mountain Committee".

In particular it specifies:

"1. The Permanent Mountain Committee comprises the Presidents of Mountain Communities, the Presidents of Belluno, Treviso, Vicenza and Verona Provincial Authorities, three mountain community mayors as appointed by the Veneto Regional Association of Local Authorities (ANCI), the President of the National Union of Mountain Local Authorities - the Veneto Regional Delegation (UNCCEM), and is chaired by the President of the Regional Authority or a Regional Councillor appointed by him/her.

2. The Committee reports to the Regional Authority within the first 6 months of each year, and the Report specifies works in progress and plans for mountain areas.

3. The Committee makes recommendations on Mountain areas to local authorities and the Regional Authority concerning the implementation of programmes in mountain areas and all other relevant matters for their development."

Omissis:

In the last three years, an average of two or three Conferences have been held by the Committee each year, ensuring co-ordinated policy by the Regional and local Authorities.

### c. Lombardy

Regional laws:

- L.r. 10/98 "Disposizioni per la valorizzazione, lo sviluppo e la tutela del territorio montano in attuazione della legge 97/1994"
- PdL di recente approvazione regionale "Misure di sostegno a favore dei piccoli comuni della Lombardia"
- L.r. 14/99 "Norme in materia di commercio in attuazione del D.Lgs 114/98".

Regional Commerce Planning acts:

- Triennial plan of Commerce field Development 2003-05 (DCR 30 July 2003 n. VII/871)
- Integrated Plan of Commerce intervention - PIC (DGR 14 November 2003 n. 7/15056)
- Triennial Plan commerce field development course of actions 2003-05 about Great selling Stores (DGR 18 December 2003 n. VII/15701).

A recent law about small mountain municipalities identifies a precise supporting framework for municipalities with populations of fewer than 2,000 inhabitants (45% of all Lombardy municipalities) in which there are situations of socio-economic and infrastructure marginalization, taken every 5 years based on demography, on wealth level, on service facilities and the tourist board.

Facilities are foreseen for:

- commercial activity practice (creating multi-services shops; derogating the 250m<sup>2</sup>



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- maximum size for neighbouring shops; opening hour during non-working days; giving permission for new openings of fuel outlets);
- education - also with economic benefit (keeping schools open; starting up with experimental tele-teaching forms; union of different teaching levels in intra-school and extra-school grouping);
- fiscal facilities to improve new production activities reducing the regional tax on production activities (IRAP);
- financial acts (l.r. 33/91 "Istituzione del fondo di ricostruzione infrastrutture sociali Lombardia - FRISL; l.r. 31/96 - Norme concernenti la disciplina del Fondo per la realizzazione di progetti infrastrutturali di rilevanza regionale").

The Triennial Programme for Commercial Field Development 2003-05 and related applied conditions foresee specific development objects for mountain areas paying attention to the maintenance of neighbouring services, financial initiatives such as l.r. 13/2000 supporting multi-service shops and other experimental forms, particular attention being paid to the impact generated by the allocation of large retail shops.

### 2.4.2 Switzerland and the Valais

Economic policy is directly linked the federal organisation of the country. According to the principle of subsidiarity, primary decisions and responsibilities rest with the lowest level of administrative authority, if the competences exist and are sufficient at this level.

At the central State level, regional policy has been devised as a policy of struggle against economic disparity and favours the weakest regions of the country, notably the mountain regions. For the mountains there exists different national legislation directly or indirectly concerning the mountain areas (regional policy, tourism policy, transport policy, agricultural policy, etc.). One of these pieces of legislation is specifically dedicated to the mountain areas, namely the Federal Law of 21/03/1997 concerning investment aid in the mountain regions (*Loi fédérale du 21/03/1997 sur l'aide en matière d'investissements dans les régions de montagne (LIM)*), initially enacted in 1974 and revised in 1985 and 1998.

This law aims to create conditions which are favourable to economic development. At the same time, it also seeks to contribute to an occupation which is shared by the whole territory and which maintains the special cultural features and provides selective aid to the investments in the form of loans at low interest rates (or indeed, in some cases, at zero interest). As of 30 June 2003, aid to investment had been given to 8,150 projects and represented a total sum in the order of 2.8 billion Swiss francs. As for the volume of investment itself created by these projects, it has 18.7 billion francs. To complement this, the Federal Law of 25 June 1976 encouraging the granting of deposits and contributions to serve the interest of the mountain regions allows the granting of long and medium-term capital loans to small and medium businesses which are established in mountain regions. The territorial field of application takes in the 54 developing regions which are recognised by the Confederation as being covered by the LIM. Loans and credit may be deposited to the benefit of small and medium businesses in mountain regions, up to a limit of 500,000 Swiss francs (source: Swiss Confederation).

In 2008, a new law on regional policy will take the baton from the LIM. Until now centred on basic infrastructure, the new law is intended to give priority to the regions' competitiveness. This new approach is justified by the increased competition between the regions. The



evaluation of the LIM (<http://www.alexandria.unisg.ch/Publikationen/nach-Projekten/18703/18728>) which was carried out in 2004, showed that it has achieved its objective, which was to improve living conditions and increase the attractiveness of mountain regions as a place to live. All the same, since the 1970s, the projects which have been financed have hardly made it possible to create sustainable employment. These regions continue to show weak potential to develop and an insufficient capacity to take care of themselves (little entrepreneurial spirit, selective depopulation) which has negative repercussions for their competitiveness.

It was therefore considered that the instruments used in the past are no longer capable of helping the regions concerned to meet current and future challenges, hence the implementation of a new regional policy. One of the main innovations brought in concerns the role played by the cantons. From now on, these will assume responsibility for implementing regional policy measures. It will be up to them to identify the peripheral zones which have weak growth potential. It can also be noted that the economic dimension of development has been given priority (according to Alain Schoeneberger, Eco'Diagnostic, Geneva).

### 2.4.3 Lower Austria

Lower Austria has diversified planning levels according to its policy of strengthening grass-root activities. Lower Austria is a federal state (Bundesland) of Austria and a region on NUTS II-level. It is divided into 5 main regions for regional planning. Each planning region consists of 3 to 5 districts, where regional administrative action takes place. The local municipalities form a strong administrative body, mostly from 800 up to 2,000 inhabitants. Most planning activities took place on this level for the last years, now more and more activities start on a small regional level (4 - 10 municipalities) formed by voluntary cooperation. Small towns in Lower Austria have 3,000-10,000 inhabitants and often are the cores of regional processes. Small towns often have a strong influence on their region, due to economic importance and are mostly situated at the best geographic site within the region.

Compared to other fields of interest, mountains do not play a major role in politics in Lower Austria, because Lower Austria does not feel "mountainous" compared to other provinces in Austria, e.g. Tyrol. These areas are included in Lower Austria in "rural areas". There are of course many political statements and treaties to preserve nature and natural conditions in mountainous regions, mainly to prevent major catastrophes for the more important flat areas. In accordance with the strong efforts to support bottom-up projects by the state, there is a constant financial flow to these "poorer" regions. Living conditions in these disadvantaged regions should be improved in order to prevent further population decrease. Economic efforts from outside the region - bringing large enterprises to these regions - have mostly failed in the long run. Endogenous regional development has diminished the differences between "booming" and disadvantaged areas a little bit during recent years and this policy will be further pursued.

### 2.4.4 France: Rhône-Alpes and Franche-Comté

#### 2.4.4.1 Organisation at national level

French territorial administration is governed by a general code of territorial local authorities and takes into account many levels: districts, departments, regions. The state is the guarantor of national sovereignty: as such its responsibilities include, in particular, such missions as education, justice, law; order and national defence; the economy, the social welfare system,



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major infrastructures, cultural and foreign affairs.

The region is responsible for general education and professional training, economic expansion, regional planning (regional passenger transport services, development of the different "localities" of RA, etc.) and international cooperation. The *département* is responsible for the building and upkeep of colleges (secondary schools for children up to the age of 15 years) and for running the various *département* services (welfare, health and emergency services, departmental roads, school buses, etc.) The department is governed by a general council which is elected by universal suffrage and headed by a president. Districts are essentially concerned with implementing municipal services, managing municipal property, economic and social. The district is governed by a municipal council which is elected by a universal suffrage and headed by the mayor.

Regarding the mountains, at national level the mountain areas are the only territories which benefit from their own institutional planning, under the Law concerning the development and the protection of mountain regions (*Loi relative au développement et à la protection des régions de montagne*) of 9 January 1985.

This law was intended to guarantee a balance between tourism planning (essentially alpine skiing), urbanisation, agriculture activity and natural conservation. It laid out very clearly the preservation of lands necessary for maintaining agricultural, pastoral and forestry activity, the protection of areas and environments which had special features of natural and cultural mountain heritage, and the control of urbanisation in continuity with existing towns and villages.

A special procedure was meanwhile put in place for heavy planning and urbanisation on unsullied land, which was called "new tourism units".

From this law has arisen an ambivalent outcome: many measures taken were never applied for, the exemptions for tourism have allowed many abuses locally. Parliament tried to bring the law up to date in the framework of the 2005 Law concerning the development of rural territories (*Loi relative au développement des territoires ruraux (DTR)*). This law only contains one section dedicated to the mountains, and strongly reaffirms the principle of territorial specificity: "The French Republic recognises the mountains as a group of territories whose equitable and sustainable development constitutes an objective in the national interest by virtue of their economic, social, environmental, landscape, health and cultural role. Equitable and sustainable development of the mountains is understood to mean a progressive dynamic initiated, carried and controlled by the mountain population and backed up by the nation, which must allow these territories to attain a level of living conditions comparable to those of other regions and to offer the nation services, goods, spaces and natural resources of a high quality. The nation must also allow mountain society to evolve without a violent break with its past and its traditions, conserving and renewing its culture and its identity, etc." (Art. 62 of the DTR Law).

Compared with previous measures, the law shows a better understanding of the environmental constraints involved: "By their contribution to production, employment, soil maintenance, protection of the landscape, to the management and development of biodiversity, agriculture, pastoral farming and mountain forestry are recognised in the general interest as basic activities of mountain life and as central administrators of mountain land". (Art. 181) The reform also reinforces the role of the committees of the massifs and proposes the creation of a strategic scheme for the massifs. It encourages these communities to organise themselves within the framework of interregional massif conventions in order to pursue integrated territorial policies. It is, however, contested by conservationists for whom the protection of wildlife and the limitations placed on urbanisation are not sufficient.

#### 2.4.4.2 At regional level

In Rhône-Alpes the mountains appear throughout:

- the mountain section of the State-Region (CPER) plan 2000-2006. In Rhône-Alpes, the sum cost of actions defined in this mountain section are estimated at € 154 million for the State and €124 million for the region, including the mountain road safety programme and the interregional massif conventions signed in June 2000 for a total of € 35 million;
- the European programmes (Objective 2, Leader 2, Interreg III, etc.) which are heavily used in the Rhône-Alpes region to support development activities of the mountain territories;
- measures arising from ordinary policies of the region with regard to planning and territorial development, forestry and agricultural policy, the management of natural risks, policies regarding the renovation for tourism purposes of mountain refuges, support for medium-altitude mountain stations, support for large hiking itineraries, promotion of winter and summer tourism in the mountains, help making mountain sport more accessible to the handicapped and transport policy.

Regarding Franche-Comté, since the 1980s, due to the effect of successive laws on decentralisation, a certain regional reconstruction is at work. The process is far from being complete, but it is opening a promising furrow. Now the town is no longer diametrically opposed, to follow a simplistic scheme, to the countryside. In Franche-Comté this divide had taken on a particular form, represented as it was between the axis of the Doubs Valley and the plateaux of the Jura and of Haute-Saône.

The major advance is contemporary. It resides in the implementation of a policy of countryside and of built-up areas which places inter-community relations in a project dynamic. The work is interesting inasmuch as in Franche-Comté, differently from in other regions, the entire regional territory is knitted together by these project areas. The directness of this link between the communes has undoubtedly made cooperation easier. Nevertheless, there exist two domains in which progress should be anticipated:

- there ought to be cooperation between the countryside and the built-up areas. The urban sprawl of Besançon, for example, spills over into the countryside around the commune of Gray, into the Pays des Sept Rivières and Loue-Lison;
- cooperation between all involved in the urban system of Franche-Comté is more necessary than ever. Nowadays, it is merely a network of towns on the Upper Rhine and links between Burgundy and Franche-Comté. The experiences thus gained have been praiseworthy, but it would be good if the towns of the region could unite and form a proper project network.

It can thus be highlighted that Franche-Comté is a land of know-how and industry. It has experienced prosperity but now suffers enormously from a lack of assertion of its own identity. Desirable cooperation among the different networks of the region is a necessary path towards asserting a regional identity. An image needs to be confirmed for this area, but that is not easy, because the neighbouring territories all have competing, robust personalities.

This lack of image has a real effect on tourism activity (it should be noted that in this area, a large constant communication effort has been made to raise the area's reputation among tourists) and causes a significant deficit in young graduates. The causes are complex, but the shortage of industrial work, its inevitable reduction and the fact that many sites are controlled by outside groups seem to be determining factors.

### 3. The issues of the AlpCity Project with reference to local economic and political situations. Attempts to analyse

In this last part, we will attempt to examine the relevance of the case studies, with regard to our problematic hypotheses and taking account of the diversity of these contexts. For the purposes of a scientific framing of these tests, the problems are of different orders:

- a first problem is that of the relevance of the cases. Are the projects capable of contributing to our knowledge of the developmental processes of small towns? Or, even better, are they capable of solving the problems raised?
- a second problem is that of whether the cases are representative. Do the case studies have a primarily local value, or are they indicative of more general phenomena? Which are the problematic aspects covered by the case studies? And, conversely, what are the aspects which have been omitted and which might deserve to be developed?
- a third problem is related to the variety of contexts we have just set out. Has variety been well conveyed by the different case studies? How does it influence the projects of the AlpCity Partners? Is it possible to identify the effects of geographical and political context on development processes?

It is not our task here to evaluate the experiments carried out by the different partners. That will be the subject of a subsequent part. Nor is it our task to assess the scientific value of the programme. Of course we are well aware that AlpCity is not a research programme with finality and with procedures of a scientific nature. Choices and needs respond to a different logic. Nevertheless it is possible and necessary to review the scientific impact of the achievements. The case studies are for all that examined in a global way, by their objectives and their themes, not in the detail of how they were executed, according to their scientific relevance and their ability to fit into an adequate methodology.

#### 3.1 The issues of the case studies within the general problems of the small town

Let us readdress the specifics of the small town, which were developed in the previous part. The small town is characterised by:

- a polarising and organising function for a non-urban territory
- the first level of being a local centre by offering services, change activities and distribution bound for a micro-region
- a socio-cultural specificity, where small town “life” is differentiated from both rural life and city life
- a position in the urban hierarchy which makes it an intermediary between spread-out areas and larger towns.

They are thus at the same time territorial, functional and cultural: AlpCity postulates that the small town, by these functions, conditions the sustainable development of alpine areas: it prevents their destructuring, either by depopulation or by a growing dependence on large centres, which would add to mobility and spread-out urbanisation.

This special role calls for maintenance of economic functions, an increase in relationships with the hinterland and development of relationships between towns to increase their capacity for endogenous action (Perlik and Masserli, 2004).

How do the different projects fit in?

### 3.1.1 The function of cultural centrality

It has been developed in particular by Lower Austria in a programme intended to put in place a network for young people, by Franche-Comté through promotion of its image and of its heritage, by Grainau and the urban restructuring operations, from the point of view of the landscape as much as planning, by the library network or the operation carried out for the benefit of the schools of Piedmont. It is also covered in a less direct way, in several projects which aim to maintain or install a level of services adequate to respond to the contemporary needs of the population: education (mountain schools in Piedmont), services. Notwithstanding every landscape or cultural concern, in that case the first thing to be done is to improve a potential weakness, if it is not possible to assure equality in living standards between areas far away and areas close to urban centres. Under these conditions one might choose and enjoy isolation, and as a consequence these territories might become attractive.

Some of these operations are more specific to the small town inasmuch as they allow a minimum or urban life, that is to say a particular social life with opportunities to meet people and enjoy culture which the villages do not have. These operations prevent the gap between the culture on offer in the towns and that of the more outlying areas from growing, especially in a context where culture and leisure constitute more and more important elements in our lifestyle. From this point of view, the operations respond in particular to the needs of the young and of the new inhabitants.

These cases also enable the improvement of endogenous development capacities by promoting the concept of belonging to the territory. The social recognition which can be expected from the local identity is more significant if the territory responds to inclusive social values. Identity, as we know, functions by mirror effect and reflects the judgements bestowed on it by society: for this reason there is great local pride in living in a place which is held in high estimation and whose qualities are recognised by outsiders. Modernity of services - outside of their intrinsic quality and of their quantity; image, promotion of heritage, quality of the landscape etc. all adds in some way to the comparative attractions of a territory from the point of view of its identity. This recognition of identity in turn conditions the population to stay put as well as to mobilise for development.

### 3.1.2 The territorial function

It represents the capacity to organise a rural or spread-out area: the small town and the area which it structures and serves form a territory. This function is the concern of several case studies, under the two principal modes of the urban centre and the network. The two are not incompatible, however the projects are more oriented to one than to the other. Some reinforce the function of polarisation, others place the accent on the relation between these centres.

- **Polarisation** proves to be the issue of several operations of economic development, in Veneto, in Lombardy (maintenance of commercial services, development of tradesmen's activities (places of sale and of production)), or in Grainau (commercial and tradesmen's



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activities). The actions aim to maintain a certain level of functions on which the town's status depends and which differentiate the local area from the rural village or from the residential unit which is dependent on employment elsewhere. Some of these actions become a factor in the entry conditions, in the planning of premises, for example. Others work instead on the processes and put forms of innovative organisation in place, such as *maisons de service* (administrative buildings providing state services to citizens).

- **The network** constitutes another mode of organisation which is an issue particularly crucial for the development of small centres. How is it defined? The networks between towns have the objective of increasing relationships between urban areas, at the same time as developing new forms of working and of managing these relationships. Beyond the necessities and the constraints of territorial continuity, beyond imposed codified structures, the networks come under an alliance freely granted by the municipalities. Responding to a new logic of spatial functioning, they run counter to the hierarchical pyramidal system which historically governed the relationships between towns. The strength and power of a town appear thus less a function of the size of the nearby territory than of the town's capacity to be connected to other centres and to other towns (May, 1993). The network therefore potentially offers small towns the possibility of leaving behind a territorial structure where they are by definition the weakest. In its organisation, the network relies on relationships between distant, non-adjointing, towns on a basis of partnership and equality. Its interests are multiple. For one thing, it assures better cohesion and creates solidarity in areas which are at risk of fragmentation. Furthermore, in a context of competition and of insufficient size in an economy dominated by the metropolises, a structured harmony between towns allows them to obtain a more significant "critical mass". Thus the network allows more towns to reach the thresholds necessary to install facilities. In addition, the actions have more weight and more legitimacy, conferring a greater ability to put pressure on the superior institutional levels. In its function, the network is hard to separate from the government. It requires as its basis an agreement, a project which organises the internal workings, regulates the location choices: the towns cooperate on a voluntary basis, on objectives which they decide for themselves, with reference to the problems that they have in common. The formula seems a lot more flexible and adaptable than the framed institutional procedures. It favours innovation, thanks to the exchange of experiences. It also avoids the dispersal of small, low-performance facilities due to the towns complementing each other internally. From this point of view, an organisation of networked towns can represent a model of territorial functioning which is adequate to respond to the crisis of the small town.

The networks of large towns have been the subject of many theoretical and empirical works. On the other hand, analyses on the small-town level have been few. AlpCity could contribute to this study. Within the framework of the programme, the networks are implemented in numerous ways:

- as a method and tool for projects: library networks, for example (Lombardy);
- in infrastructure which is indispensable for relational activities: innovation in transport and improvement of accessibility are also the subject of a project in Piedmont;
- as an objective of the operation carried out within the framework of AlpCity. For the Rhône-Alpes region particularly, it is a matter of validating the interest in establishing a network of the small mountain towns, working on the specifics of their needs as well as on their ability to mobilise themselves into this type of association, and also by analysing the results

already achieved in other regions. Knowing that collaboration can only be voluntary and with reference to joint interests, the process of calling for applications - as well as coordinating the towns chosen afterwards - should allow a consciousness of common interests and a desire to work together to emerge. The network will therefore be able to be the concrete and structured product of a collective and upward process as well as a response to a need.

### **3.1.3 A knowledge of urban structure**

In a more general way, knowledge of regional structures, of the position of the small town, of the specifics of the small mountain are the objective of two experiments: the one carried out in Rhône-Alpes and the one in Franche-Comté. This French character can be explained by a specific institutional culture. The call for applications issued by the region of Rhône-Alpes also asked for general knowledge of the situation to justify intervention and to specify the conditions of eligibility of the towns. Further more, and differently from in federal countries, these regions do not have their own policy for the mountain territories. A knowledge of the situation of small towns and of their spatial structure is a necessary precondition. AlpCity will thus have allowed us in these two regions to identify the problems of planning in both the mountains and in small towns.

### **3.1.4 Development of tourism**

This is a theme in its own right, inasmuch as the interventions being advocated are economic and sectoral. The projects aim in this way for integrated development of tourism (Piedmont), improvement of tourist services (Grainau), development of activities and the promotion of "soft" (sustainable rural) tourism (Tschlin), the promotion of a tourist trail through the Jura mountains (Franche-Comté), the perfecting of a tourist methodology (Saint-Maurice), the promotion of the winter Olympics (Piedmont). The nature of the institutional involvement explains in part the importance of this theme: in three cases effectively (Grainau, Tschlin, Saint-Maurice), we are dealing with tourist municipalities preoccupied with their own internal development, and not regions considering the role of towns in the regional area. In addition, it's a question of small tourist towns which are, like many places in the Alps, asking questions about their future. The promotion of small mountain towns in the current tourist market requires a reflection on the durability and the quality of the sites, the promotion of heritage, and the know-how. In an increasingly competitive market, this promotion also requires an increase and a refinement in of the abilities to intervene in the local area. Because of this, the projects fit in to a process of adaptation to a new context in a relevant way. The case of Saint-Maurice is a particularly explicit example of this, with the implementation of a methodology for a strategy of tourist development. But all experiences have shown clearly that the question should not be "what should we do?" but rather "how should we do it?" and "how can we do different things differently?"

### **3.1.5 Increasing the capacity for endogenous development**

This is a factor in all of the case studies. Two main angles have been proposed: the more diffuse one implements the increase through participation processes, the other from a specially dedicated intervention. In this latter case, specific to Rhône-Alpes (aid for project engineering), the intention is characterised by the process. The target towns in the operation benefit effectively from regional aid according to fixed criteria in a call for applications. This aid does



not come into play because of the themes of development, but with reference to the need for support and advice to carry out endogenous projects. This measure aims to make up for the weak developmental capacity of small towns due to having few personnel with technical training and much reduced means to study. The towns which have benefited from this aid witness the same problems as other AlpCity towns do, with specific needs in strategic processes, in their adaptation to the new tourist market and in the promotion of their heritage in all its forms.

### 3.2 The partners' expectations

The projects carried out within the framework of AlpCity fit well, therefore, into the general problems of the small contemporary alpine town. But beyond the financial aid given to particular projects, can the AlpCity programme have a more general impact? The expectations of the partner towns could contribute to answer to this question. In a questionnaire put together in 2004-2005 by the scientific committee, we can see that the expected benefits, outside of the case study itself, are:

- a need for knowledge which, given particularly the speed of economic and social change, almost requires keeping a watch on the evolution of and the directions taken by the territories;
- sharing of experiences, perhaps to be organised through the form of networks;
- an increase in the small towns' ability to promote themselves and lobby, thanks to their organisation.

These expectations are themselves coherent with regard to the objectives of the Interreg programme, but also with regard to the small town. The consideration of problems, methodological exchange of views, acquisition of a critical mass in decision-making and action that the partners are aiming for are particularly crucial today for the towns whose difficulties are caused precisely by their structural weakness and their distance from the fluxes and the innovation centres. The alliance of small towns, outside of the operations carried out, is proving due to this to be a development tool.

## 4. Conclusion

### What is a small alpine town, in the sense given by AlpCity?

- A centre of services and/or of employment serving and structuring a mountain area, and which is positioned on the lowest level of the urban hierarchy. It is the relative position and the role which are considered more than a strict statistically defined size.

### What are the specific problems of small towns?

- A position threatened either by integration into urban spaces, reducing them to residential and/or tourist satellites, or by exclusion from the fluxes causing a progressive decline and the loss of its structuring functions for its hinterland.
- A qualitative weakness of facilities and services.
- An uncertain identity, between belonging to a metropolis and rural environmental charm.



### Which issues affect small mountain towns?

- Their promotion conditions the sustainable development of mountain areas: diminishes the isolation of the population, impedes desertion and the growth of urban areas, limits the increase in mobility towards the large urban centres.
- The transformation from a mountain position or an alpine identity into a development "resource", through its cultural values, the quality of its environment, its ability to mobilise the population.
- The implementation of a new relationship with the territory, in the relationships between the small town and its hinterland, between the small towns and between small and large towns. Following the objective of sustainability, an increase in size or dependence on a metropolis cannot make up for the weakness of the small town. Development assumes the implementation of network partnerships within one territory or between territories which have the same problems. It also assumes that environmental quality be thought of not just as a rural resource or as one which has been devolved to natural areas but as one which is common and to be shared between the town and its hinterland. The qualifying identity of a small town has thus to be constructed with its territory, with the mountains.
- These issues make the small mountain town into a laboratory of how to reconstruct territorial systems.

### How appropriate are these issues for AlpCity?

Such as they have been defined, the operations planned by the programme contribute to this work of reconstructing and of redefining the small town, inasmuch as the operations aim to:

- reinforce the function of cultural centrality;
- confront the territorial function;
- acquire greater knowledge of the functions of a small town;
- adapt the processes and the facilities to the evolution of the tourist market;
- increase the towns' capacity for endogenous development;
- organise a partnership and exchanges which will make up for the structural difficulties of the isolation and the weakness of the small town;
- bring together and compare different political and geographical situations.

## Chapter III from Best Practices to a common strategy

### 1. The AlpCity objective: a common strategy made up of Best Practices

The AlpCity common strategy is particularly concerned with issues arising from urban development and regeneration in an alpine environment, with a view to contributing to the creation of a polycentric urban system also in alpine areas, as promoted by the Interreg III B Alpine Space Programme (European Union, 2003) and by the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) (European Consultative Forum, 1999).

The common strategy is divided into the following topic areas:

- economic development;
- services and quality of life;
- urban environment;
- cooperation among towns.

Each “topic area” has been divided into “fields of action” and these, in turn, were framed into individual “initiatives”: the case studies, examined by the AlpCity various working groups, aim at preparing a preliminary collection of Best Practices related to each of the types of initiative defined. The structure hereby proposed is typologically open-ended, in the sense that the range of initiatives, fields of action and topic areas can be extended. Should AlpCity give birth to a Regional Urban Observatory, the structure would benefit from being further extended.

For the time being, the project is laid out in the logic form of a hierarchy tree. However, a strategy does not consist in a list of initiatives, but it is rather a synergetic network of initiatives; that is, a network of complex policies implemented out on different levels and in various fields in such a way as to obtain the highest degree of effectiveness with regard to sustainability. As the work progresses, therefore, the tree form transforms itself into a network of synergetic interconnections. For a more detailed description of the AlpCity common strategy, please see Chapter V.

Also in the AlpCity framework the Best Practices issue merits attention both for the degree of innovation, which must mark a Best Practice, and for their role with regards to sustainability, which leads us back to the economic, social, environmental and institutional contents highlighted in the Agenda 21 (UNECED, 1992) and in the Habitat Agenda (UN Habitat, 1996).

### 2. Performing and spreading Best Practices: the challenge of innovation

A Best Practice is an innovative initiative which has led to the resolution of a problem in a more efficient and effective way than the one belonging to familiar, widely-employed and established practices and, above all, than the one stemming from other innovative practices.

As such, the Best Practice represents the end-result, the most innovative processes aspire to: any innovative process is in real terms a Best Practices system.

Best Practices are a typical research product; they ensue only from research projects requiring a scientific background or, at least skills and expertise deriving from scientific research methods. The Best Practice is a mixture of practical know-how and innovative scientific knowledge. Economic and social development is, in large measure, guaranteed by Best Practices production and circulation.

More generally, we need to seek out and bring into circulation the cultural foundations upon which new Best Practices can be constructed. And this can only take place through a complex and extended training programme, Best Practices circulation is a component of.

Research on Best Practices aims not just at inventing Best Practices but also at finding the best way of spreading them; because a Best Practice with insufficient circulation can only be socially effective to a very limited extent.

The development of a Best Practices database and its publication online have been brought about with the aim at spreading information on Best Practices and supporting their circulation, which, must however take into consideration the need for appropriate transfer activities, if it is to be effective.

Here we are concerned with Best Practices production and with the spread of information through the Best Practices Database. To analyse issues relating to Best Practices transfers, please see Chapter IV on the transfer of lessons learned.

### **3. Requisites of a Best Practice for sustainability: first principles**

In the field of policy-making for sustainable development, certain first principles have to be widely accepted, starting just with that of sustainability, in its various social, economic, environmental and institutional aspects.

When dealing with the local and global impact of the use of natural resources and waste emission, the principle of caution is highly consonant with that one of sustainability. Therefore, when faced with irreversible environmental impacts, affecting fundamental and irreplaceable components of the ecosphere, caution should be adopted in the attempt to preserve our natural heritage as much as possible.

Responsibility represents another fundamental principle, according to which the decision-making process must be followed through with a clear perception of its final goals. All initiatives put into practice should be monitored for effectiveness in the pursuit of these goals. All of this must unfold with full transparency, especially when initiative have proved ineffective and require corrective measures. Policies for sustainability pose new and arduous challenges; under these conditions, a Best Practice often arises gradually from a process of learning made up of experiments, probable errors, and subsequent corrections.

The 2001/42/CE directive on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of plans and programmes is also very significant from this point of view. This directive, in fact, rules that decision-making processes concerning such plans and programmes are subject to an evaluation procedure *ex ante*, *in itinere* and *ex post*. The principle of responsibility requires a great deal of commitment to the spread of assessment methods and the trial of suitable indicators.

Public participation is another important principle. The challenge of sustainability can be met if



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society undergoes a significant cultural evolution, and this will be possible only if local communities become more aware of the problems, requiring a shared vision and a high cohesion in intentions. Spread of information and citizen involvement in decision-making processes prove to be two pivotal requisites for any Best Practice. The Aarhus Convention is significant with regard to this subject, as is the 2003/4/CE Directive, which adopts its principles and which is concerned with citizens' right of access to information, decision-making processes and justice in environmental matters.

All these concepts are closely linked to the principle of cooperation between stakeholders. In a pluralistic and complex society like our own, it is unlikely that the solution for problems relating to sustainability is up to a single decision-maker. In general, such solutions depend on a sizeable number of parties, each of which has its own interests, which may well enter into conflict with those ones of the other parties involved. Such problems of conflicting interests can be solved only through negotiation leading to forms of partnership, whereby the various parties involved can cooperate in synergy towards a common end.

Finally there is the principle of competition. It is this one, which lends dynamism to all innovative processes. Where the formation of policies for sustainability is concerned with, it is evident that competition must always go hand in hand with cooperation. Notwithstanding, cooperation has to be enlivened by a healthy spirit of competition, which would stimulate the development, and dissemination of valuable Best Practices. Hence a Best Practice must be competitive, inasmuch as it must manifest clear advantages over other similar initiatives. To this end, a Best Practice must show its potential users that it is feasible and they can count on its effectiveness.

## 4. Selection criteria for Best Practices with a view to creating a Regional Urban Observatory in accordance with the UN Habitat

The UN Habitat Agency defines a Best Practice as an initiative which proved a tangible effect in improving the quality of life of population and environment (CityNet, UNDP, UN Habitat, 1998), and which must respond to the following basic criteria:

**a) Impact:** a Best Practice should demonstrate a positive and tangible impact on improving the living environment of people, particularly of the poor and disadvantaged, through taking effect in the following fields:

### a.1 Sustainable shelter and community development

- extension of safe water supply and sanitation;
- making housing, services and community facilities affordable;
- guarantee of access to land, secure tenure and financial resources;
- development of community-based planning and participation in decision making and resource allocation;
- inner-city core, neighbourhood and settlement revival and rehabilitation;
- safe and healthy building materials and technologies.

### a.2 Sustainable urban and regional development

- job creation and eradication of poverty;
- reduction of pollution and improvement of environmental health;

- improved access to public transport and communication;
- improved waste collection, recycling and reuse;
- greening of cities and effective use of public space;
- improved production and consumption cycles, including replacement/reduction of non renewable resources;
- protection and conservation of natural resources and of the environment;
- more efficient energy use and production;
- preservation of historically/culturally important sites;
- formulation and implementation of integrated and comprehensive urban development strategies.

### **a.3 Sustainable, efficient, accountable and transparent settlements management**

- more effective and efficient administrative, management and information systems;
- gender equality and equity in decision-making, resource-allocation and programme design and implementation;
- crime reduction and prevention;
- improved disaster preparedness, mitigation and reconstruction;
- social integration and reduction of exclusion;
- creation of leadership in inspiring action and change, including change in public policy;
- promotion of transparency and accountability;
- promotion of social equality and equity;
- improvement of administrative inter-agency coordination.

**b) Partnership:** must be based on a relationship between at least two private and public subjects of the types listed below:

- governmental organisations or agencies, including agencies with bilateral support;
- Habitat or Focal Points national committees;
- multilateral agencies (United Nations, World Bank, etc.);
- local councils, authorities or their associates;
- non-governmental organisations;
- community-based organisations;
- the private sector;
- research or other academic institutions;
- media;
- public or private foundations.

**c) Sustainability:** brings about lasting changes in at least one of the fields listed below:

- legislation, regulatory frameworks, by-laws or standards formally recognising the issues and problems that have been addressed;
- social policies and/or sectorial strategies at the (sub) national level, that have a potential for replication elsewhere;
- institutional frameworks and decision-making processes that assign clear roles and responsibilities to various levels and groups of actors, such as central and local governmental organisations and community-based organisations;
- efficient, transparent and accountable management systems that make more effective use of human, technical, financial and natural resources.



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These basic criteria are accompanied by further criteria designed to single out the kind of excellence required for the prize awarded by the Agency every two years <sup>(1)</sup>. These criteria are:

### **d) Leadership and reinforcement of the community**

- leadership in inspiring change and action, including change in public policy;
- empowerment of people, neighbourhoods and communities and incorporation of their contributions to decision-making;
- acceptance of and responsiveness to cultural and custom diversity;
- potential for transferability, up-scaling and replication;
- appropriateness to local conditions and levels of development.

### **e) Equal opportunities and social inclusion:** promote initiatives that:

- accept and respond to social and cultural diversity;
- promote social equity and equality, for example on the basis of income, gender, age, and mental/physical condition;
- recognise and value different abilities.

### **f) Local innovation and its transferability:**

- In which ways have the others have learned or benefited from the initiative?
- means employed for sharing or transferring knowledge, expertise and lessons learned.

## 5. Adaptation to the specific AlpCity Project issues

As we have seen, the criteria listed above offer a broad frame of reference for AlpCity activities, even if some of them refer to problems which may be considered marginal in the alpine environment, whilst, for the specific problems of that area, certain aspects would require a more detailed treatment in the list of criteria.

For example, one of the key issues faced by AlpCity in its attempt to define a common strategy is the problem of “endogenous local development”.

A recurring theme, which has come up in the documents so far prepared by the AlpCity Project, is the intrinsic weakness shared by the institutional, economic and social structures in alpine areas in meeting the challenge of endogenous local development in an autonomous way. Notable are:

- lack of technical and professional skills;
- local administration's lack of revenue, of financial flexibility and of the ability to rapidly and efficiently attract public and private resources;
- lacking partnership capacity among neighbouring local bodies and between public and private sector;

1) *i.e. the Dubai International Award for Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment.*

- difficulty in elaborating project ideas updated according to current social trends.

In view of this situation the only feasible alternative is bringing the necessary resources, which are endogenously lacking, if not entirely missing in, from outside. A Best Practice would thus constitute a type of initiative that, providing necessary outside support would successfully renew local institutional frameworks, enabling them to overcome their structural weaknesses and acquire the necessary skills to manage local endogenous development.

In fact, the final aim of AlpCity is just at activating a network of regions, local bodies and research centres, seeking to convey those skills in promoting local development to small towns which, due to their small scale, they are not able to acquire alone.

This central theme for the common strategy is paid fitting attention in some of the criteria indicated by the UN Habitat:

- sub-criteria b, dealing with on partnership;
- sub-criteria c, which are mainly concerned with institutional sustainability and the public administration's capacities for self-renewal;
- sub-criteria d, which deal with the topic of local leadership and reinforcement of community;
- sub-criteria f, which pose the problem of innovation at a local level and that one of potential for transferring Best Practices.

In applying these criteria to AlpCity Best Practices it will be necessary to pay particular attention to the following aspects:

- increased value of local resources;
- dependence on external resources;
- local training in new creative and practical skills;
- improvement of public administration;
- capability to attract external resources;
- local capacity to autonomously manage the end products of a Best Practice initiative driven by external aid;
- multiplying effect of a Best Practice on the spread of local endogenous capacities;
- effectiveness of the sustainability initiatives, that the high level local bodies must implement in order to make up for local weaknesses.

## Chapter IV beyond best practicing: the transfer of lessons learned

### 1. What do we mean by the transfer of lessons learned through Best Practices?

A Best Practice is an innovative initiative, which has led to the resolution of a problem in a more efficient and effective way than the one belonging to familiar, widely-employed and established practices and, above all, than the one stemming from other innovative practices.

A Best Practice is a concrete action that is generated by a local issue and from which a "lesson" is learned - that is, a method and an operational procedure whereby a given type of problem can be solved. It is just this "lesson learned" that comes to be transferred. Transfer is a process whereby the skills acquired through the Best Practice are applied in another context, in order to provide the best solution to an analogous problem. Transfer, in turn, poses another problem relating to Best Practices - that the practice involved must be innovative.

Often, when we think about innovation, attention comes to be centred on the process of creation and testing that makes the Best Practice. However, the production phase of a Best Practice is not sufficient in fully unfolding the benefits, which may be drawn from the innovative potential of the Best Practice itself. For this to take place, it is necessary to transfer the lesson learned from testing. It is not enough to know how to produce Best Practices, we must also know how to transfer them into society. Instructions on the transfer of Best Practices are an indissoluble part of the overall definition of a Best Practice itself.

The relevance of this topic is broad, touching upon the more general theme of the dissemination of innovation and of the efficiency and the rapidity it takes place with. It touches upon the themes of learning and "know-how", of the dissemination of knowledge, of skills and of the experiences necessary to be able to "do well" and, above all, of the need to respond to new problems in new ways. Furthermore, transfer contributes to the generation of a new vision of the real world that would make it possible to proceed towards a more sustainable direction. Nowadays there is a widespread belief that an action of *government*, aimed at sustainability, cannot develop effectively without accompanying its policies with an action of *governance*, aiming at generating and transferring Best Practices.

### 2. First principles

According to UN Habitat (CityNet, UNDP, UN Habitat, 1998) the transfer of lessons learned from a Best Practice must follow several general principles, which are listed below:

- it should be a form of decentralised cooperation, where a Best Practice is not "dropped down from on high", but is rather directly transferred from the parties possessing the skill



to those ones not owning but desiring to acquire it. The network should be the support framework, the environment where this transfer can occur;

- the primary focus should be on demand: although supply is also considered, it can only exist in response to an agreed-upon and accepted demand input. The relationship between them can thus be said to be bilateral, “peer-to-peer”;
- the “peer-to-peer” relationship implies just not only a 'will to learn' and a 'will to teach', but also a 'will to change' on the basis of lessons learned;
- this form of transfer is an effective and efficient way to transmit information, knowledge, skills and experience;
- it is a multidimensional form of learning, combining policy, administration, technical aspects and management, which are difficult to be provided together in such a holistic form in more formal learning environments such as seminars, conferences, training courses, etc.

One of the necessary ingredients for a successful transfer is a willingness to “think outside the box”. Innovation deriving from a Best Practice together with its adaptation to other situations requires creativity in ideas, design and application.

The success of a transfer depends in a large measure on the quality of the practice to be transferred. For a more detailed treatment of Best Practices please see Chapter III, which will provide sufficient indications of the basic requisites of a Best Practice, that is:

- a tangible positive impact on living conditions;
- a partnership between two or more public/private organisations;
- the sustainability of its social, economic, environmental and cultural components.

Experience acquired through Best Practices has shown that:

- partnerships are key components in making initiatives and projects more sustainable;
- visioning process (the process of constructing a shared vision) at the community level is cohesive and empowering;
- learning from good and best practices is an effective capacity-building tool.

In an effort to advance visioning processes and networking capacities, transfers of lessons learned are seen as components of a larger perspective, which facilitates the innovative adaptation of effective practices.

The knowledge, transmitted in this way, is derived “from real-world experience together with the human expertise capable of transforming that knowledge into social action”. This quotation highlights the fact that Best Practices and the lessons deriving from them are by nature “social actions”, imposing problems of information and public consensus, of participation, of partnerships between subjects whose cooperation will be crucial to the success of the action, of political support, of administrative feasibility, of technical skills, and so on.

These concepts are congruent with the nature of the Best Practices the AlpCity project is concerned with. These Best Practices are related to the city, a typically social phenomenon, which brings economical, political, environmental, cultural, administrative, normative and other aspects into play.

Transfer is a complex procedure which cannot be traced back exclusively to the sphere of technical skills, however important it may be. The transfer of the social practices, which touch upon collective interests, requires the support of a suitable organisation, able to face this



multiplicity of aspects in a fitting manner and, above all, to take responsibility for the dissemination of Best Practices, overseeing its transfer to all the institutional subjects it refers to. Hence, bilateral transfer - which the AlpCity Project defines as a "from city to city" transfer (UN Habitat, 2005) - must be supported by a third party, made up by the network, which is specifically responsible for "governance" in emitting innovation in public policy, bearing into mind the multidimensionality which typifies such a task.

### 3. The role of networking

In order that the meeting between supply of and demand for Best Practices takes place and gives rise to a form of effective transfer, the need arises for a structure offering an environment propitious to the transfer itself. This structure is a network among those subjects who have similar problems and who have decided to cooperate to solve them in a spirit of competitive cooperation.

Networking is a particularly useful instrument in peer-to-peer learning and in the Best Practices transfer, providing partners with conditions wherein they may access information, tools and methods. "The concept of networking has evolved considerably in recent years, from a means of establishing useful contacts to a tool for building capacity".

Modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), with the spread of the Internet, have had a fundamental role in bringing on this change. The Internet has enormously increased the capacity for interaction between those wishing to acquire and those wishing to offer knowledge, skills and information (UN Habitat, 1999).

But a network able to carry out these tasks will be something more than a simple space for cooperative intermediation. Inasmuch as it is a structure that accumulates experience and knowledge in Best Practices and in their transfer, a network is also a "learning organisation".

"Although the benefits that can be obtained by the demand-side may seem obvious, an important factor contributing to a successful best practice transfer lies in the preparation of the learning process, before, during and after the exchange [...] One of the lasting benefits should be the development of a learning organization."

A network's task is not, however, just accumulating experience in the generation and transfer of Best Practices regardless of their content. As we said, a network comes from an agreement among various parties, who decided to cooperate to solve shared problems. Therefore a network becomes also an accumulator of innovative skills in solving problems in a particular field, such as, the one of sustainable urban development, the AlpCity network is concerned with.

Bearing in mind the future possibility of the set up of an AlpCity *Regional Urban Observatory* (RUO), as part of the UN Habitat Agency *Global Urban Observatory* (UN Habitat Global Urban Observatory, 1998), the network should equip itself to carry out the functions of a learning centre, drawing inspiration from the structure of the UN Habitat Agency *Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme* (UN Habitat, 2003).

## 4. Transfer Stages

Although the transfer process, the network must bring about, may vary in accordance with different local situations, nonetheless, it should follow a certain procedure, so as to insure the highest degree of efficiency attainable in the given circumstances. This procedure can be divided up into a sequence of stages, as below:

- **Information dissemination:** the targeted spread of information on innovative practices is an indispensable means of identifying demand and bringing those requesting Best Practices into contact with those supplying them. At this stage, the network works to disseminate Best Practices, a typical function of a learning centre.
- **Matching demand with supply:** demand emerges as a will to adopt a Best Practice and, above all, to acquire the skills necessary for its realisation and management. At this stage it is necessary to identify the counterparts of the transfer for both supply and demand, their roles and their responsibilities. The network's role at this stage is one of intermediation between supply and demand.
- **Feasibility and adaptation:** a study of feasibility will be carried out and a plan for transfer adaptation and implementation outlined, making sure that the conditions necessary for the implementation exist and that the necessary technical, financial, managerial and other resources are available. In the course of adaptation, participants should identify the necessary innovations to face local problems efficiently. At this stage the network's role is one of facilitation and ex ante evaluation of the initiative efficiency.
- **Transfer implementation:** it is at this stage that the proper implementation of the Best Practice takes place. The full involvement and participation of the local community and all the stakeholders is very important at this stage. The network continues to act as facilitator, a particularly important role in processes requiring the participation of all interested parties.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** This stage aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the transfer and of any innovations introduced thereby. At this stage the network will serve as an in itinere and ex post evaluator.
- **Lessons learned:** as it is more than likely if the transfer is itself a Best Practice, which produced innovative elements, it should be added to the Best Practices database, highlighting the lessons learned. At this stage the network becomes a learning centre.

As we can see, the various activities, which make up a transfer process, highlight the network's variety of governance tasks, ranging from dissemination of Best Practices to mediation between supply and demand, to facilitation for social interaction and negotiation, to evaluation efficiency, to monitoring, storing and circulating skills and experiences, which derive from the constant innovation of Best Practices and their transfer into diverse local situations.



## 5. Transfer feasibility

One of the most crucial stages of a transfer is its feasibility evaluation. Flexibility is an important requisite for a transfer feasibility. For this reason, the network, in its supplying intermediation and support, must operate according to pragmatic methods with a great deal of adaptability. Administrative structures must not be cumbersome. They must be fast-acting and efficient in making the most of meetings between demand and supply fruitful. They must be open to innovative external stimulus, not stiff in their mould. Promoters of innovative practices must be able to constantly renew themselves.

A possible checklist for evaluating a transfer feasibility would consider the following key issues:

### • Technical support

- Is the specific element of the Best Practice to be transferred clearly defined?
- Is the locally available technical support up to coping with the Best Practice?
- Is there resistance to change amongst those who would provide technical support locally?

### • Social and political support

- Does the transfer have the broad-based support of the community? (What is its role)?
- Would the local leadership support the project or is there resistance to change?
- Does the transfer require any changes in legislation, policy or institutional frameworks in order to take place?
- If political change at any government level is foreseen, will this change affect the long-term success of the transfer?

### • Economic support

- Are there sufficient and assured resources for transfer?
- Are there assured resources for the transfer follow-up and its long-term economic sustainability ?

### • Environmental support

- Are there special social, economic or environmental considerations that could make the transfer difficult?
- Are potential environmental impacts resulting from the transfer addressed?

This list is not exhaustive. Many other issues peculiar to local areas could be added. It is important that the evaluation of a transfer feasibility is carried out jointly by those responsible for the Best Practice supply and those responsible for its request. In any case, the results of the evaluation should be outlined in a report signed by both parties. This document will also serve as a reminder to both parties of the initiative objectives, its possible obstacles, the opportunities presented and the commitments the initiative was born from, to some extent, binds both contracting parties.

## 6. Transfer methods

Another crucial stage in insuring the efficiency and effectiveness of a transfer is requiring a

facilitation of the interaction among the many parties involved (stakeholders and local communities) and mediation between Best Practices supply and demand.

These tasks can be carried out more incisively if suitable methods are adopted and whose effectiveness has been demonstrated through a past transfer experience. Obviously, the application of such methods will depend on the complexity and on the commitment required by each individual Best Practice. The methods suggested are as follows:

- **Study tours:** These tours aim at offering those thinking about adopting Best Practices a concrete demonstration of their practical effects. Their effectiveness rests on the principle that “seeing is believing” (CityNet, UNDP, UN Habitat, 1998). Study tours can often be more convincing than solutions set forth in books and can help to generate knowledge and understanding of the need to change obsolete norms and regulations. Thus, the city or cities chosen for particular excellence in applying Best Practices can become, with appropriate support from the network, showcases of Best Practices effectiveness. The effectiveness of such a tour can be greatly enhanced by prior exchange and sharing of information on key indicators, by focusing on specific issues for learning and exchange and by well-matched counterparts.
- **Study tours with action planning:** a more elaborate transfer process than that one described above which should, therefore, be restricted to more challenging cases. This involves formal and prior exchange of information regarding the receiving partner's intention of learning from the host within the framework of an ongoing or about-to-be implemented action plan. This will require the hosts to think about their lessons learned and to share their knowledge and know-how on various aspects of design, implementation, decision-making and impact assessment. The main advantage of such a tool is a more detailed mutual understanding of the needs, contexts and priorities of both parties. This process demands much more preparation from both sides and a serious commitment to mutual learning and exchange. Expectations for both parties should be clearly stipulated in terms of reference for the study tour and any follow up activities.
- **Staff exchange:** This measure should also be applied in complex cases. It is similar to the previous one and is recommended as a follow up to a study tour whereby staff, usually from the participants' side, stays with the host for the purpose of on-site, on-the-job learning and coaching. It can also involve the host sending staff to the participant for follow-up co-operation during critical phases of implementation. This form of exchange can be very effective. “Peer-to-peer” learning and professional training can help win confidence and support of technical personnel, helping to overcome fears that staff roles might be negatively affected by changes in accepted working practices.
- **Technical cooperation agreement:** This measure has also to be considered in more challenging transfers. Such an agreement may encompass all of the above tools plus the use of a secondment of technical staff and/or experts from the host to the participant. Such an agreement usually involves some costs, such as travel and accommodation, and may also include contractual arrangements. Clear terms of reference should be used to ensure that all aspects of the co-operation agreement are fully discussed, agreed to and approved by both parties.



- **Twinning arrangements:** This scheme has roots in the long tradition of “twinning”, even though earlier twinning programmes did not share their concern with the governance of mutual cooperation in innovation. Such a scheme requires long-term commitment on behalf of both parties involved to systematically engage in peer-to-peer learning, exchanges and study tours. Twinning arrangements usually involve sharing and exchange at all levels, including the political, social-cultural and technical dimensions. For this reason these arrangements are suitable to partnership projects between two towns, implying not only an exchange of single Best Practice experiences, but also more complex strategies of towns sustainable management.

## 7. Monitoring and evaluating transfer effectiveness

As we have seen transfer evaluation is another task the transfer-supporting network takes on the prime responsibility for. At this juncture, it is worth distinguishing between the effectiveness of the transfer process and the effectiveness of the Best Practice transferred.

The evaluation of the latter requires indicators of effectiveness, which should be included in the Best Practices database and which are used to monitor the effects of the practices, sometimes over a relatively long period of time. These indicators are therefore able to gauge the specific qualities of each Best Practice, remaining sensible to changes produced by the practice including those, which appear in the medium-long term.

There are several different indicators for monitoring the various stages of the transfer process (OECD, 1998). Such an evaluation, which should be carried out *ex ante* in the feasibility report, concludes with an *ex post* evaluation at the end of the transfer process. UN Habitat (CityNet, UNDP, UN Habitat, 1998) have proposed the following checklist of criteria from which indicators can be drawn:

- **participation:** Does the transfer involve and/or promote participation of all possible stakeholders?
- **transparency:** Is the transfer process open and accessible to all the stakeholders?
- **accountability:** Are mechanisms in place to ensure accountability for actions and responsibilities of all partners involved?
- **inclusion:** Is the participation of all potential stakeholders considered in the transfer design?
- **financial feasibility:** Are resources and/or funding available to realize and sustain the initiative? Are funding alternatives identified?
- **sustainability:** Does the initiative consider the economic, environmental and social needs without trading off one to the other's detriment, now or in the future?

A transfer and its assessment should be presented on an apposite report form with indication of the lesson learned, so that its contents may be considered for inclusion in the Best Practices database.

## 8. Lessons learned from the transfer procedure

Transfer, like any Best Practice, must result in “lessons learned”, which may be transferred to other types of network, extending the network capacities.

Lessons learned must, above all, highlight the obstacles encountered in the course of the transfer and the most effective methods found for surmounting them. Obstacles above all consist in resistance to change, be it political, technical or socio-cultural. Other difficulties can derive from inappropriate rules and regulations, inability to work across departmental or divisional boundaries, or difficulty in getting the various stakeholders and the local community involved in the process. Another factor, which lessons learned should bring to light, concerns opportunities and pivotal aspects in the Best Practice revealed or generated by the transfer process. These points usually feature capacity for political reform, guaranteeing accountability in decision-making processes, reinforcement of the local community and its institutions and of the fabric of NGOs. When considering lessons learned, the UN Habitat suggests that attention should be paid to the following aspects (CityNet, UNDP, UN Habitat, 1998):

- Visits provide hosts with an opportunity for learning, capacity-building and evaluation. Hosts can learn from visiting teams, and also benefit from reviewing and further improving their ongoing good and best practices. Did such opportunities emerge during the transfer process?
- Transfers should focus on the process that made innovations possible and not just on technology or know-how. Staff exchanges and visits should be conceived as an action-planning exercise to help participants share experiences on the processes involved and to assess opportunities and constraints for adaptation or transfer. Did the transfer fulfil these purposes?
- Visiting and host teams should be matched and should include various actors: decision-makers, community leaders, technical and managerial staff, as well as other relevant stakeholders. In addition to focusing on the current good or best practice, suppliers of best practices should identify other aspects of current work of potential interest to participants such as other projects, management and information systems, etc. which might be of interest to their counterparts. Did the transfer fulfil these aims?
- Learning can take place at individual, organizational and institutional levels, and therefore there are different types of transfers that can take place: NGO-NGO, NGO - city, city-city or city-other local bodies. The transfer of process skills, such as participatory planning, conflict resolution, mediation, community mobilization and participation are as important as technical skills and know-how. Did the transfer take these considerations into account?
- Assessing initiative costs and effectiveness is an important aspect of the learning and transfer process. What were the results of this evaluation?
- There is a need to understand the local administrative/political and social/economic context in order to fully assess the opportunities and constraints to a successful transfer. The costs involved in peer-to-peer learning and exchanges, particularly within a given region, are often lower and more effective than using experts or consultants or sending staff to supply-driven training courses. To what extent were these aspects taken into account during the transfer?

To reply to all these questions a close enquiry with regard to different transfer stages should be carried out; successful results and problems will arise from the analysis of this survey; from reciprocal and critical reflections upon these results, alternatives and remedies could be identified and inserted in the lessons learned.

## Chapter V the common strategy of the AlpCity Project

### 1. Why do we need a common strategy?

The term common strategy was introduced by the EU, just to describe a network of activities shared by its various member states, so as to coordinate efforts in facing a common problem. A textbook example is the European Union “Common Strategy on the Implementation of the Water Framework Directive”.

Furthermore, the term “common strategy” well expresses our idea that, rather than setting up a group of more or less independent initiatives, we will build up an interrelated network of activities, which will have to be managed in a synergetic way. Modifying conditions relating to the sustainability of Alpine urban fabric is an unconceivable task, unless we act through a complex of temporally and spatially coordinated schemes across sectors.

From this point of view the term *common strategy* is preferable to *policies*, which might suggest a selection of more or less independent sectorial activities.

After these preliminary remarks, we should, nonetheless, emphasise that the AlpCity project method for constructing a common strategy will pivot on professional training and dissemination of Best Practices. The common strategy will be considered as a construction *in progress*, arising, primarily from localised experiences and being enriched and extended in proportion to the local community's capacity to develop innovative initiatives of Best Practices generation and dissemination.

The AlpCity network was conceived because the Regions and the local bodies, which make it up, became aware that sustainable development of small alpine towns is a shared problem. The network's aim is at cooperating in the co-development of a common strategy, in order to solve this problem as effectively as possible. Operatively speaking, the AlpCity common strategy is an innovative system of Best Practices targeting sustainability.

The AlpCity common strategy is particularly concerned with urban development and regeneration in the Alpine environment. We hope to contribute to the creation of a polycentric urban network in mountain areas, as promoted by the *Interreg IIIB Alpine Space Programme* (European Union, 2003) and by the *European Spatial Development Perspective* (ESDP) (European Consultative Forum, 1999) in the *Alpine Convention* framework.

If our aim is at consolidating and following through the AlpCity network experiences by setting up a *Regional Urban Observatory* (RUO), as part of the UN Habitat *Global Urban Observatory* (GUO), the common strategy imposes itself, with still greater force, as a necessary purpose. We should not forget that both Agenda 21 (UNEP, 1992) and the Habitat Agenda (UN Habitat, 1996) clearly recognise the need to face social, economic, environmental and institutional problems with a holistic approach, with the aim at developing complex and interrelated strategies, in order to face the challenges posed by sustainability as effectively as possible.



## 2. A synergetic network

If we are to follow the path outlined above, we need to coin a shared definition of “common strategy”. To this end, we propose this one:

- the AlpCity common strategy is divided up into topic areas (at the moment, they are: economic development, services and quality of life, and the urban environment and cooperation among towns but, after the Regional Urban Observatory constitution, the number of topic areas could increase);
- each topic area is subdivided into fields of action (for example, in the “services and quality of life” topic group, one of the fields of action identified is: “the adoption of innovative service management and provision systems and increased local population's participation”);
- each field of action, in turn, is divided up into individual actions (for example, one of the possible activities identified by the field of action entitled “the adoption of innovative service management and provision systems and increased local population's participation” is “putting local library services on line”. Case studies are always based on “actions”).

The strategy can therefore be described as a logical structure, organised hierarchically into levels consisting in “topics”, “fields of action” and “actions”. Later in this chapter we will propose a possible framework for strategies following this pattern.

This tree structure, however, is just a logical dividing up of the activity levels, and cannot correspond to the interdependence system, which must connect the various actions within the strategy. The strategy is in fact, by definition, a synergetic system of actions. Its structure does not have a tree form. It could rather be pictured as a synergetic network of interdependent relationships.

For example, in the AlpCity project there are three case studies belonging to the “services and quality of life” topic category and referring to the following issues:

- mountain schools;
- local public libraries;
- services granted to young people.

All three of these projects are primarily concerned with young people: their education, their cultural development and their recreational activities. All of them should face *networking problems* by making a better use of ICT, namely Internet. Three different networks have to be formed, one dedicated to schools, another one to libraries and a third one to culture and recreational activities. These three networks are all active in the same area made up of small mountain towns.

It should be clear by now that these three networks would derive evident reciprocal advantages by cooperating with each other, rather than considering themselves as entirely separate entities, namely: lowering management costs, empowering individual services, reciprocal stimulus for innovating, sharing common activities, expanding the possible network of partners, reaching a higher degree of public participation, etc.

Moreover, such a cooperation is greatly facilitated by the today's availability of Internet, which permits the setting up of links among different networks and especially the sharing of useful instruments. Thus, for example, the library, redefined as an innovative, multimedia and open resource, would be both a useful service for schools and a tool for cultural associations working with young people.



This synergy is the very added value of a strategic vision in comparison with an episodic one concentrating on separated individual Best Practices. Pragmatically speaking, a strategy is a cohesive system of activities. A good strategy is a flexible system of possible synergetic combinations of Best Practices, which can be offered as part of different packages in various different combinations, so as to be adaptable to diverse local situations.

Our choice in concentrating on Best Practices has a variety of consequences at a methodological level. One of these is the need to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives put into practice, and to be sure that this assessment is transparent and fully verifiable and repeatable by everybody. This means that we need appropriate indicators and adequate monitoring systems for in itinere and ex post evaluation. We cannot, therefore, define a common strategy based on Best Practices without tackling the problem of defining its evaluation indicators.

### 3. Basic concepts concerning the evaluation of socio-economic programmes through the use of indicators

While evaluating socio-economic programmes through the use of indicators, a specific terminology has started to take a wide diffusion (Tavistock Institute, 2003), especially in the field of programmes evaluation related to the European Structural Funds, such as the Interreg programmes. The typology of indicators, these evaluations refer to, distinguishes the indicators in the following categories:

- **input**: different kind of resources used for the implementation of programmes, namely financial, human, organizational, regulation instruments and material goods;
- **output**: products of the programme implementation, such as the public expenditure ones;
- **result**: immediate advantages for the direct beneficiaries of the programme. An immediate advantage refers to the period, when a beneficiary is directly involved into the programme;
- **impact**: medium-long term consequences affecting both direct beneficiaries and people or organisations not directly involved in the programme (externalities).

This is the typology of indicators the AlpCity Project has to refer to. They have to be applied while evaluating, not only the whole AlpCity Project, but also all the individual case-studies related to Best Practices.

Actually, it is necessary to start from this information (input, output, result and impact) in order to proceed in evaluating implemented actions on the basis of effectiveness and efficiency criteria defined as follows:

- **effectiveness**: it could be expressed with reference to outputs, results and impacts as ratio between really achieved outputs, results and impacts and the ones expected as goals of the programmes;
- **efficiency**: it refers to outputs, results and impacts concretely achieved towards the costs (financial inputs).

Effectiveness and efficiency could be measured for each programme phase or measure, and

provide the evaluators of the programmes with useful information to improve their decisions concerning future planning activities.

Further criteria, other than the basic ones mentioned above, could be considered, namely:

- **relevance**: how much relevant are the programme goals with reference to needs and priorities defined at national and community/EC level ?
- **utility**: does the programme has a real impact on target groups or population with reference to their real needs?
- **sustainability**: in which way are the changes produced during the programme implementation expected to last after programme ending?

#### 4. Towards an evaluation of economic, social and environmental sustainability

The briefly mentioned <sup>(2)</sup> concepts have to be integrated with some basic concepts established on the occasion of some plans and programmes environmental evaluation, namely the strategic environmental evaluation (SEE) according to the EC Directive 2001/42/CE.

Actually, in the environmental evaluation of plans and programmes the method based on indicators makes reference to the sequence DPSIR (Driving force - Pressure - State - Impact - Response) (EEA, 1996; OECD, 1995), where the acronym DPSIR refers to:

- driving force: activity generating environmental impact factors (e.g. vehicular traffic);
- pressure: factor producing an environmental impact (e.g. noise emission);
- state: state of quality of an environmental component sensitive to the analysed factor of impact (e.g. state of wellness of the population exposed to a certain level of a background noise);
- impact: change of the quality of an environmental component following a pressure or a response;
- response: reaction of a plan or programme aimed at balancing the environmental pressures, in order to trace the impact back to sustainable limits, or more generally, to reach sustainable conditions (e.g. sound barriers aimed at bringing the acoustic level back to the acceptable limits established by the law).

The concept of response of the sequence DPSIR corresponds to that one of output described previously. The response has a correspondence with the measures and interventions representing the concrete output of a plan or a programme. On the contrary, the environmental impact includes the concepts of result and impact, namely the immediate impacts concerning target groups and the longer-term externalities referred to the whole system.

In line with an environmental perspective, also the concept of sustainability requires some additional information, which extends its meaning over the simple concept of impact durability.

2) Additional information in: Tavistock Institute (2003) *The Evaluation of Socio-Economic Development. The GUIDE. Suggested paragraph: 4.4. Programme monitoring/Monitoring indicators of: Alpine Space Programme. Interreg IIIB. Community Initiative. This paragraph presents a direct connection to the AlpCity Project.*



Actually an admissibility threshold has to be respected in terms of environmental impact. This limit refers to both the components of the biosphere and the ones related to the cultural aspects of historical heritage and landscape.

Furthermore, the performance criterion of a plan or programme responses has to be considered especially in case of comparison among some plan or programme alternative scenarios during an environmental evaluation.

Performance is conceived as ratio between the effectiveness and the cost of the responses (*cost/effectiveness*). The effectiveness summarizes the impact of some scenario responses of a specific plan compared to the correspondent impact in case of a 'zero' alternative (absence of the plan).

In line with this note, the terminology related to a socio-economic evaluation could be used while adapting the one typical of the environmental evaluation, in order to attain a method enabling to foster an integrated evaluation on economic, social and environmental aspects, or rather the three aspects of the sustainability <sup>(3)</sup>.

## 5. Targets and effectiveness of Best Practices

As highlighted above, the criterion of effectiveness has a particular importance, with reference to the socio-economic evaluation as well as the environmental one. This criterion could not be separated - at least in the first kind of evaluation - from the outline of programme goals or more precisely from their targets. Targets are aims defined in quantitative terms with reference to a precise deadline.

For example, as regards the initiative 'Municipalities networking in the field of library service management', the target could be defined as output in the following way: 'setting up a network of at least five municipal libraries by the year 2006'. In this sense, also the effectiveness - as well as the efficiency - will be defined in terms of outputs. In line with this consideration if the number of libraries put in a network is five, we can state that the action was "sufficiently effective". If the number is inferior to five, the action is evaluated as "insufficiently effective". In case it is superior to the mentioned number, the effectiveness of the action is considered as 'best'.

It is important to define goals in the most appropriate way, and consequently the indicators of effectiveness: both of them have to be in line with action aims. These purposes have to be well specified simultaneously to the definition of the problem the action aims at solving. Sometimes one indicator is not sufficient. Actually when different actions with multiple effects (and objectives) are undertaken, several indicators are necessary in line with the number and kind of effects (and objectives) aimed at being evaluating.

With reference to libraries initiative, the question could be related to the final aim of this action of networking. There could be different answers, for example:

3) *With a long-term perspective, the one adopted while formulating the proposal for a Regional Urban Observatory (to be launched after the ending of AlpCity Project), the RUO is conceived with some monitoring functions based on the common set of indicators of the UN Habitat. Publication of reference: UN Habitat (1997) Monitoring human settlements with urban indicators, Nairobi.*

- a. increasing the number of books/publications available in each library;
- b. decreasing library services costs;
- c. increasing the number of library services users;
- d. increasing the number of books/publications consulted.

It is evident that this definition of aims does not refer to outputs, but to results and impacts. Actually objectives a. and b. are related to two immediate effects of the action, while objectives c. and d. identify longer-term effects.

It could happen that all the listed objectives are included in the final purposes of that action. In this sense this is a multi-objectives action. In order to be evaluated, the initiative requires a number of indicators of effectiveness (in terms of results and impacts) equal to the number of objectives. Each of them has to be defined as target, as follows:

- a 100% increase of the number of books available in each library;
- a 20% decrease of library services costs;
- a 10% increase of the users number of library services within 5 years;
- a 20% increase of consulted books/publications within 5 years.

We could immediately notice the evaluation is as much more onerous as indicators are numerous, and consequently as monitoring is complex. In case the evaluation of the effectiveness is developed only in terms of outputs and results, it is not necessary to set up a real monitoring system. Actually, the necessary data require only one observation at the end of the project (this observation could be simple in relation to outputs and slightly more complex as concerns results). On the contrary, once the effectiveness refers to impacts, it is necessary to set up a monitoring system. Its cost depends on the quantity of impacts, and the complexity of surveying activities as well as the duration of monitoring process itself.

## 6. Ex ante, in itinere and ex post evaluation

A Best Practice effects assessment requires:

- an *ex ante* assessment: a forecast of potential positive and negative impacts of the project should take place during the planning stage, in order to take all possible measures to ensure sustainability against negative effects;
- an *in itinere* assessment: while the project is in progress, its effects should be monitored and compared with the effects expected, so as to make necessary corrections;
- an *ex post* assessment: with hindsight, when the action effects are stable and clear and allow us to carry out a final assessment to see whether the targets have been met and whether negative consequences have been effectively countered.

At each one of these stages, assessment should be based on the same set of indicators.

A Best Practice comes to be recognised as such through the assessment process outlined above. An initiative is validated as a Best Practice only if it was correctly assessed and if assessment results demonstrate its effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

As we have seen, assessment involves monitoring and a consequent public reporting of Best



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Practices effects. This system for monitoring the effects of an initiative is an indissoluble component of the process whereby a Best Practice is defined.

There are two other factors to bear in mind when preparing a set of indicators and the related monitoring system: spatial-temporal dimensions of effects and the need to make information publicly accessible.

As far as the first of these aspects is concerned, we should bear in mind that there is always a certain margin of time between the implementation of an initiative and its effects on the system. Hence, if it is to correctly evaluate an initiative final and lasting effectiveness, the monitoring system should take into account the system response time following the launch of the scheme. Response time may be long in some cases.

We should, moreover, always take into account the spatial dimensions of initiatives and of the systems they act upon. The relevance of spatial factors for effects valuation should be reflected in the indicators, which should become proportionately geo-referential. This need to make indicators geo-referential gives rise to problems in making the GIS indicators of Best Practice-related information uniform.

As far as the second factor mentioned above, namely the need for public access to the evaluation-related information, it is necessary that

- criteria, methods and techniques of the assessment process are fully transparent; therefore the indicators must be clearly defined and the assessment procedure have to be repeatable with the same results by everybody;
- results should be available to the general public. Best Practices assessment information is of public interest and it must be treated in accordance with the basic principle of e-government, according to which all databases containing information of public interest should be made publicly accessible; Internet has now become a vital tool in guaranteeing good public access to information.

The use of assessment indicators for Best Practices is also governed by specific rules, which should be found out and respected. We limited ourselves here to outlining the most noteworthy aspects of these rules, bearing in mind only the specific needs of the AlpCity Best Practices assessment.

## 7. The framework of the AlpCity common strategy

In the following pages, we will put forward a preliminary, general proposal for the framework of the AlpCity common strategy. The strategy is divided up into four topics:

- a. Economic development
- b. Services and quality of life
- c. Urban environment
- d. Cooperation among towns.

In this section, we will define each topic by outlining the issues involved. We will list the fields of action, each topic is divided up into. Finally, we will list the activities described in our various case studies, indicating the partner coordinators of each case.

This framework is open-ended, that is, it may expand at any of its various levels (possible topics,

fields of action, or individual activities). Above all, it allows for the identification of synergetic relationships between its component parts. Such relationships will arise as a result of the individual activities being perceived as part of a system, in accordance with a strategic vision. In this preliminary layout, which will undoubtedly undergo further alterations, the framework of the AlpCity common strategy is as follows.

## Topic Area a. Economic development

### Issues

- Re-launching, consolidation and development of existing small and medium-sized businesses, and above all of those ones contributing to the sustainable development and equilibrium of mountain areas, in accordance with the need to safeguard the landscape and the area and its cultural and social characteristics.
- Developing and attracting new small and medium-sized businesses, including those concerned with new technologies, telecommunications, services, etc, in order to broaden the scope of local development and professional activities and improve the quality of life of the local population; professional advice and encouragement to entrepreneurs.
- Professional training and assisted introduction and re-introduction into the local job market for individuals of all ages and at all social levels - whether they be disadvantaged or not (young people, mature workers, women, ethnic minorities, etc.).
- Training and refresher training for advanced-level professionals meeting market needs and prepared to remain and invest in the area.

### Fields of action

- a.1 Large scale winter sports events in local areas.
- a.2 Support for local businesses.
- a.3 Support for local craftspeople.
- a.4 Development of tourist industry.

### Actions

- a.1.1 Piedmont Region (Italy). Local Development and the Winter Olympic Games' legacy, implemented in two Olympic stations (Pragelato in Chisone Valley and Prali in Germanasca Valley).
- a.2.1 Lombardy Region (Italy). Trying out innovative schemes for keeping commercial services available in disadvantaged mountain areas.
- a.3.1 Lombardy Region (Italy). Trying out innovative schemes for local business and crafts in disadvantaged mountain areas.
- a.4.1 Municipality of Grainau (Germany). Setting up and implementing local authority schemes encouraging business and the development of the tourist industry.
- a.4.2 Municipality of Saint Maurice (Switzerland). "Tourism and the Future" in Saint Maurice.
- a.4.3 Municipality of Tschlin (Switzerland). Integrated tourism strategies.

## Topic Area b. Services/Quality of life

### Issues

- Need to improve the quality and quantity of services provided in all the areas described,



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with regard above all to the needs of mountain communities and of the accessibility of services to these communities, above all in areas where there is a low density of population (which may also depend on seasons), with a demographic make-up not always balanced.

- Innovation in services management and provision, bearing in mind the need to sustain the economic, social and cultural development of small communities, which are not yet able to fully profit from services distance-access; bringing together private and public service sectors in single centres; encouraging a greater involvement of the private sector and the local population.

### Fields of action

- b.1 Quantitative and qualitative improvement of private and public services available to the population (social, health, cultural and commercial services, etc.), bearing in mind community needs at a local level and demographic variations.
- b.2 Adoption of innovative systems for the management and provision of services, with a greater involvement on the part of local populations.

### Actions

- b.1.1 Piedmont Region (Italy). Mountain Schools (Entracque and Valdieri).
- b.2.1 Provincial Government of Lower Austria (Austria). Network of multimedia public libraries.
- b.2.2 Provincial Government of Lower Austria (Austria). Youth network in small-medium sized towns in the Alps.
- b.2.3. Municipality of Grainau (Germany). Improving/promoting services addressing the problems/needs of young people.

## Topic Area c. Urban environment

### Issues

- Recovery and regeneration of the historical centres of mountain villages.
- New planning and regeneration of the most recently constructed areas: expansion of residential areas (for first and second homes), access to small rural towns and to their main entrance and exit routes, streets, commercial, manufacturing and industrial areas.
- New planning and regeneration of culturally important buildings and public areas, in order to promote fully integrated local development (combining environmental, social, economic and cultural considerations) and a strong identification between the local community and the area.

### Fields of action

- c.1 Recovery of abandoned structures.
- c.2 Renewed vision of environmental problems.
- c.3 Re-evaluation of cultural and historical heritage.
- c.4 Development of a more sustainable mobility.
- c.5 Developing skills in dealing with environmental issues.

### Actions

- c.1.1 Piedmont Region (Italy). Reclaiming abandoned mountain villages.
- c.1.2 Veneto Region (Italy). Renewing and optimising the use of abandoned rural buildings, which were once used for productive activities.



- c.1.3 Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy). Guidelines for reclaiming abandoned villages in the borderland with Austria and Slovenia.
- c.1.1 Piedmont Region (Italy). Living in Mountain Areas: Maira Valley and Po Valley in the Province of Cuneo.
- c.2.1 Franche-Comté Region (France). Improving the public image of the longitudinal axis of the Jura Mountains.
- c.3.1 Franche-Comté Region (France). Improving public image and promoting historical sites in order to make the region more attractive to tourists.
- c.4.1 Municipality of Grainau (Germany). Improving the local area appearance, e.g. better streets.
- c.5.1 Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy). Guidelines for obtaining environmental certification.

## Topic Area d. Cooperation among towns

### Issues

- Administrative cooperation among small mountain towns, so as to create/implement networks and associations, improve services and bring about an exchange of experiences.

### Fields of action

- d.1 A network to develop/improve services.
- d.2 A network to promote Best Practices spreading.

### Actions

- d.1.1 Franche-Comté Region (France). The territorial organisation of Franche-Comté Region.
- d.1.1 Rhône-Alpes (France). Technical assistance for small towns.
- d.2.1 Rhône-Alpes (France). Surveying the experiences of small mountain towns in areas other than Rhône-Alpes (Jura and Massif Central).

## 8. How to define the content of the common strategy in terms of Best Practices

The Interreg Project final aim is at treating individual initiatives as Best Practices, sometimes identifying more than one Best Practice in an individual case study. On this basis, we can outline the following research agenda:

1. identifying Best Practice or Best Practices arising from the case study;
2. collecting the information necessary to prove that the case owns the requisites of a Best Practice;
3. filling in the Abstract Submissions Form, which will be inserted into the Best Practices Database;
4. sending off the form to the head office at the headquarters of Piedmont Regional Authorities;
5. the form will be examined at the Observatory on Sustainable Cities at the Polytechnic and University of Turin;



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6. revision, if necessary of the Abstract and preparation of the Project Statement, which provides more detailed documentation on the Best Practice;
7. final assessment by the board;
8. insertion of the Abstract and the Non Technical Best Practices Report into the Best Practices Database.

The two submissions forms have been reproduced in Annex B.1 and B.3 of the present text. Once Best Practices collection is concluded, our head office at the headquarters of Piedmont Regional Authorities, with the help of the Observatory on Sustainable Cities at the Polytechnic and University of Turin and the supervision of the board, will prepare a final report on the possible synergetic relationships between Best Practices from the point of view of the AlpCity common strategy.

## Chapter VI **transfer within the AlpCity framework**

### 1. **Should we transfer Best Practices or the common strategy?**

The AlpCity network was formed because the Regions and local bodies, which make it up, became aware that the sustainable development of small alpine towns was a shared problem. The network's aim is at cooperating in the co-development of a common strategy in order to resolve this problem as effectively as possible.

If the AlpCity network experiences are to be consolidated and given continuity through the establishment of a Regional Urban Observatory, the common strategy necessarily presents itself as the network's final aim.

We should not forget that both the Agenda 21 (UNECED, 1992) and the Habitat Agenda (UN Habitat, 1996) express clear recognition of the need to confront social, economic, environmental and institutional problems with a holistic approach, with the aim at developing inclusive and interrelated policies for efficiently handling sustainability-related problems.

The term *common strategy* was introduced by the European Union to describe a network of activities participated in by its various member states, so as to coordinate efforts in facing a common problem. A textbook example is the European Union "Common strategy on the implementation of the water framework directive".

Furthermore, the term "common strategy" well expresses our idea that, rather than setting up a group of more or less independent initiatives, we will build up an interrelated network of activities, which will have to be manoeuvred in a synergetic way if we are to resolve complex problems like those ones relating to sustainability. Modifying conditions relating to sustainability in the urban alpine environment is an unthinkable task, unless we act through a complex of temporally and spatially coordinated schemes across sectors.

From this point of view the term *common strategy* is preferable to *policies*, which might suggest a selection of more or less independent sectorial activities.

We can therefore confirm that the transfer the AlpCity Regional Urban Observatory will eventually be concerned with will not just consist in a transfer of single Best Practices, but will extend to the transfer of integrated systems of activities forming part of a more general strategy for local sustainability.

### 2. **From government to governance and back**

There now exists, in various sectors at various levels, a widespread conception that government activities (adoption of norms, investment decisions, administrative control, sanctions, etc.) must go hand in hand with a kind of activity seeking to build up consensus, promoting a common vision, above all where economic, social and cultural stakeholders are concerned, aiming at increasing their direct involvement in training and in the implementation of public policies.



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These measures, which aim at creating cohesion among stakeholders, who are able to influence policies outcome, are accompanied by broader measures, which target to inform the general public and, often, to educate new generations.

These activities are conceived to broaden consciousness of the problems concerning the community and altering living styles. Such changes are considered a socio-cultural background necessary for the pursuit of political goals (something which is particularly true when factors pertaining to economic, social and environmental sustainability are at stake).

Other measures relating to the professional training of public and private administration personnel working in the field may prove opportune. In fact, an innovative plan often requires that its sustaining techno-structure makes considerable advances in its technical and scientific skills.

Such technical and scientific advances often require not only activities pertaining to professional skills updating but also, on a deeper level, laying of foundations for new knowledge. This latter brings the need for scientific research into the equation. A policy facing new and complex themes with an innovative perspective will inevitably bring the light to knowledge gaps in the system where it operates. It is at this point that policy-makers come to provide demand for new knowledge. These activities, accompanying government actions, are termed actions of governance. Government and governance must be mutually supportive, since implementing one without the other would mean a risk of failure, or at least ineffectiveness of policies.

There is one field of action, which lies between government and governance: partnerships. Partnerships are a necessary tool to stimulate cooperation among parties, the success of a given initiative depends on.

Governance is essentially an activity, which aims at innovating government bodies policies, making them more efficient and more effective but, above all, providing them with the conditions, in which they can face challenges posed by change. From this point of view, governance is an activity of social benefit at a local level. Projects of governance should attract both endogenous local resources and, above all exogenous ones. Governance projects should have all the Best Practices typical characteristics, in that they should aim at excellence and managerial skills should be employed in promoting them.

The activities of a Regional Urban Observatory in generating and transferring Best Practices contribute to the functions of governance in disseminating the innovation necessary to face the challenge posed by sustainable development issues. In this sense, it represents a notable modernisation of governance methods in the network's component bodies, starting with the Regional authorities, which make up its supporting structure. In this case it is the government that activates governance in order to generate the fertile cultural background necessary for successful policies, that is, for a government committed to rapidly and effectively disseminating Best Practices.

Once the Best Practices have been put into place through the participatory method typical of governance, their dissemination can only be pushed through government instruments. Regional authorities can adopt normative governmental, financial or administrative measures in order to support transfer and render it more rapid and widespread.

The network is an instrument of governance, which was generated by the Regional authorities in order to renew their policies. The regional authorities did so just to renew their vision and their capacity for confronting and solving new problems. This one would be amongst the primary objectives of the governance network, which notwithstanding also remains firm in its objective of helping small mountain communities Best Practices are addressed to. Regional authorities have been presented with a new form of policy made up of Best Practices (transfer

into policy); local councils have been presented with the concrete application of Best Practices (transfer into practice).

The most effective transfer strategy for a network of this type is based on a two-step transfer. The first transfer passes the lesson learned by the governance network to the administrative government organisation. With this governmental support a broader transfer takes place where one supplier, the governance network, satisfy the demand of many basic local bodies.

In the first transfer from the network of governance to the governmental framework an initial relevant innovative effect is produced, through which Best Practices - or, rather, the holistic system of Best Practices - rise to a political plane, becoming part of norms, plans, programmes, financial balances. They are institutionalised.

In the second transfer, addressing demand for Best Practices, the Best Practice is truly realised in a new context where supply meets demand.

This technique recalls the model for *transfer* through "*cluster diffusion*", which focuses on a "*cluster*" made up of *opinion leaders*, that is, of parties able to influence potential recipients of Best Practices (Larson, Dearing, 2002). Where a network of regional authorities and local bodies are concerned, this leadership is made up of aldermen, local councillors and mayors, but above all of those ones, who have most power to mobilise resources, i.e. the political leaders at a regional level.

In order to reach this objective, the governance network should maintain a sound relationship with the regional government administration. This relationship will be pivotal for the full and rapid execution of transfer, both within the network and, above all, outside it - potentially, in the case of AlpCity, in all small mountain communities.

### 3. Transfer to regional and provincial authorities and mountain communities

In the first step of transfer, from the governance network to a governmental institution, the lesson learned takes the form of regional policy. Also this transfer must take place in accordance with the principle rules of Best Practices: it must itself be a Best Practice.

This task is much more complicated than the transfer of a system of Best Practices, which aims, albeit gradually, at building up a common strategy. This first task, in reality, consists in an ongoing bilateral peer-to-peer exchange between the governance organisation and the government administration.

For AlpCity, where the second transfer will pass policies on to small alpine towns, it is very important that this first step also takes into account other bodies incorporating numerous local councils <sup>(4)</sup>, in such a way as to make the government network coherent in the policies the success of the common strategy depends on. In other words, we can describe the transfer from governance to government as occurring on many levels, where each level of local government has specific administrative requirements, which must be taken into account.

4) i.e. provinces and mountain communities



## 4. Transfer to local councils

In the second step of the transfer process, the lesson learned is transferred to individual towns, so that Best Practices can fulfil the function they were originally designed for. According to the two-step transfer model, this form of final transfer should take place with the support of the larger government institutions outlined above and of the regional government. Such support would doubtless considerably boost the final transfer action, which would no longer rest exclusively on the shoulders of the governance network, being rather lent support from the various broader administrative bodies.

It is not easy, at the moment, to imagine the form this cooperation would take, but it is an issue that we should bear in mind and seek to address from now on. The form taken by this final transfer would also depend on the nature of the Best Practices being transferred.

The UN Habitat classifies the different types of transfer into the following content groups:

- **technical**: the transfer of skills and technology applications/processes;
- **informational**: the transfer and exchange of ideas and solutions;
- **managerial**: a system or series of decision-making and resource allocation processes that can be transferred and adapted.

Each of these content groups may require particular transfer techniques and tools, thus perhaps also requiring administrative skills pertaining to different organisations.

These different content groups may appear separately. However, most of the time they come together as indissoluble components of a single Best Practice. However, in accordance with their importance within the Best Practice, the transfer process requires a suitable balancing out of the various transfer techniques and tools and, therefore, different types of cooperation between administrative bodies and the governance network.

## 5. Bringing out Best Practices and hidden skills

So far we have focused our attention on the network as an environment, Best Practices are generated and transferred in. Nonetheless, innovative procedures pervade all sectors of the contemporary world in a complex manner: Best Practices lie hidden in a wide variety of different local contexts. These are well-designed, efficient practices the public appreciates, but they have not been recognised as Best Practices *per se*, except, perhaps, in their narrow local context. The governance network should seek to identify such practices and bring them into circulation.

This end can be pursued along several different lines, namely:

- requests to local councils to indicate initiatives they deem to be best practices: “Which policies do you consider to have been particularly successful and of credit to the local community?”;
- surveys of stakeholders;
- questionnaires distributed amongst the local population;
- open forums on the network's websites.

It could also be useful to run alongside this investigation, which seeks to discover new Best Practices and hidden skills, a parallel investigation of the same subjects aiming at identifying the problems the local community deems priorities.

These investigations may reveal very widespread problems, the local community is aware of, but which have fallen into the “background” due to their everyday nature, and are tolerated as being inevitable factors of contemporary urban life (traffic, dangerous roads, pollution, etc.) which one must resign oneself to.

These are often the very problems, which pose the greatest challenge to innovative programmes for sustainability. Yet it is exactly on these subjects that networking may fulfil its potential for “organising innovation”. In fact, the network may:

- call upon its partners, asking if they have suitable Best Practices which have already been tested;
- call on groups of experts to see if the necessary skills to build up Best Practices are available locally;
- employ task forces of experts to put together plans for Best Practices development and transfer;
- launch competitions for innovative ideas.

These types of initiative aim to bring out hidden skills in the social system and to give them a sufficient value by inserting them into the network of Best Practices transfer.

## 6. Transfer and the AlpCity Regional Urban Observatory

As we have already said, the problem of Best Practices transfer will only arise if the AlpCity network is able to transform itself into a Regional Urban Observatory, and so to continue the development of the work started with the Interreg project.

Taking into account this future prospect - and AlpCity is working towards this end - the problem of designing a specific type of organisation, able to manage transfer in the most effective possible way, arises. That is to say that such an organisation should know how to circulate Best Practices amongst as many potential users as possible, so that these groups inherit the knowledge, which makes up the lessons learned. At the same time, the organisation should broaden its own competencies and experiences. All of this should take fast quickly and efficiently.

As we have seen, the UN Habitat advises a bilateral “peer-to-peer” transfer method, at the same time noting that both the “demand side” and the “supply side” need an intermediary system, which creates an environment favourable to learning: this one will be the AlpCity Regional Urban Observatory's function, which can be described as follows:

- **developing Best Practices:** with groups of experts working on case studies put forward by network members;
- **choosing Best Practices:** generated by others, who, in so doing, become part of the network of experts;
- **creating a network of experts in Best Practices and their transfer:** this would be



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the “supply” network;

- **identifying the stakeholders potentially interested in receiving Best Practices:** contact them and organise them into “clusters” of demand parties;
- **organising a meeting between Best Practices experts and demand clusters:** provide the means for the learning process to take place;
- **encouraging further innovation with every Best Practice transfer:** provide incentives for further improving the Best Practice with each transfer.

These various aims are fulfilled through the learning centre. It is here that the capacities and functions pertaining to transfer and the related continuing accumulation of innovation will be concentrated.

In reality, as we have seen, the issue is more complex, since the AlpCity Regional Urban Observatory should be an instrument for modernising the governance of the Regions. Here, it should not just be concerned with transferring single Best Practices to solve specific sets of problems, but it should rather assist in the transfer of an inter-related network of Best Practices across a multilevel system of local bodies - that is, it should transfer strategy for local sustainable development.

If we are to clearly understand the problems posed by transfer, we should understand what we intend to transfer. If transfer does not just deal in single Best Practice episodes but in systems of Best Practices and, above all, if it should last, accumulate knowledge, skills and experience, spreading these Best Practices and constantly improving them, according to a principle that should be considered more as Best Value than as Best Practice (UK Government, 1999); if this is the case, transfer will require a stable structure of government able to assert itself, to make itself be appreciated and to broaden its own influence and its body of knowledge on the common strategy for sustainable development. These considerations lie at the root of the Regional Urban Observatory idea.



## Chapter VII features of the Regional Urban Observatory

### 1. From the AlpCity Interreg Project to the AlpCity Regional Urban Observatory (AlpCityRUO)

Like all the Interreg projects, the AlpCity Project was set up as a European Union measure of governance with the aim at forming a network for disseminating strategies for sustainable development at a local level. In particular, the AlpCity network was set up because the Regions and the local bodies, which make it up, became aware that the sustainable development of small alpine towns is a shared problem. The network's aim is at cooperating in the co-development of a common strategy in order to solve this problem as effectively as possible. An ability to bring innovation to culture, institutions and to the relationships between economy and the environment is a prerequisite of a common strategy for the effective management of the complex problems, which arise from local sustainability issues. A common strategy for sustainable development can only arise from a process of continual innovation at all levels of society. This innovation should take the form of an increased ability to face challenges arising from social, economic and environmental sustainability issues in new and effective ways. From a practical point of view, the common strategy is an innovative system of Best Practices targeting sustainability. The AlpCity common strategy is concerned, in particular, with issues arising from urban development and regeneration in an alpine environment, with a view to contributing to the creation of a polycentric urban system in alpine areas, as promoted by the Interreg IIIB Alpine Space Programme (European Union, 2003) and by the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) (European Consultative Forum, 1999).

To accomplish its task in an effective way, the AlpCity network does not only need to facilitate the diffusion of Best Practices. It should also contribute to the development of a new vision of local situations as being just a part of a much broader network. Sustainability at this global level is of fundamental importance for and will be reflected in the local situation at a local level. To this end, when operating at a local level, the network needs a standardised set of appropriate indicators, which will enable it to assess requisites for sustainability and to compare different local situations. The regional authorities and the local bodies taking part in the AlpCity project have a great deal of faith in the network as a tool for disseminating a new, shared vision, and for encouraging and disseminating innovative Best Practices. The fact that the network is trans-national heightens its value, since it thus provides the nations involved with an invaluable opportunity for mutually beneficial cultural exchange.

For these reasons, we are determined to follow through the activities of the network after the conclusion of the Interreg Programme. One of the most important outcome is that the network continues to develop and consolidate itself as an instrument for disseminating innovation.

Basically, the main triumph of the Interreg Programme as an European instrument of governance has consisted in creating local governance networks, able to develop and consolidate themselves so as to continue disseminating innovation. All this implies the need to define the most suitable form, which AlpCity can take on in order to continue operating after the conclusion of the Interreg Programme.



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To this end, we have proposed that the network transforms itself into a Regional Urban Observatory (RUO) as part of the United Nations Habitat Global Urban Observatory Network.

## 2. What is a Regional Urban Observatory?

The UN Habitat Agency set up the Global Urban Observatory Network (GUO) <sup>(5)</sup> (UN Habitat - Global Urban Observatory, 1998) with the aim at implementing the sustainability programs proposed by Agenda 21 (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, [UNECD], 1992) and the Habitat Agenda (UN Habitat, 1996) at a local level.

The GUO's two main activities are:

- the *Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme* <sup>(6)</sup>, which aims at disseminating Best Practices for local sustainability;
- the *Urban Indicators Programme*, which monitors sustainability at a local level, using a core set of common indicators (UN Habitat, 1997).

The GUO network is made up of:

- *Regional Urban Observatories* (RUO), which are concerned with trans-national areas with specific geographical, eco-systematic, environmental, cultural and social factors in common;
- *National Urban Observatories* (NUO) for individual countries;
- *Local Urban Observatories* (LUO), which restrict themselves to local areas.

Urban Observatories carry out activities analogous to those of the GUO at all three levels. In other words, the dissemination of innovation through the transfer of Best Practices (CityNet, UNDP, UN Habitat, 1998) and monitoring of urban sustainability takes place at every level of the network.

As you can see, the activities carried out by the GUO network's Urban Observatories are, by no means, dissimilar from those ones carried out by the AlpCity project. Were we to become part of Habitat GUO network, we would have the considerable advantage of becoming part of a global network, which would constitute an important vehicle for international cooperation.

## 3. The functions of a Regional Urban Observatory

Although there is a good deal of flexibility in the UN Habitat guidelines on the organisation of Urban Observatories, certain requisites and activities represent the fundamental principles for any such observatory.

5) Please see <http://www.urbanobservatory.org>

6) Please see <http://www.blpnet.org>

RUOs, in particular, should carry out the following activities (UN Habitat, 2003):

- holding regional consultations on common issues, including trans-national issues and issues derived from shared ecological, administrative or cultural systems;
- sponsoring regional workshops on the development and adaptation of region-specific tools, guidelines, methods and indicators;
- organizing, in conjunction with other partners, national Best Practices competitions and exhibitions;
- contributing to development and dissemination of training materials in languages of the region;
- coordinating training for trainers in national and local capacity-building institutions;
- assisting the different partners with the collection, the analysis and the evaluation of indicators and Best Practices;
- facilitating the sharing and exchange of lessons learned among countries and cities of the region;
- coordinating regional urban research programmes;
- identifying regional correspondents and focal points for trans-national technical cooperation and research;
- reporting on new development, opportunities and constraints to the GUO for the inclusion of region-specific issues and priorities in inter-governmental processes;
- producing a biennial State of the Region's Cities report, including comparative analysis of indicators and presentation of Best Practices.

#### **4. The AlpCityRUO: a transnational network of Local Urban Observatories**

AlpCity is a trans-national network spanning a group of regions with common and unique environmental characteristics, that is the Alps and taking part in the Interreg Programme. As such, it shares many of the characteristics of a RUO, as defined by the UN Habitat.

If we are to succeed in setting up a RUO, each of our regional members should set up a task force to work on managing, developing and promoting the implementation of the common strategy.

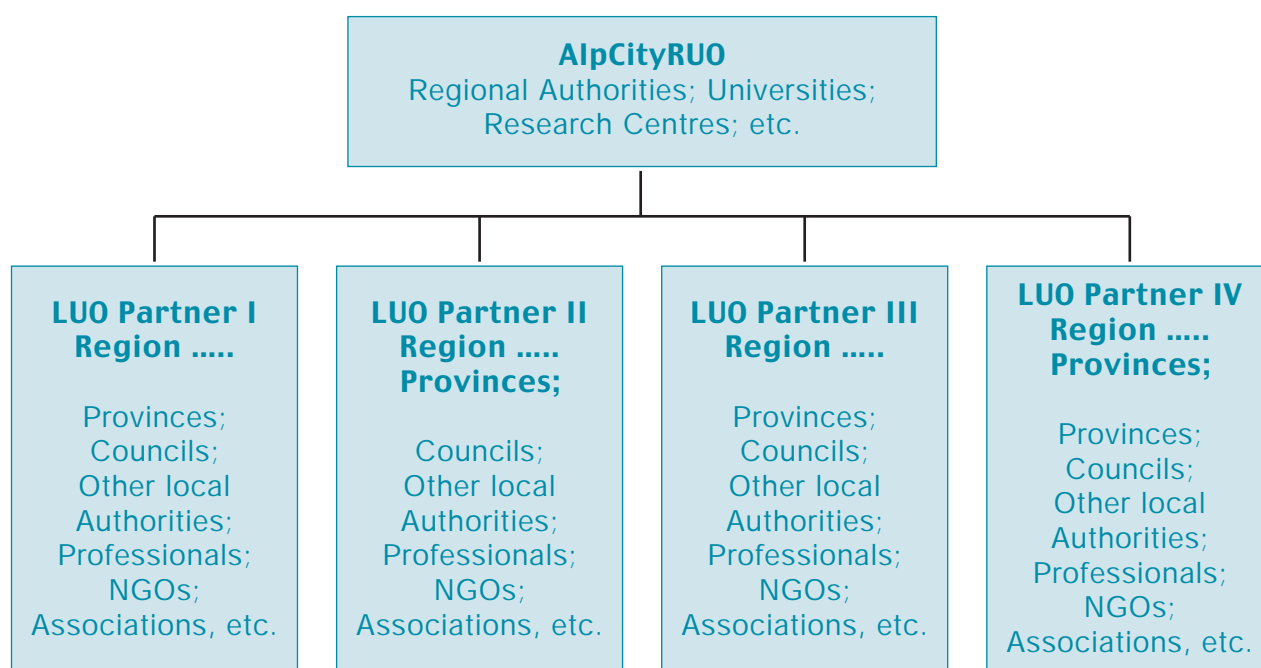
The network may continue to be coordinated by the Piedmont task force, which leads AlpCity, and should be responsible for the setting up of and running the AlpCityRUO main website.

This horizontal network of cooperation among regional authorities is accompanied by a vertical network, which branches downwards and maps out the cooperation among the sub-regional local authorities, who will eventually be putting the common strategy into practice. Each regional authority should set up a Local Urban Observatory (LUO) - a network of the local authorities in its area. The AlpCity RUO would thus essentially consist in a trans-national network of regional LUOs (as you can see Diagram 1 below).

Seen in this way, the individual regional authorities, which make up AlpCityRUO, have a considerable degree of flexibility in setting up their respective LUOs. This degree of flexibility is made necessary by both the variety of local administrative systems and the contrasting situations with regard to public-private sector partnerships they are dealing with.



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns



**Diagram 1** • The structure of the AlpCityRUO network

Furthermore, since each regional authority can set up a different kind of LUO there is a rich variety of possible experiences and outcomes, which will help us to understand which kinds of networking are the most effective and efficient - which are the Best Practices lessons can be drawn from in setting up LUOs in other regions.

According to the structure outlined above, each regional authority should set up its own website dedicated to disseminating the common strategy within its own network of local authorities. The micro-network, made up by all the regional LUOs websites, would come together to form the AlpCityRUO online macro-network.

With the view to improving the skills to develop a common strategy, each individual Region has to create partnerships with universities and research institutes, which own all the requisites to be part of the horizontal AlpCityRUO network.

Similarly a network of technically skilled local bodies can be conceived as technical support to the basic local institutions network in implementing Best Practices. Also this experts network can be considered as part of LUOs networks, since it actually produces Best Practices.

In case regional authorities are not available to set up and manage LUOs, other local authorities can step in. However, LUO management must, in the long term, be placed in the hands of regional authorities, since they are the only administrative institutions able to guarantee the adequate dimensions and organisational capacities.

The AlpCityRUO network is run by a Steering Committee, made up of the heads of its various regional task forces and chaired by an officer charged by Piedmont regional authorities.

The AlpCityRUO is supported by a scientific committee of experts coming from its member regional authorities.

All of the above leads us to the conclusion that the cooperation and goodwill of regional

authorities will be of pivotal importance to the success of the RUO initiative. It is vital that regional authorities recognise the important role that this network can play in improving their powers of governance and bringing innovation to their strategies for government. The network would provide a considerable stimulus at a local level for the formation of innovative policies targeting sustainable urban development.

## 5. International cooperation

The AlpCityRUO network is happy to cooperate with other organisations, or rather:

- horizontally with other trans-national networks working on urban sustainable development and Alps issues; in particular the *International Commission for the Protection of the Alps* (CIPRA) and the "*Alliance in the Alps*" network;
- vertically with larger, international organisations, especially the European Union and the UN Habitat.

With regard to the *International Commission for the Protection of the Alps* (CIPRA) and the "*Alliance in the Alps*" network, the AlpCity RUO has committed itself to collaborating with these two networks aiming at the Alpine Convention implementation. This cooperation will take place through an exchange of information, know-how and experiences, but especially through the transfer of lesson learned from Best Practices.

As regards the cooperation with the European Commission, it is worthwhile underlining that the latter is currently preparing its Thematic Strategy on Urban Environment (Commission of the European Communities, 2004). The first drafts prepared by experts in the field do not, so far, seem to take into account the issues surrounding the sustainable development of small towns in problem areas, such as most mountain regions and, in particular, the Alps. This issue would merit particular attention if a common European strategy for sustainable urban development is to be established. The AlpCityRUO's activities could contribute towards filling in this gap in policy, especially if we bear in mind that the Interreg Programme was among the sources the Commission drew from whilst developing the strategy.<sup>7)</sup>

Although the UN Habitat is evidently primarily concerned with developing countries (UN-Habitat, 1998), the Agency has always nourished the idea that urban observatories should also be set up in developed countries. Indeed, such an interaction among observatories in developed and developing areas could prove highly illuminating. This kind of exchange would be very much in keeping with the organisation broader strategy of fostering international cooperation. International cooperation is normally interpreted as existing on a broad, global plane. However, networks formed at a local level can also provide very interesting results from this point of view.

7) Another possible contact for future cooperation could be the European Union Database on Good Practices and Urban Management Sustainability (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/urban/>). Please see Annex A of this text.



Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

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**Part two**    **the AlpCity Project  
empirical approach:  
21 case studies**

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## Chapter VIII **introduction**

### 1. The selection of 21 case studies

AlpCity promoted the design and implementation of 21 pilot activities at local level, which are considered as potential best practices and models for local endogenous and urban development in small alpine towns. These activities were conceived mainly in the form of strategic and feasibility studies on relevant issues in the four fields identified with the Project:

1. Economic development
2. Services and quality of life
3. Urban environment
4. Cooperation among towns.

They were scattered throughout the Alps in order to cover different contexts and representative situations. The activities had to imply a bottom-up approach involving local authorities and inhabitants with the help of consultants and experts. They had to be of trans-national interest, both as regards the issues faced and methodology (analysis in different regions and countries, trans-national meetings and information exchanges).

After the selection of the mentioned pilot cases each AlpCity Project Partner had the task to fill in different Forms (1,2 and 3 respectively; all of them are available on the DVD attached) regarding information about itself, its territory concerned with the Project and its individual case studies.

Subsequently the Scientific Steering Committee analysed the material provided by the Project Partners with the aim at outlining an objective evaluation of the individual case studies included in AlpCity.

### 2. Form 1. Partner's introduction

Form 1 provides useful information about each individual Partner participating into the Project. Moreover it allows the Partners to show all their expectations concerning the Project, its structure and the entrusting of the participants with specific tasks.

First of all it indicates the name of the partner with the precise identification of the institution involved in the initiative.

Then the institutional role of the partner is depicted with general information on all sectors of competence and degree of administrative capacity; afterwards the name of the sector in charge of managing AlpCity is underlined together with the role of the mentioned sector within the Partner's administrative structure, which includes information on specific competencies, policies and services.

After all these descriptive data there is a portrait of the Partner's expected benefits from the participation in AlpCity.

Then the Partner expresses its position in the Project by indicating the Work Package (5-8) in which it undertakes local case-projects and if it is coordinator of one Work Package.

Subsequently there is the request of the organisational expectations from the participation in one



or more specific Work Packages through the case studies. In order to build an effective structure each Partner is required to outline:

- whether the Work Package must have internal rules;
- the specification of these rules;
- the role of the Work Package coordinator;
- how the exchange of experiences within the Work Package should be promoted;
- the ways to structure the Work Package through distinct meetings, news by e-mail and other.

Finally a detailed description is required regarding the expectations coming from the work of the AlpCity Scientific Steering Committee's activities.

### 3. Form 2. Description of the concerned territory

This Form deals with information about the geographic and institutional areas involved in the Project. First of all the participating Partners have to depict the administrative areas within the region by specifying the administrative levels of the region for different policy, planning and project purposes, the different competencies inside these areas, the relationship between these levels and the small mountain towns.

Afterwards there is a brief description of the mountain character within the whole Partner's territory, with a detailed outline of the part covered by mountains, the types of mountain (high, medium, low), the percentage of population living in mountain areas, the role of the mountain areas in the regional economy.

Then the structure of the towns within the region helps to get the clue to their size, hierarchy, demographic and economic changes, and also to main social and economic problems.

In order to remark each Partner's involvement the names of the case projects and all administrative areas concerned are listed. More detailed information must be provided about the number of inhabitants in these areas for all individual towns and all the other administrative levels concerned by each case project.

Special attention is paid to specific issues on the structure of the towns in these mountain areas. Afterwards the economic profile of these towns is depicted, by listing regional and external functions.

An interesting element regards the social image of the mountains within the region with the specification of symbolic values attached to the mountains, the level of attractiveness for residential and or leisure time activities, the level of repulsiveness, the differences among community and social groups.

Each Partner has to outline its policies for the mountain and any specific legislation concerning mountain areas at national, regional and local level. The list should be as precise as possible with indication of references and dates. Apart from legal instruments each specific Partner's political approach vis-à-vis the mountains should be mentioned together with its objectives and existing differences from other regions and areas.

#### **4. Form 3. Description of the local activities within AlpCity**

This Form contains a detailed description of each case study included into the AlpCity Project. Starting from the Project Partner's name, the case study title and the related Work Package, a brief case-project abstract is drafted.

Afterwards the reasons for the choice of this case-project are analysed, followed by the adopted methodology.

Then the expected benefits at local and regional level are drawn up.

Not only the ongoing activities are taken into consideration, but also a certain attention is paid to the potential follow-up activities related to the case study.

Also the expected value added (other than financial) coming from the participation in an Interreg project like AlpCity are outlined.

Due to the peculiar nature of an Interreg III B project also the expected trans-national exchange benefit gained from the case has to be remarked.

For a more rigorous analysis output indicators and impact ones are then listed.

Subsequently there is a section addressed to the peculiarities of the towns involved in the case study: after the name of the town/s concerned, some information about the demographic, social and economic situation and specifically identified problems are depicted, together with the role of the mountain resource within the local development chances by outlining positive and negative aspects. Just to give a picture of future scenarios it is necessary to underline the expected contribution of the foreseen actions towards the development of the town/s concerned.

Afterwards there is the indication of the subject responsible for the concrete development of the project. It is important to supply information about how activities are sub-contracted.

Then all the administrative authorities involved in the project and the main local and regional project actors should be mentioned.

In order to frame the environment of the case study it is questioned whether the case is isolated or integrated within a broader frame/programme of activities with a precise indication of the financing modalities.

Finally the timetable for the project development and the total cost for the case are required to be outlined.

At the very end the presence and the role of experts (other than the Scientific Steering Committee's ones) should be pointed out.

#### **5. Evaluation of the case studies by the Scientific Steering Committee's experts**

The aim of this evaluation Form is at finding common issues, methodologies and outputs ("red line") among the local cases included in the AlpCity Project. Another aspect taken into consideration in the evaluation is the responsiveness of each individual case study to the Interreg recommendations (such as concrete results, a bottom-up approach, transparency, visibility, follow-up activities, etc.). The evaluation concerns only the issues mentioned above, while technical and financial aspects have not been considered being a task of the Project Partners and the Lead Partner.

The examination of the forms filled in by the AlpCity Partners shows that the topics related to

a sustainable development in mountain small towns have been taken into account with the exception of the industrial activities. Topics are various and cover a wide range of fields; the final results of the Project revealed to be very interesting, because the Partners paid attention to the trans-national aspects of the problems affecting their areas. The concrete result consists in presenting a "model", which is the first step towards implementation. There are local cases, which could correctly be inserted in multiple Work Packages, but the Scientific Steering Committee chose to maintain them in the order proposed in the Application Form just to avoid confusion and to allow the presentation of a final product in line with what stated in that document. As first step the main purpose of the Scientific Steering Committee consisted in finding out a common "red line" among the different local case studies. Following the previous forms submitted by the Partners, the experts decided to consider methodology and final outputs (mostly guidelines and feasibility studies) as the so-called "red-line".

For what concerns methodology the shared tools are represented by participatory process, concept of model, exchange of information and best practices, networking.

The check concerns only practical aspects related to the implementation of the case studies and it does not include other items regarding mountain aspects, such as the definition of a small town, contained in the mentioned previous forms.

The Scientific Steering Committee's experts pointed out that some forms resulted unclear and meagre in the description of the activities, the output methodology and the language expressed by the Partners: this implied some important communication difficulties between the parts during the project implementation.

The following procedure was established in order to get the Scientific Steering Committee's evaluation of the individual case studies:

1. Once the Partners had the scheme they started to build up working groups developing their issues via e-mail under the coordination of a responsible person charged by the Partners. The Work Package coordinator received information and forwarded it to the Lead Partner and the Scientific Steering Committee. In this way it was possible to follow the project developments and to check whether the shared methodology revealed to be appropriate.
2. All Partners aiming at the issue of guidelines adopted a common frame in order to produce them with comparable items.
3. Partners dealing with networks established a working group sharing criteria on the way a network is built up and links are created.
4. In order to facilitate the outlining of the "red line" among the case studies, it was necessary to discuss with the Lead Partner about the frame of the activity report, whose preparation was assigned to the Partners.

The Alpine Space Programme focuses (amongst others) on the existing socio-economic disparities, which - in the alpine area - often exist within small distances. Concerning the objectives of AlpCity the two faces of the alpine space can be summarised as follows:

The positive and negative aspects shown in the table above reflect the situation in the alpine area and in the small towns interested by the AlpCity Project.

Problems characterising the alpine area and opportunities for a sustainable development have been taken into account in developing the AlpCity Project. The work packages represent the tentative to propose a solution (even if only at local level and as a first step toward implementation) to decision makers and civil society through the adoption of different methodologies.

## Chapter IX Work Package 5 economic development

### 1. Introduction

Work Package 5 on “economic development” deals with development and assistance to existing small and medium-sized enterprises with special attention to the ones, which contribute to local sustainable development in line with the requirement to preserve local environment and territory as well as its cultural and social resources and heritage.

It takes care also of the setting up of new small and medium-sized enterprises with reference to innovative technologies, telecommunications and services able to enhance the creation of local job opportunities and the improvement of the local population's life quality by encouraging professional advice, challenging entrepreneurship and innovative enterprises.

It supports training activities addressed to different social target groups (youth, women, mature workers and other disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities). Moreover it favours training activities for advanced-level professionals in response to the requests of the territory and the job market in order to encourage new and innovative local investment.

Work Package 5 ranges over many fields: support of local enterprises; innovative proposals for local craftspeople; development of tourist industry with a special focus on large scale winter sport events in local mountain areas.

The case studies included in this Work Package are:

- Experimentation of innovation actions for preserving commercial services. Lombardy Region (Italy).
- Experimentation of innovation actions for trade and handicrafts integration. Lombardy Region (Italy).
- Development of the retail trade concept for small trade. Municipality of Grainau (Germany).
- Future and tourism in Saint Maurice. Municipality of Saint Maurice and Haute École Valaisanne (Switzerland).
- Integrated tourism strategies. Municipality of Tschlin (Switzerland).
- Local Development and the Winter Olympic Games' legacy, implemented in two Olympic stations (Pragelato in Chisone Valley and Prali in Germanasca Valley). Piedmont Region (Italy).

## 2. Case studies cards

### Experimentation of innovation actions for preserving commercial services



**AlpCity Partner**

**Work Package**

**WP Coordinator**

**Subjects involved  
and their role**

Lombardy Region (Italy)

Economic development (WP5)

Lombardy Region (Italy)

**Project Partner:**

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**Subcontractors:**

A.D.I.E. (Agenzia d'informazione europea)

CESTEC (Centro Lombardo per lo sviluppo tecnologico e produttivo dell'artigianato e delle piccole imprese)

**Spatial area involved**

Two areas were selected as objects of the case study:

Alta Valle Camonica and Alto Garda Bresciano in the mountain province of Brescia. Within these zones, seven municipalities were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- low density of population (less than 2.000);
- lacking involvement in substantial tourist flows;



**Project budget**

- more than 20% of elderly population (age  $\geq$  65 year old).

€ 50.000,00

**Project purpose**

The case study aimed at improving life quality in mountain areas; spreading good and best practices; increasing the value of the social dimension of trade through maintaining adequate commercial services standards in the mountain and disadvantaged areas of the Region.

The action classified municipalities according to the criticalities in commercial service equipment, the inadequate tourist attractiveness and the need of increasing the value of existing handicraft activities.

The pilot actions aimed at laying the foundations for a genuine partnership involving large-scale retail trade, small retailers, trade association and local handicraft activities; it represented an innovation element because it called on actors acting previously as competitors with the purpose to establish a new balance.

Moreover the case study targeted the start up of an experiment with excellent features to support the activation of experimental enterprises in many parts of the regional territory through a subsidy function.

**Project methodology**

The applied methodology includes:

- focus groups with all actors involved;
- dialogue with civil society through public consultation (survey on consumer habits) also in order to raise awareness of changes to be faced;
- a round table organised in order to agree and sign up a convention with reciprocal obligations for large-scale retail trade, small retailers, trade association, municipalities;
- training activities addressing the basic training needs of the retailer (especially about commercial management and merchandising techniques).

Every step must be regarded in a perspective of equitable level for all participants with a spirit of genuine partnership. All this together with the ultimate goal of improving an active participation as key element for the success of the project.

**Project activities**

The following activities has been carried out:

- Organisation of two focus groups with local authorities, trade associations and representatives from Mountain Communities.
- Public authorities and other involved subjects focused on the priority of sharing a strategic approach in setting up the development guidelines for the area. Furthermore, in their opinion any initiative must target the empowerment of

	<p>local identity, through the development of a brand for products and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “On the field” analysis of consumer’s habits, supply and demand, existing public services, etc.</li> <li>• Enquiry through two questionnaires: the first-one concerning citizens; the second one public authorities. The inquiry about consumer’s habits identified their preferences when buying goods and services in their daily life (then frequency of shopping, distance and time employed, means of transport etc.). The objective of the analysis concerning public bodies consisted in collecting data about: accessibility, tourist vocation, need to increase commercial services, existing public services and postal services, availability of public places for multi-service shops and/or for itinerant trade.</li> <li>• Presentation and discussion of best practices and European projects already settled in order to verify the possible transfer in similar contexts.</li> <li>• Set up of a feasibility assessment of the project.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Achieved results</b></p>	<p>Great involvement of local actors through the focus group. Clear identification of real local emergencies and expectations. Identification of a new model of cooperation among small retailers and large-scale trade. Agreed work methodology based on a bottom-up approach.</p>
<p><b>Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved</b></p>	<p>The gap between planned results and achieved one is due to an inadequate attitude on the side of retailers and municipalities in front of the challenge of modernising trade with neighbours.</p>
<p><b>Instruments proposed, revised and finalised</b></p>	<p>A strategy paper. A draft convention among small retailers and large-scale retail traders. A website.</p>
<p><b>Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders</b></p>	<p>Major positive impact is due to the shared desire of municipalities to cooperate among them and to identify a common strategic approach by means of building a real consensus with all other actors (retailers, regional authorities, trade associations, etc.).</p>
<p><b>Critical aspects</b></p>	<p>Tourist presences only during the summer season. Precariousness of job in the tourist sector. High fiscal pressure. New rules which make difficult to apply legislation for health and food security matters. Inadequate resources to support typical products.</p>
<p><b>Lessons learned</b></p>	<p>Positive outputs related to the work methodology, particularly</p>



referring to:

- Participated planning (involvement of the local authorities and retailers' associations).
- Interviews with customers, citizens and policy-makers to point out needs and availability.
- A study about the retail services standard involving citizens, statistics, trade solidity and monitoring of shops opening and closure.
- Opportunity related to the Objective 2 Call Measure 1.11 "Support to trade services re-qualification and development of closeness services", which gave the financial support to the renewal of existent shops and to the experimentation of multi-service shops.

The case study outlined that multi-service shops are not known in Lombardy (although considered in some regional planning instruments since 2003) and, particularly in mountain areas: for this reason experimentation must be supported by a long information step addressing retailers, and by financial resources devoted to start-up and experimenting.

After these premises, the outputs of the ongoing experimentations can be considered really satisfactory, since they allowed the survival of some shops and, as consequence, of the essential services in a context of strong trade desertification.

Also a difficulty can be pointed out as regards the topic of trade service considered as part of the problems of local economic development: for the future the start up of new projects is expected in order to integrate trade services with development focusing on local resources: tourism, agriculture, typical products.

### Transferability

The work methodology is repeatable: regional authorities are working for the transfer of the AlpCity experience to all regional mountain areas.

At present a call with regional resources has been carried out in order to advertise the case study of Brescia and find projects with a larger functional integration, able to solve the problem of trade desertification also through different selling formats.

### Case study Follow-up

There is the will to start up projects integrated with other urban functions.

There is also a progressive increase of multi-service shops, introducing other selling channels, even if it is really difficult to settle an agreement between different forms.

The case study has been the basis for the new regional planning on commerce (Triennial Programme for Development of Trade Sector 2006-2008).



### **Common issues with other projects**

Within Interreg Vital Cities Project (Cadses Area) a mapping of Lombardy Mountain Provinces critical trade areas has been developed; this method has been extended to the whole region through the Triennial Programme for Development of Trade Sector 2006-2008 (the major planning instrument for trade policy in Lombardy Region).

### **SSC Experts' comments and recommendations**

This project aimed at improving the quality of life in disadvantaged mountain areas through a set of tools such as enquires, exchange of practices, participation, setting up of conventions, feasibility studies, etc.; the use of several instruments aimed at achieving a clear picture of the potential development of the trade sector offered an added value to the project. Furthermore the project foresaw follow up activities (activation of calls according to regional laws). In this way it answers to the AlpCity purpose as the first step towards implementation. The case study has a long-term strategy that will assure follow up activities; this aspect is recommended by the Interreg policies. The experiment can be exported from the methodological point of view to other partners, who wish to improve life quality in mountain areas.



## Experimentation of innovation actions for trade and handicraft integration



**AlpCity Partner**  
**Work Package**  
**WP Coordinator**  
**Subjects involved**  
**and their role**

Lombardy Region (Italy)  
Economic development (WP5)  
Lombardy Region (Italy)  
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*Municipality of Dazio coordinated by the Province of Sondrio*  
**Spatial area involved** Province of Sondrio (177.500 inhabitants): Municipality of Dazio (347 inhabitants) and some boundary small towns.  
**Project budget** € 50.200,00

<p><b>Project purpose</b></p>	<p>The project objective consisted in the definition of a model for the revitalisation of typical products in the involved areas. In particular it aimed at improving the economic development in mountain areas, at enhancing integration among commercial and tourism activities and setting up a strong cooperation among the entrepreneurs belonging to different production sectors (agriculture, handicraft, tourism, etc). The project is part of a programme developed by the Mountain District and it has to be seen as a complementary work inserted in a regional strategy.</p>
<p><b>Project methodology</b></p>	<p>Involvement of all the local actors, who are concerned with the Mountain District economy.          Analysis of the existing situation.          Development of a “new model” to revitalize the typical goods trade in those towns nearby the most important touring routes.          Definition of a model for future actions.          Training activities for economic operators.</p>
<p><b>Project activities</b></p>	<p>Investigation involving the stakeholders belonging to different production sectors for promoting a common “selling point”, in order to enlarge the market and improve the sale of local products.          Identification of place and stakeholders (like craftsmen and merchants already active in the market) on the basis of the indications emerged from the previously mentioned study.          Workshops with the participation of stakeholders.          Set up of a selling point.          Promotion and dissemination of the project activities.          Training for economic operators (craftsmen, small and medium enterprises, social enterprises and institutions).          Experimentation of opening/reactivating “selling places” with the aim at monitoring every single stage through a direct support, in order to allow development of models based on good practices.          Analysis of the results and definition of the model for future actions targeting good practices.</p>
<p><b>Achieved results</b></p>	<p>Consolidation of the supporting action to the Mountain District economy.          Creation of commercial circuits related to tourism in order to support local productions.          Opening of the selling point.          Workshops.          Promotion initiatives and training actions.</p>
<p><b>Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved</b></p>	<p>No evident discrepancies have been detected from the planned activities.</p>



<b>Instruments proposed, revised and finalised</b>	A convention with the Municipality of Dazio.
<b>Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders</b>	<p>The most important contributions targeted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• economic development of mountain areas, mountain districts and boundary small towns;</li><li>• integration between trade and tourist activities.</li></ul> <p>Small entrepreneur (agricultural entrepreneurs, craftsmen, merchants, tourist operators) mostly benefited from this promotion initiatives.</p>
<b>Critical aspects</b>	The areas of reference for experimentation are territories characterized by a relevant social dispersion, which constitutes an important obstacle to integration not only from an economic point of view.
<b>Lessons learned</b>	The importance of a network among local bodies.
<b>Transferability</b>	This case study is only one example of several projects promoted by the Mountain District. Within all these projects it is possible to find links and resources for the development of a continuous and repeatable process.
<b>Case study Follow-up</b>	The project offers an important contribution to the local development regarding the mountain economy and facing the products "distribution" problem.
<b>Common issues with other projects</b>	For the current Equal IT-G-LOM-014 Project the creation of a network for research and assistance inside the alpine space has been planned. This network could find important links with AlpCity.
<b>SSC Experts' comments and recommendations</b>	The project objective consisted in defining a model for the revitalisation of the typical products in the involved area. The idea is quite good and especially the concept of "selling places", which can reveal to be a best practice exportable to other contexts. Since the project is part of a programme developed by the Mountain District, it can be considered as a complementary work inserted in a regional strategy. The training offered to interested stakeholders represents an implementation of the project concept. The experiment can be exported (from the methodological point of view) to other partners, who need to revitalise mountain economy. It can provide a set of best practices being an innovative project and aiming at the improvement of local population's capacity building through an appropriate training.

## Development of the retail trade concept for small trade



<p><b>AlpCity Partner</b></p> <p><b>Work Package</b></p> <p><b>WP Coordinator</b></p> <p><b>Subjects involved and their role</b></p>	<p>Municipality of Grainau (Germany)</p> <p>Economic development (WP5)</p> <p>Lombardy Region (Italy)</p> <p><b>AlpCity Project Partner:</b>  <i>Municipality of Grainau</i>            Andreas HILDEBRANDT, First Mayor            Am Kurpark 1            D - 82491 Grainau            Tel.: 0049 / 8821 / 9818-0            Fax: 0049 / 8821 / 98 18-30            E-mail: <a href="mailto:gemeinde@grainau.de">gemeinde@grainau.de</a></p> <p><b>External expert:</b>            Manfred HEIDER            Agency for Location, Market and Regional Analysis            Bismarckstr. 5, 86159 Augsburg, Germany            Telephone: + 49 / 0821 / 52 78 53            Fax: + 49 / 0821 / 522987            E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@drmheider.de">info@drmheider.de</a></p> <p>Many other people have been involved in the discussions and decisions during the implementation of the study on trade and economy:            Local Councils of Grainau.            Inhabitants of Grainau (mostly belonging to the retail and handcraft sectors).</p>
<p><b>Spatial area involved</b></p> <p><b>Project budget</b></p> <p><b>Project purpose</b></p>	<p>Municipality of Grainau (3.704 inhabitants).</p> <p>€ 42.000,00</p> <p>The project aimed at strengthen the trade industry through a set of tools, which have the scope to support local authorities in developing innovative strategies improving the mentioned</p>



	<p>sector. A particular effort was carried out in creating new job opportunities especially for young people. The case study implied the finalization of a comprehensive sustainable development concept for trade and economy in the municipality of Grainau, in order to ensure a long-term sustainable development of the village as an attractive trade and business location (developing suitable measures for an increase of attractiveness in the economic location and the inner city).</p>
<b>Project methodology</b>	<p>Analysis of existing trade and industry firms. Analysis of existing problems. Identification of basic solutions. Proposals of scenarios to local authorities. Workshops involving the stakeholders.</p>
<b>Project activities</b>	<p>Elaboration of an analysis of the present situation: the existing structures, development tendencies and potentials of the economic location Grainau have been analysed and determined together with the challenges to be faced (current trends such as decentralization/centralization). Identifying the development perspectives and sustainable solutions: the present changes in the external framework have been surveyed and suitable development objectives, opportunities and fields of action have been identified in order to develop feasible adaptation strategies. Improving site-related location factors for retail trade. Raising attractiveness of the inner city through an integrated approach. Ensuring supply to the local population. Creation of favourable conditions for job development in the business sector. Consideration of sustainable spatial planning in respect of the needs of the local population and the tourists: one of the crucial points was to raise the awareness of the inhabitants in terms of promotion for self-initiatives and responsibility for their municipality (through the promotion of the endogenous potential). Development of a comparative analysis of the Bavarian municipalities for the identification of best practises related to the stabilisation of the inner city.</p>
<b>Achieved results</b>	<p>Establishment of a project group (formed by a project manager expert on location marketing/economic development, some town planners, the mayor, businesspeople, the local council and some key persons involved in local trade) in order to identify priorities through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a strength/weakness analysis;</li></ul>

- an opportunities / threats analysis;
- the determination of risks and potentials;
- the investigation of the fields of action, priorities and adaptation and development strategies;
- a concept of integrated action for the local economy with linkages to the other case studies and actions implemented in Grainau within AlpCity.

Draft of a detailed list of the weak aspects and problems of the local economic development in Grainau.

Provision of an handbook for private stakeholders and the municipality on the way to face problems and challenges.

Development of an overall strategy concerning economic aspects in coherence to local spatial development and urban land use planning ('Bauleitplanung').

Development of a clear strategy for economic stabilisation of the inner city and for ensuring the long-term supply to the population.

Set up of priorities for projects concerning town construction in the inner city by putting emphasis on a concentrated allocation of the local financial resources available.

Development of action guidelines for the municipality concerning optimisation and maximisation of the public buildings use for various events and activities.

Improved information, raised awareness of general public and higher degree of involvement concerning the local decision-making process.

**Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved**

No evident discrepancies have been detected from the planned activities.

**Instruments proposed, revised and finalised**

Finalisation of an industry/business/ trade site appraisal.  
 Start of the follow-up project - a concept for small trade - to settle and get improvements by arts and crafts enterprises in Grainau. The goals of the further investigation should be: the stabilization of the resources in the village centres, the development and improvement of the location village centre, the improvement of the positioning regarding the tourist industry. Moreover the following substantial investigation should be developed: some location recommendations, a strategic proceeding, the project implementation within the municipal development (through an integrated action plan) and some recommendations regarding the own marketing strategy (e.g. flyers, over-local application, etc.).

**Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders**

The local stakeholders realized that for the long-term management of the economic location Grainau an intensified engagement and initiative of local stakeholders is necessary.



The municipality took its role as initiator, moderator and promoter of ideas and initiatives to mobilise the local stakeholders. There is a diffuse awareness that a strong integration and involvement of the local businesspeople and real estate owners is indispensable. The establishment of an action basis for the long-term management of the local supply revealed to be useful: how to shelter supply and living quality locally, and also how to secure residence near supply especially important for aged inhabitants.

The improvement and adjustment of the spatial development plans on the existing internal-local spatial potentials contributed on the reduction of land consumption.

Taking care of tasks by local town council members implied additional voluntary work. Businesspeople and real estate owners were confronted with lack of quality and consequently stimulated for a quality improvement.

### Critical aspects

Problems emerged during the realisation:

- Key measures concern public (public areas) and private interests (retail trade, catering trade, services, handicraft, other trade): a deep adjusting and coordination with municipality planning has been necessary.
- Trade associations and agencies on local level are not organized and should be integrated.
- Difficulty in getting support from the outside - motivation and participation of local participants has been absolutely crucial.
- Activation of the local businesspeople and real estate owners required high expenditure (time and personnel), which exceeded the possibilities of the local authorities and of honorary engaged citizens.
- Limited financial resources (public and private).
- Beyond this a personnel capacity problem exists for the conversion of individual measures (activation of the real estate owners).

### Lessons learned

The composition of the project group with 10-12 participants works very well: key persons (e.g. opinion leaders) beside the municipal authorities are local businesspeople with good site knowledge and reputation; supra-regional economic representatives seem not to be very interested since they pursue their own interests.

Self-image, self-confidence and local communication must be improved, in order to be able to exploit the existing potentials. Guidance by the municipality to establish favourable framework-conditions has to be adjusted to the particular interests of the local stakeholders by a clear and open dialogue



and discussions between the municipality and the stakeholders.

The transfer steps strongly dependent on personnel capacities belonging to the municipality, can be only partly carried out with honorary activity: a specialized expert analysis and expert knowledge accompanying the process is required.

The integration of different public institutions engaged in local development and planning (for Grainau the authority of Upper Bavaria concerning town construction) is recommended.

After completion of the concept finding work a fast authorisation of the measures and activities concerning the public/private projects is necessary to ensure continuity and the achievement/implementation of goals and measures.

Early clarifying of the decision-making procedure concerning the setting of priorities, the measures to be pursued and the financial and personnel organisation should be outlined in order to ensure a fast and target-oriented implementation.

Effective communication in the village as well as the improvement of quality and attractiveness of the inner city have to be considered as valuable development chances and crucial location factors in many other municipalities.

### **Transferability**

The following elements are considered usefully repeatable in other contexts:

- a combination of the bottom-up and top-down method;
- the overall guidance and co-ordination by the municipality;
- utilization and combination of external expertise with the know-how of local stakeholders;
- inter-sectoral adjustment, integration and combination of results for the development of suitable common strategies and particular strategies for each sector;
- motivation, integration and involvement of the local population (this is possible foremost in small alpine towns).

### **Case study Follow-up**

A further project, which directly ties up to the activities implemented within the AlpCity Project, has already been assigned. The involved external expert Mr. Heider will be engaged again to push on with the improvement process. The Municipality of Grainau intends to proceed with the improvement and the new settlement of additional/new retail trade and handcraft enterprises also after the end of the AlpCity Project and it will use this studies (the location appraisal) as a basis for the further procedure.

### **Common issues with other projects**

In Grainau the maintenance and the successful further development of the economic situation stands in the foreground. The Municipality pursued an integrated approach to raise its attractiveness. Therefore this case study stands in



### SSC Experts' comments and recommendations

a close context with the activities implemented in the other case studies of AlpCity. Regular co-ordination meetings with all other involved internal and external partners were held in order to exchange information and thus enhance the overall added value initiated through AlpCity.

Grainau adopted a public-partnership approach with the involvement of some external experts and moderators, which represents a sort of participation process. This combination of internal and external know-how has produced acceptance of decisions and a real participation of the stakeholders.

Furthermore the integration of several sectors in "one overall concept" has produced remarkable results in the implementation of the case study and such successful strategy can surely be exported. However, at present the different structural conditions and the given standards in the alpine countries require a very specific adaptation of the chosen strategy.

## Future and Tourism in Saint-Maurice



### AlpCity Partner

Municipality of St Maurice and Haute École Valaisanne (Switzerland)

### Work Package

Economic development (WP5)

### WP Coordinator

Lombardy Region (Italy)

### Subjects involved and their role

*Municipality of St-Maurice - Department Economy & Tourism*  
Case Postale 83, CH-1890 Saint Maurice

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Development Agency of St-Maurice (Société de développement de St-Maurice), which groups all the local economic enterprises.

AlpCity Local Steering Committee (the two previous actors and some tourist companies).

University of Applied Sciences Valais, which coaches the AlpCity process in St-Maurice.

Haute École Valaisanne

Institute of Economics and Tourism

Technopôle 3, CH-3960 Sierre

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### Spatial area involved

Municipality of St-Maurice (3.800 inhabitants and 718 ha surface) located in the Canton of Valais (South of Switzerland, 280.000 inhabitants and 5.000 ha surface).

### Project budget

€ 100.000,00

### Project purpose

Through the realization of the project Future & Tourism, the municipality of St-Maurice hoped to give a great impulse to the development of tourism on its territory. This means more revenues for the local economy but also a better quality of life



	<p>for the inhabitants (better urbanization and more animation). The project will provide the municipality with technical assistance in order to establish an appropriate method and process related to tourism issues.</p>
<b>Project methodology</b>	<p>Analysis developed through questionnaires. Workshops with stakeholders. Transfer of model to other regions.</p>
<b>Project activities</b>	<p>2004: contacts and preparation of the project with the Department of Economy &amp; Tourism of St-Maurice and the "Société de développement de St-Maurice". 2005: interviews with the political and the tourist leaders; questionnaires to the visitors (tourists) and the inhabitants to draft a state of the art regarding tourism in St-Maurice. 2006: workshops with all the stakeholders and open to the inhabitants to propose measures to improve tourism; validation of the strategy and the action plan. The final product consists in a strategy and an action plan especially designed for tourism in St-Maurice</p>
<b>Achieved results</b>	<p>The action plan has being drafted by the Project Partners in collaboration with the local Steering Committee; all the others steps (questionnaires, interviews, workshops) were carried out and concluded.</p>
<b>Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved</b>	<p>No evident discrepancies have been detected from the planned activities.</p>
<b>Instruments proposed, revised and finalised</b>	<p>A strategy and an action plan for tourism in St-Maurice.</p>
<b>Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders</b>	<p>The inhabitants are more conscious of the importance of tourism. The collaboration between the local actors is improved. The municipality is more favourable to the development of tourism.</p>
<b>Critical aspects</b>	<p>Some political oppositions. A lack of collaboration from one tourist enterprise.</p>
<b>Lessons learned</b>	<p>The most significant lesson learned regards the confirmation of the importance of the participatory process.</p>
<b>Transferability</b>	<p>Willingness from the local authorities to open the process to all the stakeholders and to all the inhabitants.</p>
<b>Case study Follow-up</b>	<p>The strategy and action plan has to be realized in the following years by the municipality and the Development Society of St-Maurice.</p>

### **Common issues with other projects**

According to the presentation held in Sierre (3-4/06/2004) the project was already tested elsewhere and the methodology was transferred to the AlpCity case study. There was also a plan to provide municipalities with technical assistance on tourism (method and process) and to create links with some projects within Agenda 21.

### **SSC Experts' comments and recommendations**

The concept of developing people's awareness in the field of tourism through a linear methodology was well described and the model could be easily transferred to other contexts. The project is in line with the Interreg recommendations regarding a participatory approach, the dissemination of activities, the transfer of models at trans-national level and some best practices exchanges. The participatory process could be implemented and improved through an exchange of information with the AlpCity Austrian Partner, who can boast a long experience in this field and in relation to municipalities. A great interest has been showed as regards the follow-up activities of the Action Plan.



## Strategies for an integrated tourism



<b>AlpCity Partner</b>	Municipality of Tschlin (Switzerland)
<b>Work Package</b>	Economic development (WP5)
<b>WP Coordinator</b>	Lombardy Region (Italy)
<b>Subjects involved and their role</b>	<i>Municipality of Tschlin</i> Angelo Andina, Secretary Cumün da Tschlin 7559 Tschlin Tel. +41 081 866 33 03 Fax +41 081 866 32 47 E-Mail: info@tschlin.ch
<b>Spatial area involved</b>	The local authorities assigned Mr Andina the role to manage the project and all the resources devoted to it. This work was supported by the "Alpenbüro Netz GmbH" and some specialized consultants (in hotel management and finance). Moreover an architect started planning the renovation and enlargement of the school-building. Municipality of Tschlin (Graubünden Canton, Unterengadin Region) with a surface of 7473 ha and constituted by three small settlements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tschlin: 173 inhabitants with the town hall and a school building without pupils;</li><li>• Strada: 147 inhabitants with the school and the post office;</li><li>• Martina: 114 inhabitants with the customs house.</li></ul>
<b>Project budget</b>	€ 100.000,00
<b>Project purpose</b>	Development of the town by change of use of the empty buildings for a soft tourism. The project starts with the re-conversion of the school building in Tschlin in the form of a decentralised hotel-building.
<b>Project methodology</b>	Spreading awareness among the local population about the

### Project activities

concept of integrated tourism to be developed by exploiting the available local resources and infrastructure.

Project design and financial clearing established by the local authorities with the help of external consultants.

Dissemination of the concept of an integrated tourism among the inhabitants.

Planning of the project of transformation of the school building into a hotel.

Financial clearing aimed at defining and allowing the financial backing of the project.

Design of a detailed architectural plan for the new hotel.

Search of potential investors interested in the project real implementation.

### Achieved results

The concept of an integrated tourism was fully accepted, shared and supported by the local population.

All the practical procedures to develop the case study from an architectural and financial point of view have been fulfilled.

All the most important plans have been realised as scheduled.

### Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved

### Instruments proposed, revised and finalised

A paper on the concept of the integrated tourism and its strategies.

A prospectus of the architect.

### Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders

In Tschlin there has been a decline of the population for years: many inhabitants have moved mainly to the main town of the region (Scuol) and to the capital city of Graubünden (Chur). The most part of the resident population works in the primary sector with a shortage of job opportunities.

Tschlin owns a toll-free area in the Valley of Samnaun and is just 20 km far from the Scuol ski-area, a famous Swiss tourist resort.

Thanks to this pilot case the local people will be able to find a few job opportunities in the local tourist industry. Other important spin-offs will be created among the economic activities induced by tourism: crafts, cheese and meat products of local farmers, the local brewery and all goods with the "Bun Tschlin" brand will find new channels of distribution and selling. At the same time the local restaurant with its fine cuisine and the small shop in the village will get new customers. Renting of holiday-rooms will increase. Finally carpenters and other workmen will have more work according to a virtuous circle.

### Critical aspects

The most relevant problem consists in finding the necessary financial resources to support the implementation of the project. Due to its position in the very east of Switzerland it results difficult to reach the Municipality of Tschlin from the other



<b>Lessons learned</b>	<p>Swiss cities: this can make it less attractive for potential investors. Tschlin owns a traditional rural vocation, which can be only gradually transformed into a soft form of tourist reception.</p> <p>A small municipality like Tschlin needs help from the outside for what regards its economic development. International project-partnerships, specialized consultants and investors represent the basis for a successful step toward the future.</p>
<b>Transferability</b>	<p>The listed elements can be useful in other contexts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the implementation of a participation process;</li><li>• the model of "Alliance in the Alps" as laboratory of experiences exchanges;</li><li>• the vision of an integrated development equipped with a leading idea for leading projects (in Tschlin the opening of a local brewery and a hotel) together with expert guidance.</li></ul>
<b>Case study Follow-up</b>	<p>The implementation of a soft idea of tourism with the new hotel will start at first with the founding of an new society, which should take care of the financial backing concerning the renovation and enlargement of the empty existing buildings.</p>
<b>Common issues with other projects</b>	<p>Tschlin is member of the international network "Alliance in the Alps". By visiting several other members the authorities of Tschlin learned to distinguish between successful an less successful developments.</p> <p>As member of "Alliance in the Alps" Tschlin has a network of specialised consultants at its disposal, with the Alpenbüro Netz GmbH as the closest one. They worked out together with the secretary of the municipality in order to define the concept of sustainable development in Tschlin. In the central point of this work stand always the participation of the local people remains the central point of this work: without it there is no chance for a sustainable development of small towns.</p>
<b>SSC Experts' comments and recommendations</b>	<p>On the case study level each Project Partner in this Work Package should have got a local added value for what concerns its economic development perspectives. This is important in the sense of "learning regions" (Morgan, 1997) where a region changes under the conditions of internal and external pressures. It masters this situation by developing skills and experiences and in adapting its own knowledge on internal and external needs. In this way, the Municipality of Tschlin transformed some existing resources and infrastructures in relation to new potential development path represented by tourism. The Municipality certainly gained important profits by exposing the local development project on a trans-national arena, getting feed-backs and suggestions on the implementation according to the guidelines of the Interreg Programme.</p>



**Local development  
and the Olympic Winter Games'  
legacy**



<p><b>AlpCity Partner</b></p> <p><b>Work Package</b></p> <p><b>WP Coordinator</b></p> <p><b>Subjects involved and their role</b></p>	<p>Piedmont Region (Italy)</p> <p>Economic development (WP5)</p> <p>Lombardy Region (Italy)</p> <p><i>Consorzio Pracatinat</i> Mr Boris ZOBEL E-mail: bzobel@tracatinat.it</p> <p>Dipartimento Interateneo del Territorio Università e Politecnico di Torino Prof. Egidio DANSERO Egidio.dansero@unito.it</p> <p><i>Municipality of Pragelato and Prali</i> Mountain Community of Val Chisone and Germanasca (main stakeholders)</p>
<p><b>Spatial area involved</b></p>	<p>Alta Val Chisone (Upper Chisone Valley) (with 2.268 inhabitants in 2001): municipality of Pragelato. Val Germanasca (with 2.315 inhabitants in 2001): municipality of Prali.</p>
<p><b>Project budget</b></p> <p><b>Project purpose</b></p>	<p>€ 40.000,00</p> <p>The project is based on two case studies developed in Pragelato and Prali (Upper Chisone Valley and Germanasca Valley) with the purpose to analyse initiatives and proposals of local economic development with special reference to the winter Olympic event, which took place in Piedmont Region in 2006. The final aim is at overcoming the structural difficulties/constraints, particularly strong in Prali, and at identifying feasible strategies to decrease economic decline.</p>
<p><b>Project methodology</b></p>	<p>Two different strategies have been adopted for improving the local population's involvement in the two different places.</p>



### Project activities

In Prali a round table was planned involving young people and focused on their own views of the future and their role in the local community.

In Pragelato a first round of bilateral interviews was organized with local entrepreneurs, professionals, workers operating in the winter tourism sector.

Furthermore a deep analysis on the social-economic dynamics was carried out in order to identify possible proposals.

- A first draft of the territorial analysis performed by implementing the main socio-economic indicators.
- Some interviews with the project key actors (the Mayors of Prali and Pragelato, the representatives of the Mountain Community, the managers of Toroc [Turin Organising Committee XX Olympic Winter Games]).
- A first round of focus groups in Prali and Pragelato.

In the Municipality of Prali:

- Some interviews with specific actors (industries, young people, real estate agencies, eco-museum).
- A survey among the young resident people about Prali and their future perspectives.
- A planning of the second round of focus group with the municipal authorities.
- A second round of focus group involving tourists and young people of Prali communities.
- Building of a participative scenario in Prali.
- Voluntary agreements among young people, the mountain community, the municipal authorities, Pracatinat Consortium, University of Turin and the eco-museum in order to keep this participative approach during every future projects design for Prali.

In the Municipality of Pragelato:

- Some interviews with specific actors (economic actors, hotels, tourist operators, municipal authorities).
- A telephone survey among the resident population (60) with the aim at being acquainted with the opinions about the transformations due to the Olympic Games and at verifying a joint analysis of the "Funivia Vai e Vieni".
- A face-to-face survey among tourists about their judgement of the tourist package supplied.
- An interview of the members of the so called "G8" network, composed by the municipalities of Pragelato, Sestriere, Usseaux, Fenestrelle and Roure and the three parks of the area (Val Troncea, Orsiera Rocciavre, Salbentrand) in order to assess the reason of this project failure in promoting all

### Achieved results

the high valley as a whole.

Involvement of local authorities.

Organization of two focus groups with the local authorities: one for each valley (Val Chisone and Val Germanasca).

The activities planned in the two cases were the same but the community of Pragelato had no time to spend in a participation procedure.

The methodological approach was different: a traditional approach in Pragelato with many interviews and surveys to found the trends of the community; a participative one in Prali with a specific target towards an active role of the youth.

### Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved

No evident discrepancies have been detected from the planned activities.

### Instruments proposed, revised and finalised

- Interviews
- Telephone and face-to-face surveys
- Focus groups
- Maps of the actors
- SWOT analysis and territorial data
- Search of best practices
- A voluntary agreement

### Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders

Good participation and impact on the municipality of Prali have been recorded, even if in the very beginning of the project the youth was not involved in the public debate on the future of the Prali.

The tourist owners of houses expressed interesting ideas about specific needs and from a different point of view about the resources of Prali. The debate about tourism and development gave an opportunity to think about an alternative development path. At the end of the project an active role of the young people in the community has been underlined.

The impact on Pragelato has been less intense. The only actor really involved in the project was the mayor, thanks to his specific role. The other actors were widely interviewed but they did not express any particular participation.

The local mountain community and the eco-museum called "Scoprimeria" supported the project and followed every single step.

### Critical aspects

The involvement and participation of the private sector and young people in building strategies of development is a peculiar aspect of this project. At the end the involvement of young people was emphasized by the focus groups.

The role of Pragelato in the high valley and the alliance with



### Lessons learned

other municipalities (Usseaux, Fenestrelle, Sestriere) aimed at building a new tourist package. Some interviews to the mayors and to the parks representatives were carried out in order to find a solution. The survey among the local population and the tourists was used to provide the local authorities with a different perception.

The participative approach works well if two conditions are satisfied:

- available and collaborative local authorities;
- a specific situation of crisis (tourism decline or involvement of the youth).

In other contexts characterized by plenty of resources, many transformations, and a positive economic growth, the participation tool can be considered as a lost of time.

### Transferability

The involvement of young people could be transferred in other areas where communities have problems to change their local development strategies.

Also the participation of the non-resident owner of houses is important to get another point of view as regards the resources allocation in the territory.

In the case of important infrastructure as the jumping in Pragelato, a joint analysis was implemented for a monetary esteem of the territorial impact. This kind of analysis has already been repeated for other purposes and another project (a PhD thesis) for the case of Cesana (Bobsleigh).

### Case study Follow-up

A further development of the case of Prali could represent a technical and methodological support to the works of voluntary agreement among young people and other institutions.

Other formative resources as seminars and summer schools could be useful to improve the youth's skills in drawing and building projects for the community development.

A lack of modern view about tourism is evident; an innovative vision about the exploitation of the environmental and cultural resources will be promoted to support a sustainable tourism.

### Common issues with other projects

Interesting synergies have been traced with:

- OMERO Project financed by Torino Incontra "Turin 2006 Winter Olympic Games: from successful events to a lasting and sustainable legacy".
- The international symposium "Olympic Winter Games Symposium" organised by OMERO, University of Turin, Olympia Research Team and University of Mainz and held in Turin on February 9th 2006.
- The seminary "The Olympic Games and the immaterial legacy. Governance, communications, tourism", organised

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recommendations**

- by SPOT and OMERO in Turin on May 6th 2006.
- The project of the Pracatinat Consortium entitled "Project for the promotion of sustainability in the area surrounding Pinerolo" financed by the Province of Turin.

The project aimed at investigating the reasons of marginalization of the small alpine municipalities through an objective analysis on the local social and economic patterns and the recognition of the existing projects. The project is well structured and the methodology adopted is a classic one (analysis, scenarios, state of the art). The networking approach with the involvement of the stakeholders is interesting. The confrontation at the trans-national level and the best practices exchange about the potential development of the networks represent important aspects of this project as well as the cross-analysis of the three network levels active in the territories and the relationships binding these networks.

## Chapter X Work Package 6 services and quality of life

### 1. Introduction

This Work Package is related to the selection and implementation of case studies on the improvement of “services and quality of life” with reference to the small alpine and mountain towns. The case studies focus especially on the improvement of the quality and quantity of services with special reference to the needs of alpine and mountain communities, as well as to the accessibility to these services in environments characterised by a low density of population. Particular attention is paid to the improvement and innovation of services provision and management models by considering the necessary support to the economic, social and cultural development of small alpine and mountain communities, which present different weaknesses in relation to their capacities to access these services, to integrate the public and private services as well as to involve the private sector and the local population. The selected actions aim at the quantitative and qualitative improvement of private and public services available to the population (social, health, cultural and commercial services, etc.), bearing in mind community needs at a local level and demographic variations. Moreover, the case studies target the adoption of innovative systems for the management and provision of services, with a greater involvement on the part of local populations.

The case studies included in this Work Package are:

- Network of multimedia public libraries. Provincial Government of Lower Austria (Austria).
- Network of the youth in small and medium-sized alpine towns. Provincial Government of Lower Austria (Austria).
- The international mountain school of the Maritime Alps (Municipalities of Entracque and Valdieri). Piedmont Region (Italy).
- Improving and promoting services addressing tourism and young people. Municipality of Grainau (Germany).

These four projects tried to find a way to make life in mountain small towns for young people more attractive. The best way to achieve this goal is promoting networking and participatory process. Involving people in the process is a good start in order to build consensus and interest. Lower Austria has a quite long experience in participation: that's why they could lead the other partners and help them with advice and transfer their experience. All projects looked for an aggregative point (libraries, mountain school, communications, improvement of services). Small mountain towns cannot compete with towns from the economic point of view, but they have good chance in offering a higher quality of life, including not only a beautiful landscape, but also education and job opportunities (for example in the service sector). Quality of life must combine: successful concepts for future development perspectives (education, employment, provision of necessary goods, etc.) and preserving and promoting cultural and natural heritage (e.g. for sustainable leisure time activities). By combining these elements they can increase their attractiveness and decrease the abandonment of these areas.

## 2. Case studies cards

### Network of multimedia public libraries



**AlpCity Partner**

Provincial Government of Lower Austria (Austria)

**Work Package**

Services and quality of life (WP6)

**WP Coordinator**

Provincial Government of Lower Austria (Austria)

**Subjects involved and their role**

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Role: Operational Support

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Role: Operational Support

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*City of Krems*

Public Library

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<b>Spatial area involved</b>	<p>Member of the Network of Multimedia Libraries</p> <p>The participant towns were initially: Heidenreichtstein, Eggenburg, Gänserndorf, Wolkersdorf, Gloggnitz, Fischamend, Haag, Waidhofen/Y, Langenlois, Hainburg.</p> <p>Actually the members are Eggenburg and Krems.</p>
<b>Project budget</b>	€ 38.246,00
<b>Project purpose</b>	<p>The main goal of the project consisted in the implementation of a creative and innovative cooperation process within some selected multi-media equipped public libraries in small-medium towns of Lower Austria. New forms of personnel and virtual user dialogs together with a periodic exchange of experiences within the network created the base for an enduring development process that aims at the provision of user-oriented multimedia stock and services. To enable a long lasting working process, a virtual platform and periodically organised personal meetings are carried out as a fundamental organisation structure.</p>
<b>Project methodology</b>	<p>The project adopted the participation process as base for cooperation. Representatives of public libraries established a network after developing the concept of networking during some proper workshops. Some best practices examples have been collected and used as professional input. The bottom-up approach ensured a tailor-made design of the project stimulating the people's participation.</p> <p>The project aims have been achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• coordination of interested and involved groups;</li><li>• working out of topics and working fields;</li><li>• implementation of self-organisation methodologies (local workshops);</li><li>• setting up of inputs and strategy know-how (regional workshops);</li><li>• development and establishing of products and services for the libraries to create more direct benefit for the participants.</li></ul>
<b>Project activities</b>	<p><i>March 2004:</i> Introduction of the network. Informing cities with active public libraries about the call to take part in the project. The information was carried out with information letters and personal calls.</p> <p><i>June to September 2004:</i> Introductory workshops with 5 libraries that were interested in taking part in the project.</p>



### Achieved results

### Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved

### Instruments proposed, revised and finalised

### Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders

The specific goals of the network were set.

*January - June 2005:*

Implementation of educational workshops, where all public libraries were invited.

Topics: "Sponsoring and fund raising for libraries" and "The perfect Appearance-professional speeches and presentations".

*October 2005*

Symposium: Public Libraries in the 21st century - Knowledge Transfer Networks - Expectations, Facts, Perspectives.

The final declaration is provided in an extra document.

*2006 so far*

Planning of further steps in establishing more network activities and getting more members into the network.

Achieved agreements with 12 interested towns.

Coordination of regional and local authorities and persons.

Preparation and organisation of workshops.

Homepage and project logograms.

The participating towns showed a greater interest in the role of the libraries. Krems will soon provide its public library with new rooms.

At the moment, the network has only two permanent members, although many more libraries expressed interest in taking part.

The goal of eight participating libraries was missed, not because of lack of interest, but because of lack of personnel resources in the libraries involved.

An information leaflet.

The Network Agreements between participating towns and the Association for Village and Urban Renewal in Lower Austria. The implementation of a website for dissemination. On the website also an online-forum is available.

Invitation folders for the symposium.

A final resolution as the result of the symposium.

A knowledge transfer among the libraries during the implementation phase.

An educational programme for more and better skills in the daily work. Also a knowledge transfer between "beginners" in the business and people working in a library for long time. In the participating towns, the role of the libraries was more emphasized.

During the symposium, the head of the country's biggest scientific library offered cooperation to all public libraries attending the symposium, independently from their size. The gap between scientific libraries and public libraries started



	<p>disappearing.</p> <p>The resolution of the symposium can be used at political level: it was formulated and passed by some representatives of scientific and public libraries alike.</p>
<b>Critical aspects</b>	<p>The libraries are very interested in networking, but they do not have the necessary personnel resources.</p> <p>Nevertheless there are more and more local networks between bigger libraries and small libraries in the countryside. In order to overcome this obstacle the important role of libraries has to be recognised by the municipalities, who run the public libraries. Like that, hopefully more funds will be provided. Fund raising was always an important issue.</p> <p>A second strategy consists in encouraging voluntary work also in the libraries of cities, as it happens in the countryside. The online-forum on the website was not used. The reason seems to be due to a lack of experience among users in the libraries. A training day on this subject will be offered in 2006.</p>
<b>Lessons learned</b>	<p>Networking is widely regarded as an important tool, but especially building up a network takes time. Therefore a coordinator is needed, who has to work only for that particular project.</p> <p>The participants in the network have to understand their personal advantages for getting active.</p> <p>Especially on the political level, it will be important to break up the image of the old style libraries with little old ladies taking care of them, but to position the library as an active and important access point to education and science.</p> <p>The full usage of new media is limited because there is a lack of technical skills among many people.</p>
<b>Transferability</b>	<p>The methodology of workshops to design the network is widely accepted by the participating libraries and the feedback was very good.</p> <p>A network on this level has not ever existed before. The activities of the network were planned together with the participants in the workshops.</p> <p>The symposium was the first event of this kind and brought together public libraries, scientific libraries and also dealt with the way to bestow a new appearance to public libraries.</p>
<b>Case study Follow-up</b>	<p>The web page will be kept up.</p> <p>There will be further activities set within the framework of the Urban Regeneration Programme in Lower Austria.</p> <p>In the long term, there is the goal to implement a country-wide network.</p>
<b>Common issues with other projects</b>	<p>There are common topics with the second project submitted by the Partner (multimedia network, cooperation, setting up of</p>

**SSC Experts'  
comments and  
recommendations**

infrastructures and know-how transfer) and also a common methodology (meetings with the stakeholders, participation process in networks, virtual platform, best practices exchange). The project shares also great part of its methodology with “the international mountain school of the Maritime Alps” case study managed by Piedmont Region.

The idea of libraries forming a network has a strong impact, because they can be seen as an “aggregation place” for people living in small alpine towns. Generally isolated initiatives will fail, because they are not integrated in a system; for this reason the project approach is correct as well as the adopted methodology. Furthermore, the project is linked to the other one, submitted by the Partner: both of them supply tools to attract people, particularly the youth. The stakeholders' involvement has allowed a bottom-up approach since the beginning and made the local population the engine of the project.

**Network of the youth  
in small and medium-sized  
alpine towns**



**AlpCity Partner  
Work Package  
WP Coordinator  
Subjects involved  
and their role**

Provincial Government of Lower Austria (Austria)

Services and quality of life (WP6)

Provincial Government of Lower Austria (Austria)

*Office of the provincial government of Lower-Austria*

*Spatial planning and regional policy Department*

*Regeneration of villages, towns and city centres*

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Sabine HIPPMANN

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<b>Spatial area involved</b>	Municipalities of Ebreichsdorf, Wilhelmsburg, Laa an der Thaya, Horn, Gloggnitz, Brunn am Gebirge.
<b>Project budget</b>	€ 38.350,00
<b>Project purpose</b>	In Lower Austria several activities and efforts to integrate young people in the social life of towns have been carried out; especially the program of urban regeneration has started several projects on this topic. There are important experiences from previous projects concerning implementation, challenges and results. A network among local authorities, associations and other bodies is necessary to create new ideas, impulse and standpoints. The set up of infrastructure for networking and know-how transfer allows to carry out projects using financial and human resources in a more efficient way. For what regards the future by encouraging new forms of development in small and medium-sized alpine towns.
<b>Project methodology</b>	The methods varied according to the local situation. The creation



<b>Project activities</b>	<p>of a network among different stakeholders is the basic idea of this project as well the design of projects involving young people through a participation process. Furthermore the expected exchange of experiences between target groups improved the flow of information and cooperation.</p>
	<p><i>March to September 2004:</i> Introduction of the network Information of cities with the call to take part in the project. The information was carried out with information letters, personal calls and personal conversations.</p>
	<p><i>January - June 2005</i> Concretion of goals and project schedule of the network among ten interested cities. Organisation and implementation of educational workshops and network meetings with six partner-cities. Conception of Working Groups including the final identification of Partners (single persons with local groups) in towns (city managers, youth-coordinators, youth-politicians, councillors, young people, regional-managers, experts). Workshops prepared and held on the following topics: youth-rooms; drugs and prevention; girls and municipalities. Creation of a network-youth logogram.</p>
	<p><i>October 2005 so far</i> Five full-time Symposiums in Brunn am Gebirge, Gloggnitz, Laa an der Thaya, Horn and Wilhelmsburg with all the network partners. Planning of further steps of the network.</p>
<b>Achieved results</b>	<p>Six cities became real partners in exchanging experiences and know how concerning youth-topics in small towns. In the participating towns, the role of youth was more and more taken into consideration. The network has six permanent member-cities, although many more cities and partners in Lower Austria expressed interest in taking part in the network for the future. Exchange of information, experiences and lessons learned among partners of the work package in Lower Austria. A youth congress in preparation.</p>
<b>Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved</b>	<p>No discrepancies were found.</p>
<b>Instruments proposed, revised and finalised</b>	<p>Some information papers and journals. The Network Agreements between participating towns and the Association for Village and Urban Renewal in Lower</p>

### **Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders**

Austria.  
Implementation of a website for dissemination.  
Invitation folders for the symposium.  
A final resolution as the result of the symposium is in preparation.  
Leaflets and a "guide" are in preparation too.  
Workshop-tools like Power Point presentations, handouts and posters.

An intensive knowledge transfer between the stakeholders and the involved persons of the network.  
Understanding needs and offers for educational programmes to learn more and better skills in the daily work. Also knowledge transfer between "beginners" and people facing a long experience.

Knowledge of the local and regional best practices.  
Collaborations among towns, young people and the local authorities. Growing networking and positive dispositions concerning youth agendas in small towns on all levels.

Autonomous and coordinated collaboration between all the concerned and involved persons and groups, public work with local and regional medias, project ideas and further business plans.  
Development of new social relationships among local and regional stakeholders.

### **Critical aspects**

There was a late start due to the replacement of the case studies manager.

Few financial resources to meet all the demands; few calculated means for a project idea with very widespread responses, with an important and sustainable impact.

The online-forum on the website was not exploited. The reason seems to be a lack of experience among the libraries users. A training day in that field will be offered during the current year.

### **Lessons learned**

A specific coordinator is necessary in order to be responsible and always available only for that particular project.

Long term aims have still to be gained and defined, so the prosecution of the coordination is needed.

The participants in the network have to foresee their personal advantages for getting active. This takes time and much work. Especially on the political level, politicians have to be involved too.

The youth has a great consideration in the regions (villages, towns) and represents the most important target group for the future.

### **Transferability**

All methodologies of networking, of its design have been widely accepted by all partners.

The exchange of information among partners dealing with



### **Case study Follow-up**

networks and method sharing is recommended. Since the project is well designed and thanks to the long experience in participatory process, Lower Austria can provide the other Partners with very good suggestions and assistance.

The Network will be spread in many other cities and villages. Preparations have already begun.

The web page will be kept up.

There will be further activities set within the framework of the Urban Regeneration Programme in Lower Austria.

In the long run the network will be extended to the whole country.

A special handout, a so called "guide" is in preparation.

### **Common issues with other projects**

Networking has become a widespread and important demand in other towns as well as in other regions.

There are common topics with the second project submitted by the Partner (multimedia network, cooperation, setting up of infrastructures and know-how transfer) and also a common methodology (meetings with the stakeholders, participation process in networks, virtual platform, best practices exchange).

The youth topic concerns also the following case studies on the international mountain school of the Maritime Alps and the problems of young people in Grainau.

Networking is a theme shared also with the other AlpCity Work Packages, especially WP8.

### **SSC Experts' comments and recommendations**

The project is very well structured and the objective and methodology are clear. Like in the previous case study the approach is focused on finding an aggregative element, in order to make the small towns more suitable for young people. The theme of this pilot case, "how to communicate with young people", can be considered universal and a potential best practice to be exported in other contexts.



## The international mountain school of the Maritime Alps



**AlpCity Partner**  
**Work Package**  
**WP Coordinator**  
**Subjects involved**  
**and their role**

Piedmont Region (Italy)  
Services and quality of life (WP6)  
Provincial Government of Lower Austria (Austria)  
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Primary schools of Valdieri and Entracque  
Secondary school of Borgo San Dalmazzo  
University of Turin, Education Sciences  
Municipality of Valdieri  
Municipality of Entracque  
Centro Servizi Amministrativi (CSA) of Cuneo  
National Park of Mercantour (France)

**Spatial area involved**

The small towns mostly concerned are Entracque and Valdieri, where the schools are located at the moment. However, the project area regards the Park and its surroundings.

**Project budget**

€ 40.000,00

**Project purpose**

The aim of the project was at developing a model of public school in mountain areas which would allow to:

- keep on site local students and, at the same time, to attract students from neighbouring zones;
- qualify local teachers, increasing their sense of belonging and job/life prospects; to attract external teachers;
- define an education strategy based on European languages, especially the alpine ones and on scientific subjects, with advanced methods and equipments;



### Project methodology

- promote the integration of the school into networks of exchange with other alpine schools, aimed at the circulation of students, teachers and ideas.

Creation of halls and colleges (both for students and external guests in summer).

The methodology included a concept modelling, cooperation among different stakeholders, know-how transfer, creation of a network of alpine schools and some best practices exchanges. In particular:

- analysis of the state of the art regarding schools in mountain areas (Piedmont and outside): peculiarities, priorities, potentialities, existing good practices (in Italy and in other alpine countries);
- formulation of a first theoretical model of an 'international school' in mountain areas: feasibility studies including financial, administrative and technical aspects (e.g. check with the current legislation and recent changes, financial requirements and other funding opportunities);
- analysis of the Maritime Alps area in terms of critical aspects and potentialities;
- definition of an international school model applied to the peculiarities of the Maritime Alps area.

Involvement of local key actors engaged in the promotion of schools in mountain areas in Piedmont and at a trans-national level (e.g. Principals of local schools, Park of the Maritime Alps, Provincial Educational Office of Cuneo, Mountain Communities, the Italian Alpine Club, etc.).

### Project activities

Starting from the consideration that mountain schools become smaller and smaller because of the diminishing number of pupils, the case study aimed at offering attractive contents and activities to traditional school, by creating a new and innovative model linked to the mountain environment.

Professional competences, sports, environment, local culture, computer science and foreign languages represent the main activities. The school will be a residential college open all year around, serving also as location for sports and cultural events.

For this purpose the following steps have been implemented:

- identification of the area/schools for the carrying out of the case study;
- involvement of the Park of the Maritime Alps;
- drafting of a strategy and a work plan for the collaboration among Piedmont Region, the Park of the Maritime Alps, University of Turin and local actors and stakeholders;
- collection of documents and data concerning the situation, priorities and challenges of schools in mountain areas (e.g.

	<p>referring to the book 'Le scuole di montagna in Piemonte', Edmond Le Monnier ed., 2004);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>preliminary research for Best Practices related to schooling innovative initiatives in Piedmontese mountain areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Achieved results</b></p>	<p>Setting-up of a working team with the involvement of different actors at different levels.</p> <p>Outlining of an initiative called 'Centomontagne' promoted by Piedmont Region, and co-funded by the "Compagnia di San Paolo" Foundation as call for best practices to be received directly from schools in Piedmontese mountain areas.</p> <p>A survey among the local population has confirmed objectives and results: families from Entracque and Valdieri were asked to express their schooling needs and the reasons of their abandonment of the valley.</p>
<p><b>Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved</b></p>	<p>All the established objectives have been so far confirmed by the implemented actions.</p>
<p><b>Instruments proposed, revised and finalised</b></p>	<p>An action plan between the Park of the Maritime Alps and the French Park of Mercantour.</p> <p>A formal agreement with the Centro Servizi Amministrativi of Cuneo.</p> <p>A business plan including a financial plan and a feasibility study.</p>
<p><b>Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders</b></p>	<p>The pilot case was carried out with the method of an integrated participatory approach involving representatives of the Park of the Maritime Alps, schooling experts and local teachers. This working group established also external relationships with teachers, families, resident students and other institutions (Park of the Mercatour, with whom some meetings were organised in Tenda in order to collaborate in the drafting of the educational axis of the Action Plan).</p> <p>Through the pilot case design and drafting new forms of relationships between public institutions and citizens have been created. For the mountain population, often sceptical, it represents just the start of an involvement into a project for the future of the valley.</p>
<p><b>Critical aspects</b></p>	<p>The budget available is not sufficient for a real business plan, only a very preliminary one has been issued.</p>
<p><b>Lessons learned</b></p>	<p>The most encouraging result is the interest and support from the local population and institutions.</p>
<p><b>Transferability</b></p>	<p>The case study is replicable in any other mountain school, where a subject can play the role of catalyst. The subject can be constituted by a park, a local cultural organisation or a</p>



### **Case study Follow-up**

non-governmental organisation.

The Park of the Maritime Alps has the intention to go on with the project by steps, seeking for further financing support thanks to the interest expressed by the local and regional institutions.

Potential sponsorship could be offered by the Regional Councillorship for Mountains and some private foundations like "Fondazione San Paolo per la Scuola".

### **Common issues with other projects**

A list (available on request) of 20 other examples of similar schooling experimentation was provided by the pilot case staff as result of potential synergies to be created and as a collection of outstanding best practices on the subject.

### **SSC Experts' comments and recommendations**

The aim of the project is at developing a model of public school in mountain areas. The idea behind the pilot case revealed to be good also because theory has been supported by an intensive trans-national and interregional exchange of ideas and practices. The involvement of a national Park facilitated the process (some specific themes concerning the alpine environment could be taught by the Park personnel as well as practical exercises). The setting up of a virtual platform in schools can be another option. The aim is at reducing the disadvantage of distance, saving teachers' time and introducing students to innovative tools. In this case an interesting link with the Austrian pilot cases can be remarked. The inputs from this case study can be considered for building up an innovative and reference model of mountain school.

## Improving and promoting services addressing tourism and young people



**AlpCity Partner**  
**Work Package**  
**WP Coordinator**  
**Subjects involved**  
**and their role**

Municipality of Grainau (Germany)

Services and quality of life (WP6)

Provincial Government of Lower Austria (Austria)

**AlpCity Project Partner:**

*Municipality Grainau*

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**External expert for tourism:**

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Other people have been involved in the discussions and decisions during the implementation of the expertise study on tourism:

Local councils of Grainau

Inhabitants of Grainau (tourism stakeholders, private bed & breakfast-place owners, service providers, hoteliers)

**External expert for geological and field name trails:**

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External expert for Zugspitz-Card:



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<b>Spatial area involved</b>	Municipality of Grainau (3.704 inhabitants).
<b>Project budget</b>	€ 64.594,00
<b>Project purpose</b>	The aim of this project consisted in revitalising the small towns in order to allow young people to remain in the area. The improvement of tourist services is the focus of this project as well as the strengthening of the cultural identity. Tourism sector is predominant in the region but cultural aspects are not taken into proper account: for this reason the efforts were concentrated in promoting international relationships among young people favouring the exchanges of experiences on the same topics. This project was based on the results deriving from a previous study carried out by the Municipality of Grainau in 2003.
<b>Project methodology</b>	Preparation of an Integrated Action Plan (IAP), in which all the single projects (described below) will be put together. The IAP is the basis for a widespread participation of the inhabitants of Grainau (the government of Upper Bavaria was integrated into this participation process).
<b>Project activities</b>	<p><i>1. Tourism: strengthening the competitiveness of Grainau through cross-sectoral improvement of services quality with a focus on the tourism sector</i></p> <p>Strengthening one of the most relevant economic sectors for Grainau by initiating a participatory process with experts and local stakeholders. Establishment of different work groups (families &amp; children, nature &amp; sport, wellness) in order to ensure sustainable (economic, ecological and social) development and preserve/provide jobs in the community; to improve quality of life for inhabitants and guests as well as to enable economic development.</p> <p>Analysis of the situation by external consultants with support of the municipality, information of the local stakeholders, establishment of workgroups and implementation of a wide-spread</p>

participatory process in order to bundle and centralize all energies for developing common solutions.

## *2. Hiking trails through Grainau*

### a) Geological hiking trail

Due to the very special geological situation in Grainau, this hiking trail was developed in co-operation with Johann Peter Orth (geologist). The geological hiking trail is supposed to explain everybody, who is interested in, how the Grainau surroundings arose.

The character of the appearance of Grainau is the result of a massive rockslide. This can be observed especially at the (in the meantime afforested) rock masses, which are spread all over the village (unique in the region). The hiking trail shows all salient places, which are geologically provable.

### b) Field name trail

In Grainau many old names for the fields still exist, with historical roots or simply deriving from the house names of their owners. This cultural heritage should not be lost, so the municipality of Grainau decided to open a hiking trail through these fields explaining the origins of the names, providing historical and cultural information in order to generate a benefit for the native population, children and guests. The field name trail is completed. The opening took place last summer.

### c) Adventure trail for families

Grainau accomplished a magic adventure trail for families in spring 2006. The concept was elaborated within a workgroup formed by local people). Its main aim is at staging existing local resources, culture and history by combining nature elements, secret legends and myths, sport exercises (e.g. rope swinging, timber carving, mountain crystal seeking, etc.) of Grainau and its surroundings.

## *3. Zugspitz-Card*

Due to the public traffic in the region, it became necessary to introduce a standardized Card for all the public transport and for the sights of Grainau and its surroundings. Previously many different holidays cards were available, but with different systems and also different technical accounting systems, which made it impossible to offer this service to guests. A Card can be now used for all the public transports in and around Grainau.

## *4. School exchange Grainau - Turin*

Dates: July 3rd-8th, 2006

The students of Grainau, in the age of 9-10 years, visited the chief town of Piedmont Region. 33 kids with their four tutors



## Achieved results

were welcome by the "Umberto I" European School. The students experienced the daily life in a city. In the same way the pupils from Turin will experience the daily life in the Zugspitzdorf Grainau in February 2007. They will discover the differences between their city and the mountains.

### 1) *Tourism*

- Creation of expert study groups, which set up priorities on the service sector.
- The cultural project "Geological hiking trail" allowed the youth of Grainau to learn more and better the special features of their native home and to strengthen their identity.
- This target was reached also thanks to a project concerned with historical terms in the topographical relations of the municipality.
- The results converged to the integrated action plan (IAP).

The Workshops generated an extensive accumulation of ideas, partly realized or still in progress. A change in the way of thinking of the local stakeholders has started. First improvements (service quality, product innovations, bundling energies for marketing, generation of a "common way of thinking" etc.) are now visible.

### 2) *Hiking trails*

The geological hiking trail is finished.

The field name trail was also completed during the summer like the adventure trail for families.

### 3) *Zugspitz-Card*

The main benefit consisted in a reduction of the individual traffic and therefore a minimization of noise and pollutant emissions. To motivate guests and inhabitants to use public transport means an attractive, simple and effective Card for transfers and sights has been developed.

### 4) *School exchange*

The schools started their relationships through an e-mail exchange. The first part of the exchange was successfully accomplished in July.

No discrepancies have been found.

## Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved

## Instruments proposed, revised and finalised

### 1) *Tourism*

Development of a concept for optimising the tourist image through a brochure and an accommodation catalogue.

### 2) *Hiking trails*

A brochure was provided over on the geological hiking trail.



## Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders

Field name trail: a brochure was finalised in summer 2006.  
 Magic adventure trail: a brochure was finished in summer 2006.

### 3) Zugspitz-Card

The tool was designed and prepared.

### 4) School exchange

Working groups activities: letters, pictures, an article published on a local newspaper (Grainau).

### 1) Tourism

The overall consequences cannot be fully assessed at this moment. However the public-private partnership principle was positively conducted in this project. One of the factors of success was the assignment of an external consultant as a moderator. A neutral person enabled to mediate and communicate the impressions, requirements, wishes and prejudices objectively between local stakeholders and the municipality.

### 2) Hiking trails

The effect on the local environment is positive. The native population and the guests can know more about nature and the homeland and can estimate it. Cooperation with the local population, in particular within the development of the adventure trails revealed to be very good.

### 3) Zugspitz-Card

Through this tool the municipality of Grainau created a simplified and clearer procedure for public mobility. In addition, a simplification of the system for the use by tourists and residents. Reduction of noise and other pollutant emissions.

### 4) School exchange

As foreseen this experience produced an open-minding effect on the Italian and German children, their families and the teachers involved, not only for cultural reasons, but also from the point of view of interpersonal relationships.

## Critical aspects

### 1) Tourism

Problems occurred regarding the motivation of people to participate, actively join, contribute and support the work-process. The "traditional" way of thinking hindered new ideas from being developed. Many of the workshop participants did not feel confident to start a work on their own. Moreover they referred to the "overall" responsibility of the municipality and furthermore they couldn't understand why changes (innovation, specialisation, quality) should be necessary, as "persistence" had almost no influence on success in the tourism market in



the past.

Indeed just a few years ago most of the work (product development, marketing, setting up infrastructure, etc.) was planned, financed and implemented by the local authorities. Nowadays a greater responsibility of every individual stakeholder should be developed and the way of thinking should enhance individual entrepreneurship.

### *2) Hiking trails*

No problems arose during the project development and execution. The only problem with the field name trail and adventure trail for families was the long-lasting winter. Thus the completion shifted from spring to summer.

### *3) Zugspitz-Card*

This project did not face critical aspects: all the logistic problems were overcome without any particular difficulty.

### *4) School exchange*

All the latent cultural and language barriers have been avoided thanks to children' and teachers' enthusiasm for the initiative.

## Lessons learned

The public-private partnership principle revealed to be effective in this project. One of the factors of success was the assignment of an external consultant, a neutral person enabled to mediate and objectively communicate impressions, requirements, wishes and prejudices between the local stakeholders and the municipality, apart from elaborating solutions.

The main focus must be set on the process sustainable continuation. As financial resources are limited, the project managers should concentrate on generating "spin-offs" initialized through the project. This means that work groups should be motivated and supported by acceptance and picking up of the elaborated ideas. The main danger is that the financial resources come to an end before the entrepreneurial-thinking of the local actors (at least the core group - which itself can generate spin-off effects) is established. For this reason at least one "leader" for each work-group should be selected with the necessary know how to lead the process. At irregular intervals it might be useful to "book" an external expert in order to get up-to-date information on trends and the market, to solve internal communication problems, etc.

It should be tried to keep the workgroups "alive" even after the main project conclusion, as they can be used as an "engine" for continuous development and improvement through the personal commitment of every single workgroup member.

Projects like hiking trails can be carried out only if experts

### Transferability

support the process. The combination of external and internal knowledge is crucial for the success.

The following elements could be transferred in other contexts:

- combination of bottom up and top down method;
- overall guidance and coordination by the municipality and the town council;
- utilization and combination of experts' and local stakeholders' know-how;
- cross-sector adjustment, integration and combination of results for the development of suitable common and peculiar strategies;
- motivation, integration and involvement of the local population (this is possible foremost in small alpine towns), which generate acceptance of decisions;
- pupil exchange as a means for strengthening the idea of being "Europeans".

### Case study Follow-up

#### 1) *Tourism*

As follow up study there is the drafting of the holiday catalogue 2007 (brochure and accommodation catalogue). The lastingness of the tourism study will be clear in few years and the formed workshops will continue after the AlpCity Project.

#### 2) *Hiking trails*

The hiking trails will last for sure over the next years. After receiving feedbacks from tourists and residents some improvement and optimization measures and/or extensions will be implemented on the hiking trails through Grainau.

These will be arranged and accomplished after the AlpCity Project.

#### 3) *Zugspitz-Card*

Also after the end of the AlpCity Project the work to the Zugspitz Card will continue. This requires constant renewal and updating of public transport together with optimization on the customer needs (feedbacks of the customers will be used for improvement measures).

#### 4) *School exchange*

The children from Turin will visit the municipality Grainau in February 2007. Maybe another important exchange programme will start after the end of AlpCity.

### Common issues with other projects

There is a close interrelation of all the other AlpCity case studies implemented in Grainau and characterised by integration and arrangement of a common strategy and, at the same time, by the establishment of individual objectives and measures within each case study (overall coordination and



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

### **SSC Experts' comments and recommendations**

guidance by the municipality).

An information exchange regarded the other case studies belonging to WP6.

The methodology applied is in line with the participatory approach. It is a very good idea to establish a networking activity with European youth associations in promoting exchanges in cultural aspects and tourism.

### 1. Introduction

Work Package 7 takes care of the urban environment in small alpine and mountain towns. The case studies focus not only on the recovery and regeneration of historical centres and settlements, but also on the project planning and regeneration of recent settlements including the expansion of residential areas, the access to small rural towns and to their main entrance and exit routes, the development of streets, commercial, manufacturing and industrial areas. Moreover they deal with the project planning and regeneration of buildings and public spaces, which promote the local integrated development (environmental, social, economic and cultural) as well as a relevant identification between the local communities and their territory/environment. In real terms the selected pilot cases act on the recovery of abandoned structures, a renewed vision of environmental problems, the improvement of the value of the cultural and historical heritage, the development of a more sustainable mobility and the development of skills related to environmental issues.

The case studies of Work Package 7 are:

- Guidelines for reclaiming abandoned villages in the borderland with Austria and Slovenia. Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy).
- Guidelines for obtaining environmental certification. Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy).
- Renewing and optimising the use of abandoned rural buildings, which were once used for productive activities. Veneto Region (Italy).
- The renewal of abandoned mountain hamlets. Piedmont Region (Italy).
- Living in Mountain Areas: Maira Valley and Po Valley in the Province of Cuneo. Piedmont Region (Italy).
- Improving the public image of the longitudinal axis of the Jura Mountains. Franche-Comté Region (France).
- Enhancing the image and promoting cultural historical sites for the reinforcement of the regional attractiveness of the "Petites Cités Comtoises de Caractère". Franche-Comté Region (France).
- Renewal of downtowns - Development of the Integrated Action Plan - Development of the concept of landscape preservation. Municipality of Grainau (Germany).

The partners involved have understood that the best way to achieve their goal is the promotion of a networking and participatory processes, involving people and local actors in order to build consensus and interest.

The maintenance and enhancing of the sense of belonging can be considered the red line which links these project cases under a common spatial development vision: the recovery and the improvement of the urban environment by preserving the architectural peculiarities of the historical/traditional real estate of the villages involved as well as the exploitation of the environmental, landscape and natural heritage has to be considered as some of the tools to be used for reaching the expected result.

## 2. Case studies cards

### Guidelines for the recovery of abandoned areas in the neighbourhood of the borders with Austria and Slovenia



**AlpCity Partner  
Work Package  
WP Coordinator  
Subjects involved  
and their role**

Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy)

Urban environment (WP7)

Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy)

*Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region*

Central Directorate for Agricultural, Natural, Forestry and Mountain Resources - Mountain Department, which has managed and coordinated the whole operation and given technical and financial support to local authorities and stakeholders involved in the case study.

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*University of Udine*

Civil Engineering Department has been appointed to carry out the case-study.

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Local counterparts involved (for contact details concerning these counterparts, please ask the above-mentioned project

	<p>manager and consultant):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eight Municipalities of the "Canal del Ferro Val Canale" Valley: Tarvisio, Malborghetto Valbruna, Pontebba, Chiusaforte, Dogna, Resia, Resiutta, Moggio Udinese;</li> <li>• Gemonese, Canal del Ferro and Val Canale Mountain Community: this is an association of municipalities of the mountain territory grouping the above-mentioned municipalities.</li> </ul>
<b>Spatial area involved</b>	Val Canale and Canal del Ferro
<b>Project budget</b>	€ 50.000,00
<b>Project purpose</b>	<p>The project started from the awareness that small public authorities (in terms of size, financial capacity and professional skills) have difficulties in facing complex inter-sectoral plans for territorial and urban enhancement. The regional authorities intend to provide local ones with the appropriate tools to enhance their development. A preliminary analysis of the endogenous resources and of the existing potentialities connected to the recovery - aimed at tourism or with productive purposes - of the abandoned areas was carried out in order to propose concrete solutions.</p>
<b>Project methodology</b>	<p>The method foresaw the collection of proposals and ideas developed on the local level, their comparison and transfer of the results to other partners. Some guidelines provide local authorities with an immediate tool that can be immediately used for the recovery of the dismantled areas.</p>
<b>Project activities</b>	<p>Implementation at local level of the activities related to the pilot case, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• preparation of a work plan;</li> <li>• drafting of guidelines on the recovery of abandoned areas near the borders of Austria and Slovenia due to the disappearance of borders including the related project financing;</li> <li>• the related data collecting and the First Progress Report on this activity was presented at the end of May.</li> </ul>
<b>Achieved results</b>	<p>Involvement of regional and local authorities in collecting the data concerning the preparation of the guidelines.          Setting up of a work group of experts.          Carrying out a SWOT analysis.          Preparation of guidelines including a general development plan.</p>
<b>Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved</b>	<p>There have been no discrepancies between the original plan and the expected results.</p>
<b>Instruments proposed, revised and finalised</b>	<p>An agreement with the University of Udine - Civil Engineering Department.</p>



**Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders**

**Critical aspects**

Definition of the pilot-case plan.

The decision-sharing process has created strong awareness, at a local level, about the economic perspectives related to the recovery of abandoned areas and buildings.

At the beginning there were problems in communicating and defining responsibilities between local authorities and the Central Directorate for Spatial Planning of Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region.

It is too expensive for the local authorities to purchase the abandoned areas, because the owners (large public companies such as the Army, the National Railways Company, etc.) have fixed very high sale prices. In order to overcome this problem the European Awareness Scenario Workshop (EASW) has been suggested as the methodology, which can help the dialogue together with local stakeholders' involvement in the programmes of sustainable development planning at a local level as well as in finding the financial resources to carry out the planned projects.

**Lessons learned**

Small local administrations (Municipalities, Mountain Communities, etc.) do not have the size and the financial resources for facing wide-scale problems as the one analyzed within this case study.

Consequently, it is necessary to set up specific clusters at a local level, if possible supported by the Regional Authority in order to face complicated and wide-scale problems.

**Transferability**

The model, opportunely adapted, could be transferred to other areas of the region with similar problems. The following elements can be replicated:

- the integration of institutional and local ideas and their comparison with the Regional Integrated Plan for the area under examination;
- the use of the European Awareness Scenario Workshop (EASW) methodology;
- the formulation of project financing tools to carry out the selected ideas.

This is an original and innovative approach as far as the mountain area involved is concerned.

The development of a strong collaboration among local authorities and actors constitutes a strategy that can surely be repeated in and transferred to other territories with similar features.

**Case study Follow-up**

The guidelines and the project financing plan prepared should be an important planning tool delivered to local authorities for



### Common issues with other projects

facing the problem of recovering abandoned buildings and areas so that, from this point of view, the case study should have a sure and positive follow up.

The case study can have synergic aspects in common with other similar experiences, in particular:

- within AlpCity with the case studies carried out by Piedmont Region ("The renewal of abandoned mountain hamlets" and "Living in mountain areas") and Veneto Region ("Renovation and optimum use of abandoned rural buildings once used for production purposes");
- with other projects, like the sub-project (carried out by Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region within the Innoref Interreg IIC Recover (Reconversion of rural villages as an opportunity for economic development) Project.

The case study has some peculiarities in common with the case studies of Veneto and Piedmont Regions.

### SSC Experts' comments and recommendations

The project was well described and its objectives, methodology and results well defined. The involvement of the University of Udine as scientific consultant guaranteed a methodological approach in supporting the municipalities concerned. The foreseen project model, the project financing model, the definition of guidelines are tools that can be transferred to other regions and at the same time can provide a real input for follow up activities. It is important to note that the project took into account previous studies and plans carried out in a fragmentary way trying to harmonize all contributions and integrate them. Furthermore the guidelines observe the master plan and the Regional Development Plan being complementary to these regulations. The project is in line with Interreg recommendations such as: participatory approach, dissemination activities, transfer of models at trans-national level. The project was integrated in a wider "policy development" adopted by Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region; in particular there are several Interreg projects and initiatives dealing with the use of buildings for tourist aims.

## Guidelines for obtaining the environmental certification



**AlpCity Partner**  
**Work Package**  
**WP Coordinator**  
**Subjects involved**  
**and their role**

Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy)

Urban environment (WP7)

Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy)

*Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region*

Central Directorate for Agricultural, Natural, Forestry and Mountain Resources - Mountain Department, which has managed and coordinated the whole operation and given technical and financial support to local authorities and stakeholders involved in the project.

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Local counterparts involved (for contact details concerning these counterparts, please ask the above-mentioned project manager and consultant):

- the seven Municipalities of the "Alta Val Tagliamento" area: Forni di Sopra, Ampezzo, Forni di Sotto, Socchieve, Enemonzo, Preone and Raveo;
- "Cossetur" (the Consortium of Tourist Services) of Forni di Sopra, Forni di Sotto and Sauris;

**Spatial area involved**

- “Comunità Montana” (Mountain Community) of Carnia: the Association of the Municipalities of the Carnia mountain territory including the Alta Val Tagliamento, which is collaborating with all the other pilot case actors on specific matters related to environmental issues;

**Project budget**

The area of Forni di Sopra and Alta Val Tagliamento.

**Project purpose**

€ 50.000,00

The project aimed at enhancing the endogenous resources through the achievement of an environmental certification, which promotes the environmental quality of the landscape and of the environment of Forni di Sopra. The project provided the local authorities with some guidelines and such tool can be transferred to other regions as best practice example. The foreseen case study has to be seen as a practical experience, which will put into practice what described in the guidelines. Certification will improve the value of the area offering a transparent communication to the public, increasing the participation of stakeholders in decision-making process concerning their territory.

**Project methodology**

The adopted methodology foresaw the transfer of the concept model to other regions and the involvement of stakeholders since the first phase of the project improving in this way a bottom-up approach. The project provided best practices on tourism, land use management, financial aspects and promoted the dissemination of such issues to other alpine contexts.

**Project activities**

The “Guidelines for obtaining environmental certification” were prepared.

The collection of data and the environmental analysis of the Municipality of Ampezzo to apply for the EMAS Certification were concluded. Furthermore, the Environmental Declaration of the Municipality of Ampezzo and the Declaration concerning their Environmental Policy were prepared. The last step, that is, the pre-audit to check that commitments concerning the above-mentioned documents were fulfilled and subsequent application to officially obtain the EMAS Certification was completed by the end of summer.

Two customer satisfaction surveys were carried out for the area of Forni di Sopra. Furthermore a mid-term plan for the development of opportunities in the tourist industry was drafted in connection with the untouched environment of the whole valley (presented to local authorities and stakeholders on May 4th 2005 in Forni



	<p>di Sopra with the aim of being discussed and shared).</p> <p>The three-year programme of an ecologically sustainable development plan for the Alta Val Tagliamento was defined and approved by the local authorities and stakeholders involved, who will create a specific no-profit association called "Associazione Alta Val Tagliamento" responsible for implementing it. The final version of the plan was formulated and it was presented at a local level.</p>
<b>Achieved results</b>	<p>The main results that have already been achieved are the :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• setting up of a widespread local partnership involving all the local authorities responsible for the selected area and the stakeholders who are interested in the pilot case issues;</li><li>• carrying out of all the steps concerning the definition of the guidelines to obtain environmental certification (EMAS) and promote tourism in the entire valley;</li><li>• setting up of a plan for sustainable development of the selected areas.</li></ul>
<b>Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved</b>	<p>No discrepancies between the original plan and the expected results have been reported so far.</p>
<b>Instruments proposed, revised and finalised</b>	<p>An agreement with the consultant "O-sistemi" I.t.d..</p> <p>The definition of a three-year programme for an ecologically sustainable development plan for the Alta Val Tagliamento.</p> <p>The involvement of local authorities and stakeholders through a participatory process and consequent sharing of the decisions of the plan.</p> <p>Two customer-satisfaction surveys.</p> <p>An environmental analysis of the Municipality of Ampezzo.</p> <p>An environmental declaration of the Municipality of Ampezzo.</p> <p>The creation of a no-profit association.</p>
<b>Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders</b>	<p>The decision-sharing process has created a strong awareness, at a local level, of the economic perspectives that are available when the potentials of the environment are appropriately used.</p>
<b>Critical aspects</b>	<p>At the beginning, the local authorities and stakeholders of the territory involved were perplexed about the particular approach proposed within the pilot case.</p> <p>The constant involvement of local private and public actors together with the decision-sharing process has, day by day, increased the consensus on planned aims.</p>
<b>Lessons learned</b>	<p>The importance of the decision-making process can be confirmed - a process, by means of which, it is possible to overcome local rivalries by making local authorities and</p>

### **Transferability**

stakeholders converge towards a common objective. Consequently, a similar approach, if correctly implemented, leads to great improvement of problem solving capacities.

The decision-sharing approach and the development of a strong collaboration among the socio-economic subjects, that are typical of a mountain valley - such as the one involved in the pilot project - if tied to the identification of specific aims, constitute a strategy that can surely be repeated in and transferred to other territories with similar features.

### **Case study Follow-up**

The set up of a three-year development plan and the creation of a no-profit association make it possible to declare that there will be a certain and positive follow up, after the end of the project, in terms of collaboration and co-operation between the local actors in order to reach the objectives foreseen by the project.

### **Common issues with other projects**

For the entire duration of the pilot case (approximately 2 years) there have been constant exchanges between the subjects implementing the case study, i.e. Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, "O-Sistemi" and the local actors. In the last six months, this collaboration led to the set up of a local work group, which conducted to the preparation of a three-year plan and the creation of the above-mentioned no-profit association.

An exchange of experiences has already taken place between this project case study and a pilot case belonging to the Innoref Project, called Aedes with similar contents. Once the two pilot cases have been brought to an end, a common follow-up is foreseen in the next EU programming period 2007-2013.

### **SSC Experts' comments and recommendations**

The project aimed at enhancing the endogenous resources through the achievement of an environmental certification promoting the environmental quality of the landscape and of the environment. The certification can be applied in other regions as best practices example and compared to other similar tools (labels) used for promoting parks, biosphere etc. The certification aims at improving the valorisation of the area providing a transparent communication to the public, increasing the participation of stakeholders in managing the territory. The particular theme (certification, labels) can give the opportunity to exchange information at transnational level with the bodies mentioned above. Then the exchange of information can provide follow up activities (networking, common guidelines etc).



**Renovation and optimum use of abandoned rural buildings once used for production purposes**



**AlpCity Partner  
Work Package  
WP Coordinator  
Subjects involved  
and their role**

Veneto Region (Italy)

Urban environment (WP7)

Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy)

*Veneto Region (Project Partner)*

Tiziana QUAGLIA (Project manager)

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Developing his case studies, Veneto Region involved two local institutions, the Agordina Mountain Community and the Comelico Sappada one, which provided their political, administrative and technical support.

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**Spatial area involved**

Canale D'Agordo, Cencenighe Agordino, Falcade, S. Tommaso Agordino, Vallada Agordina for the Agordina Mountain Community.

**Project budget**

€ 90.000,00

**Project purpose**

The aim of the project was at identifying a method and/or practice to convert the architectural, historical and cultural heritage of the small alpine areas. The purpose consisted in safeguarding the unspoiled beauty of the countryside and handing it down over the generations, by arresting the current process of physical and socio-economic decline, which has affected these mountain territories for years. The actions were not ones related to hibernation or nostalgic attempts to recover an ancient sense of the mountains, but an effort to find a sustainable way for these areas, which is compatible with their natural resources.

The implementation of the two case projects was intended to give an impulse to the socio-economic revitalization of the territories involved, because the activities proposed are closely linked with local development policies carried out by local authorities.

**Project methodology**

The methodology includes:

- transfer the model through guidelines;
- promotion of a bottom-up approach, which will be implemented through the participation process activated with workshops, seminars and meeting with the population;
- the financing model has to be seen as a practical tool to transfer to other alpine regions.

The implementation of the two case-projects will be based on a bottom up approach aimed at:

- involving local communities in order to express their needs and indicate the buildings to be restored;
- prepare a set of questions and collect local requests and needs concerning the restoration of rural buildings taking into account needs from the territory for the implementation of case-projects.

**Project activities**

At the end of March 2005 Veneto Region assigned the case projects implementation to a group of external experts.

The activities started on the 1th of April 2005 and included:

- a draft of a work plan on the implementation of the two case-projects;
- a coordination meeting with the two Mountain Communities involved;
- a collection of documents necessary to start up with the cases implementation.

During the implementation of the case studies Veneto Region



realized three typology of activities:

- the implementation of tools, solutions, methods and good practices in order to reconvert the construction legacy of the small alpine centres

The activity begun with the definition of the working program and of the pragmatic contexts of the case studies, as well as the specific object: the case studies realized by Veneto Region have been specifically oriented to the re-utilization of *tabià*, considered buildings of a great symbolic value. This choice determined a first level of typological identification in the rural and productive construction universe realized in the small alpine villages. At this first stage the implementation experts of the case studies and their experience were identified. Through the involvement of the stakeholders (Mountain Communities) and with the evaluation cards of the local instances, the preliminary analysis was edited, by summarizing the territorial characteristics and showing the development potentials. In sight of this analysis, the *tabià* of the study areas were identified through the General Regulating Plans and through various inspections.

Afterwards, the typological analysis of the catalogued *tabià* and their single elements started: it was based on the verification of the actual situation, through inspections, photographic relief, building trade practice, which can be traced in the Technical Offices. This analysis allowed to elaborate a cataloguing methodology of the existing *tabià* broken up into base elements, contained in the Manual for Best Practices and finalized to record the heritage in the perspective of his conservation. At the same time an analysis was developed at urban scale: it defined the conditions of environmental compatibility, the minimal requirements for the dwellings, the areas anyhow ruled out of the reconversion process of the *tabià*, through the evaluation of the location, accessibility, and environment: the results are contained in the Guidelines. The principles emerging from the Manual and from the Guidelines were applied for the first time through the drafting of the Feasibility Projects, which graphically experimented the scheduled procedures and can be considerate an example for the future applications. A particular importance was given to the cultural aspect of the recovery of *tabià*: some interviews were made in order to “recover” the ancient knowledge like manufacturing of wood, stone and other materials used in the traditional construction of *tabià*.

- activity of involvement of the local stakeholders and diffusion of the results

The implementation of the case studies followed a bottom-up approach and various activities involving local actors were



### Achieved results

scheduled in order to detect their instances and to spread their results. In particular there was a preliminary meeting for the development of the case studies with the representatives of the Mountain Communities in order to define the addresses of the case studies.

Afterwards, workshops and seminars were organized in the concerned areas in order to detect the local instances and spread its results.

- The project trans-national activities

Veneto Region supported the project initiatives through participation in the trans-national meetings.

Moreover, Veneto Region organized together with Lombardy Region and Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region the international conference of Milan, during the two former meetings, in Venice and in Milan on October 28th 2004 and on February 1st 2005.

Good participation and cooperation of the interested Mountain Communities in implementing the project.

The implementation of the case studies reached its purposes to individuate solutions, methods and good practices in order to reconvert the construction patrimony of small villages and to predispose transferable models of recovery in different contexts of the alpine area.

The study showed the operative levels, which can conciliate the housing usage with the conservation of those specific characters (historical, architectonic, environmental) of *tabià*.

The results traced in the Manual for Best Practices and in the Guidelines can be divided in two groups: a typological restoration and an environmental one. The "typological restoration" indicated the compatibility limits of transformation; how to recuperate "the ancient know-how"; how to define the new construction criteria and/or enlargements; how to incentive communication processes and experience diffusion, by contributing a formative teaching for the public and private technical operators and for the owners or users of the buildings. The "environmental restoration" defined the guidelines for the revision of the territorial and local urban planning instruments.

Even for what regards the local actors' involvement good results have been reached.

No discrepancies were found.

### Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved

### Instruments proposed, revised and finalised

A Preliminary Analysis Report, which describes socio-economic and cultural characteristics of background and structural



### Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders

characteristics of rural and productive buildings located in two study areas.

A Manual for best practices, which contains the catalogue of buildings typologies, their analysis and possible interventions for their recovery.

Some Guidelines containing the criteria for safeguard of rural buildings and their environment with some town planning indications.

Two Feasibility Projects representing examples for future recoveries indicating phases of design.

Four interviews to the skilled workers in order to recover old best practices concerning building techniques.

The impact on the stakeholders and their involvement has been particularly important during the implementation of the case studies. In particular, there was a preliminary meeting before the project start together with the persons in charge of the Mountain Communities in order to make them participate into the definition process of the objects of the case studies. Afterwards two workshops were organized within the study areas in order to involve the local actors and the population. On this occasion, questionnaires for the revelation of local instances were distributed in order to adapt the project activities to the territorial needs. Moreover, an intermediate and a final seminar were organized with the local actors, which were informed about the advancing of the activities. Also the persons in charge of the municipal technical offices and the technicians such as architects, engineers and surveyors took part in the event. The presence of the municipal technicians had the function to compare the criteria of the PRG with the ones scheduled for the recovery of *tabià* from the outputs of the project. The presence of these subjects was fundamental for divulging the tools designed within the activities because a diffused application of the practices is possible only if the professionals know about them. Even the representatives of the ULSS participated in the seminars in order to understand that the re-utilization of *tabià* implicates some waivers to the present regulation relative to the use of houses.

### Critical aspects

The studies made on the mountain *tabià* evidenced some criticisms about the use to be assigned to the recovered buildings. The initial objective of the research, in fact, was to restore the buildings in order to preserve their historical aspect as much as possible. During the researches it emerged that, if we want to adapt a *tabià* for living we have to make some interventions that will change the original legacy. That is why the Manual for Best Practices has the purpose to provide the

tools for evaluating how much the restoring intervention can engrave on the original manufacturing, keeping the designer and the buyer conscious, and advising them a better intervention for the preservation.

### Lessons learned

In the Manual for Best Practices a cataloguing methodology of the buildings has been defined, based on an analysis of the different kinds of the study areas. That methodology could be useful for creating a census of the typologies existing even outside the study areas in order to quantify the legacy of the alpine zones. The feasibility projects, applying that kind of methodology, showed also the procedure to follow in order to record the historical components of the building. And last, the interviews made to the local workers permitted to recovery a series of historical handcraft activities, regarding the construction techniques of the rural buildings recovered and applied for the restoration of *tabià*.

### Transferability

All instruments developed by Veneto Region case studies are drafted in accordance with the principle of transferability. In particular, within the Manual for Best Practices it was defined a card for the relief of the single elements composing the buildings. Such card can easily be applied to different typologies of buildings similar to *tabià* that present same constructive elements. Taking into account the common features marking many alpine villages, the town planning environmental prescription defined in the Guidelines can be applied also to contexts external to the areas study.

### Case study Follow-up

The follow up of the case studies of Veneto Region will be able to realize, in some recovery interventions, the restoration principles and methodologies described in the Manual for Best Practices and in the Guidelines, recovering also the ancient constructive techniques that have emerged from the interviews to the workers. The experimentation in the construction sites will allow even the quantification of the real costs for the interventions carried out respecting the Good Practices and a comparison with the more traditional techniques. The Guideline indications, moreover, can be the basis for the definition of the PRG and the Area Plans of the study areas, because they contain various prescriptions for the preservation of the historical rural handmade. That kind of indications could even be an integrating part of the PTRC and of the apposite regional law for the recovery of the mountain legacy.

### Common issues with other projects

A particular synergy has been developed with the other WP7 case studies. Common features, in fact, are shared with the activities of Friuli Venezia Giulia and Piedmont Regions: all



### SSC Experts' comments and recommendations

case studies face the issue of revitalisation of small mountain village or alpine areas through their recovery and their change of use as dwellings, tourist houses and productive buildings. Particular importance is dedicated to the frame, where case studies took place: in fact the recovery of small villages doesn't preclude environment end territory protection.

In April 2006, a meeting took place among Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, Piedmont Region and Veneto Region in Venice. It was finalised to share and to exchange experiences carried out during the development of case studies. It outlined that the WP7 case studies originate from the same needs and lead to the same conclusion about the recovery of alpine village.

The project description, methodology and results were exhaustive. It is interesting the adoption of a modern approach not related to conservation, but aimed at revitalising the existing one through the re-use of the rural buildings. The project financing model and the definition of some guidelines are tools, which can be transferred to other regions and, at the same time, can provide a real input for follow up activities. The project answered precise requests coming from the territory (municipalities): in so doing it promoted a bottom up approach that was implemented through participatory processes (workshops, meetings with the population).

The project is in line with some Interreg recommendations such as: participatory approach, dissemination activities, transfer of models at trans-national level, best practices exchanges.

## The renewal of abandoned mountain hamlets



<p><b>AlpCity Partner</b></p> <p><b>Work Package</b></p> <p><b>WP Coordinator</b></p> <p><b>Subjects involved and their role</b></p>	<p>Piedmont Region (Italy)</p> <p>Urban environment (WP7)</p> <p>Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy)</p> <p><i>Politecnico di Torino</i>            Franco PRIZZON, Luisa INGARAMO, Manuela REBAUDENGO,            Giuseppina TACCONE            DISET (Dipartimento di Ingegneria dei sistemi edilizi territoriali)            Tel: +390115645317            Fax: +390118396327            E-mail: area@areatorino.it</p> <p>Local counterparts:            P. CUCCIATTI (Mayor of Noasca)            C. COLA (Technician, Valli Orco e Soana Mountain Community)            dott. M. OTTINO, dott.sa P. VASCHETTO (Gran Paradiso National Park)</p>
<p><b>Spatial area involved</b></p>	<p>The hamlet of Varda belonging to the municipality of Noasca (207 inhab.).</p>
<p><b>Project budget</b></p>	<p>€ 40.000,00</p>
<p><b>Project purpose</b></p>	<p>The project aimed at developing an integrated approach to the renewal and regeneration of a completely abandoned hamlet (Borgata Varda, valley of Roc, Noasca). The hamlet is part of a valuable landscape and environment included in the Piedmontese side of the Gran Paradiso National Park, and is characterised by an interesting architectural quality. The integrated approach to regeneration will take into account not only architectural but also social and economic aspects. The reinforcement of tourist and agro-pastoral activities integrated with the environmental and historical/cultural improvement can be achieved with excursion and sporting tourism, not only</p>



### Project methodology

in the winter season, so to encourage and promote the local community acting on the territory at a social-economic level.

The method consisted in:

- Analysing the built heritage of the hamlet
- Collecting and evaluate success stories to draw lessons from
- Discussing with stakeholders the re-development options
- Issuing a feasibility study
- A participated project planning together with the real estate owners (SWOT analysis)
- An economic-financial assessment on the hypothesis of conversion of some buildings into a multi-building hotel

### Project activities

An analysis of the hamlet environment at territorial-urban level and at social-economic-cultural level:

- The territory concerned in the project (park, mountain community and valleys)
- Population and employment
- Strength and weakness of the socio-economic context (SWOT analysis)
- The attracting tourist elements and the territorial vocation (environment and nature; arts and culture; summer and winter sports; gastronomy, typical products and folk festivals)

An analysis of local buildings/ruins and check on present real estate ownerships:

- The building heritage (access to the hamlet, building typologies, conservation)
- General mapping (photographs, cards, iconography)
- Cadastral data (dimensions, planimetry and real estates)

Mountain pastures:

- A mapping of mountain pastures (planimetry, history and use).
- Cards of the individual mountain pastures

Hypothesis for new functions:

- Identification of the involved actors (park, municipality, mountain community, private owners)
- Critical analysis of similar cases (Best Practices)
- Analysis of the different options
- Features of the proposals: the multi-building hotel and the milk industry

Feasibility study:

- The technical feasibility: the recovery of cottages and mountain pastures: reflections on the possible actions aimed at promoting association forms for the milk industry of transfor-

	<p>mation. The problem of accessibility (AHP e Electre).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The economic-financial feasibility: the potential tourist demand; the existing supply (hotels, hostels, refuges) and the users' target</li> <li>• The dimensional hypothesis of the multi-building hotel</li> <li>• The proposal to develop the milk industry</li> </ul>
<p><b>Achieved results</b></p>	<p>Economic analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The total cost of operation (a multi-building hotel, mountain pastures and the main street)</li> <li>• Management</li> <li>• The economic and financial plan</li> <li>• The economic convenience (costs-benefits analysis)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved</b></p>	<p>Development of some ideas concerning the increasing of the value of the hamlet and the search of compatible new functions. Analysis of accessibility.</p> <p>Establishment of two steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The renewal of the hamlet and its transformation into a multi-building hotel by using the existing path</li> <li>• Setting up of a new access (a street ending in the Fragno hamlet)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Instruments proposed, revised and finalised</b></p>	<p>No discrepancies were found.</p>
<p><b>Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders</b></p>	<p>Planning procedures with the participation of public and private actors involved.</p> <p>Economic and financial feasibility study for the reconversion of some buildings into a multi-building hotel</p>
<p><b>Critical aspects</b></p>	<p>Development of a nature-oriented and sport tourism; increasing of the value of some agricultural and sheep farming traditions; enforcement of the territory identity.</p>
<p><b>Lessons learned</b></p>	<p>Distrustfulness of the local investors and owners. Difficulty in involving the key actors in the different steps of designing and developing the project.</p>
<p><b>Transferability</b></p>	<p>The main lesson consists in the important involvement (even if initially difficult) of the local actors in all the steps of the project.</p>
<p><b>Case study Follow-up</b></p>	<p>The most important elements, which can be transferred, are the concept of participation and a feasibility study.</p> <p>Both the local authorities (Municipality of Noasca and Valli Orco and Soana Mountain Communities) and the Park expressed the intention to develop further studies about the Hamlet of Varda in order to:</p>



### Common issues with other projects

- verify the possibility to restore buildings according to some sustainable criteria;
- monitor the pilot-case implementation;
- verify the transfer of this model to other abandoned hamlet in the Park.

### SSC Experts' comments and recommendations

A special synergy was promoted with the WP7 Veneto Region case study on the recovery of tabià. For the preliminary analysis of the socio-economic structure of the environment useful inspiration and suggestion came from Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region case study.

The project pointed out the integrated approach to restoration taking the architectural, social, economic aspects into account. The involvement of the Gran Paradiso National Park assures an added value as well as the participation of the stakeholders. The methodology is clear and the implementation of the project activity was assigned to the Polytechnics of Turin, the municipality of Noasca and the Gran Paradiso National Park according to an integrated approach. In this case the inter-partenarial exchange of information was necessary in order to share new ideas, approaches and methods.



## Living in mountain areas



**AlpCity Partner**  
**Work Package**  
**WP Coordinator**  
**Subjects involved**  
**and their role**

Piedmont Region (Italy)

Urban environment (WP7)

Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy)

The activities were carried out by:

Environment Park S.p.a

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in collaboration with:

- Comunità Montana Bassa Valle di Susa (Giorgio Salza, Via Trattenero 15, 10053 Bussoleno (TO) - tel +39 0122 642800)
- Comune di Condove (Debernardi Barbara, Piazza Martiri Della Libertà 7, 10055 Condove (TO) - tel + 39 011 9642265)
- Comune Di Mompantero (10059 Mompantero (TO), Via Roma, 12, tel 0122 622323)
- Comune di Gressio (Fausto Sciandra - P.zza Carrara 131, 12075 Gressio (CN) - tel +39 0174 803649)
- Comune di Mattie
- COREP (Manuela Rebaudengo - Corso Duca degli Abruzzi 24, 10129 Torino - info@corep.it)

Other actors involved through the COREP consortium:

Comunità Montana Valli di Ianzo, Dora Baltea Canavesana, Valli Gesso e Vermenagna, Alta val Tanaro, Curone-Grue-Ossona, Valle Stura, Val Varaita, Valli Orco e Soana, Val Pellice

The role of the involved organisations consisted:

- in finding the typical alpine buildings needed to perform the energy and environmental assessment;
- in supporting the development of the guidelines for the energy and environmental retrofit of alpine buildings;



### Spatial area involved

- in acting as a link with the local population.

Maira Valley and Po Valley in the Province of Cuneo.

### Project budget

€ 40.000,00

### Project purpose

The local population and authorities were involved in building environmental assessment activities and in the following definition of strategies for the better refurbishment. This allowed an “education process” about the green building principles, mainly on the aspects tied to the energy saving. The objective is to reduce the environmental impact of the building operations and to improve the level of quality of the indoor environments. The local authorities will also have the possibility to better know the potential uses of the assessment systems like ABAT. For example the inclusion of such tools in the building regulation to promote a better building sustainability and quality of life.

### Project methodology

Environment Park has developed a building environmental assessment tool for the alpine context, named “Alpine Environmental Building Assessment Tool- AEBAAT”. The tool allows to carry out assessments on existing buildings with respect to a wide number of criteria dealing with the most important environmental issues, such as: resource consumption, environmental loadings, quality of the indoor environment, quality of service. The result is a “picture” of the actual environmental performance of the building assessed. On the basis of the assessment results, it will be possible to define, for each typical alpine building, the best refurbishment strategies to improve its environmental quality. The strategies will be analysed taking into account also the economic aspects of the refurbishment actions.

AEBAAT has been based on the GBC (Green Building Challenge) system. The GBC method and its software tool (GBTool) is a unique rating tool, in that it has been developed since 1996 through an international process with the participation of more than 20 countries. Its main feature is the possibility to be easily adapted to any context condition. The GBTool is a second-generation assessment system; one that is designed from the outset to allow adaptation to the very different priorities, technologies, building traditions and even cultural values that exist in various regions and countries.

### Project activities

Performance benchmark has been established for energy and water consumptions. On this base, the environmental quality of each specific building will be assessed.

Analysis of existing housing conditions.

- The objective of the case study is to develop guidelines for

### Achieved results

the energy and environmental retrofit of alpine buildings.

The main activities carried out have been:

- to identify a set of buildings representative of the “typical” alpine buildings in collaboration with local counterparts;
- to carry out by means of specific tools (EPIQR and AEBAT) an assessment of the environmental performance of the buildings;
- to develop retrofit actions to improve the environmental quality of the assessed buildings;
- to perform a cost/benefit analysis of the retrofit actions;
- to develop a guideline containing the optimal retrofit actions for the “typical” alpine buildings;
- to organise workshops to illustrate the guidelines to the cooperating organisations.

### Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved

The objectives of the case study were achieved. There are not discrepancies from planned activities and expected results.

### Instruments proposed, revised and finalised

An agreement was signed with:

- Bassa Valle di Susa Mountain Community
- Municipality of Condove
- Municipality of Mompantero
- Municipality of Gressio
- Municipality of Mattie
- COREP (Consortium for research and continuing education).

The object of the agreements consists in getting the support from the communities in the identification and availability of buildings that could be considered representative of the alpine building stock.

### Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders

The case studies aimed at improving the environmental quality of existing buildings, which are the object of a retrofit action by means of the application of specific guidelines.

The guidelines are at disposal of local organisations (Municipalities and Mountain Communities) to be adopted and to be used in building codes, funding programs and to base economic incentives.

The long-term result will be a more sustainable local built environment.

The involved stakeholders are also: designers, users, investors, construction companies.

### Critical aspects

The main criticism has been to get many local Mountain Community involved.

The strategy to overcome this problem consisted in the involvement of the COREP (Consortium for research and



continuing education). The consortium was managing a master in collaboration with many Mountain Communities (OPLAB Project also supported by Piedmont Region). By means of this master it was possible to involve several Mountain Communities in the case study.

### **Lessons learned**

Most of the historical alpine building stock in the Piedmont Alps is quickly deteriorating.

In few years the possibility of a retrofit and refurbishment action will be not possible anymore.

There is a strong interest by local governments to recover the alpine villages and a strong will to do that in a sustainable way. To achieve this objective it is necessary to identify in short time an eco-efficient strategy, that must involve the local governments at every level.

### **Transferability**

The case study is replicable in other geographical regions.

The applied methodology is very flexible and the used tools are able to be adapted to any specific context.

### **Case study Follow-up**

The guidelines resulting from this case study will be adopted by several local authorities. Environment Park will support these initiatives by a technical point of view.

### **Common issues with other projects**

Synergies have been developed with the other case studies of the same work package in terms of knowledge and experience sharing; the methodologies followed in the development of the case studies, particularly information concerning the cost/benefit analysis carried out.

### **SSC Experts' comments and recommendations**

This pilot case revealed to be a very useful tool for analysing the convenience and sustainability of living in mountain areas. The most interesting feature consists in the use of very innovative technological instruments to carry on the study and to recover the value of some mountain building. The private company responsible for the case study took care of involving the local stakeholders and put the premises for a concrete application of the methodology of analysis proposed. The positive synergies developed with similar case studies produced the result of improving the final output made available at the project conclusion under the form of a handbook with relevant guidelines.

**Enhancing the image  
of the longitudinal axis  
in the Jura mountains**



**AlpCity Partner  
Work Package  
WP Coordinator  
Subjects involved  
and their role**

Franche-Comté Region (France)  
 Urban environment (WP7)  
 Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy)  
*Franche-Comté Region (Project Partner)*  
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- managed and coordinated the whole operation
- especially managed communication, awareness and technical assistance actions
- gave advice and helped (technically and financially) local project managers

Départements of Doubs and Jura:

- co-managed the project,
- managed actions on roads
- gave advice and helped (technically and financially) local project managers

Municipalities or groups of municipalities:

- managed their local projects

Consultants hired by the Region:

- engineering support for the whole process
- advisor on the spot and technical assistance to local project managers

**Spatial area involved**

Départements of Doubs and Jura.



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

<b>Project budget</b>	€ 313.000,00
<b>Project purpose</b>	Following a study carried out in 2001, which recommended to improve the environmental and urban situation along the longitudinal axis in the Jura Mountains, the proposed project aimed at providing decision makers with concrete suggestions. The main issue was to provide technical assistance to the municipalities in developing concrete projects, strategies and communication with the aim at balancing local and regional dynamics.
<b>Project methodology</b>	The method is based on participation process activated through meetings with stakeholders, technical assistance supported by analysis, exchange of information.
<b>Project activities</b>	<p>The following activities have been carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Raising the awareness and getting potential project managers (public and private) informed</li><li>• Implementation of a file of technical requirements to guarantee the coordination of development and planning projects</li><li>• Engineering support to local project managers</li><li>• First thoughts about the implementation of a communication tool along the axis</li><li>• Establishment of 1 technical committee and 1 steering committee, technical workshops</li><li>• Organisation of 4 meetings to explain the project which gathered more than 200 local actors (local elected people, potential project managers)</li><li>• Creation of guidelines: advice and recommendations for planning projects, examples of good practices (work in progress)</li><li>• Creation of a leaflet to inform on the common project and raised local actors awareness</li><li>• Carrying out pilot experiences to promote the development of the whole project chosen given their transferable elements: 8 projects selected (4 operations, 4 studies)</li><li>• Assistance to the cities or groups of cities in their planning project: creation of guidelines on the basis of 26 projects identified, more than 13 contacts in situ (recommendations, advice for each of them)</li><li>• Research for the implementation of a communication tool</li><li>• Diagnosis of existing elements</li></ul>
<b>Achieved results</b>	Thanks to the above mentioned activities the cooperation with local and external authorities was improved. The joint work with the other partners launched (Départements du Doubs and du Jura, Région Rhône-Alpes, Régional and Départemental Committee of Tourism...) to federate the

**Discrepancies between  
planned results and  
results achieved**

**Instruments proposed,  
revised and finalised**

various current initiatives to work out on a common product.

Achieved activities:

Informing potential actors

- Creation of a leaflet to inform on the common project and to raise the awareness of local actors
- Organisation of 4 meetings which gathered more than 200 local actors (local elected people, potential project managers) to explain the project

Creation of guidelines: it aims at giving advice, helping and raising the awareness of project managers about the arrangement of villages.

Carrying out pilot experiences to promote the development of the whole project. After the identification of 8 pilot cases (4 operations and 4 studies), it was decided to design a newsletter showing the methodology of each case. The 1st newsletter was finalised in may 2006.

Assistance to the cities or groups of cities in their planning project: 48 project managers were interested and 33 are committed to a project (in April 2006): boost on operation and improvement of their quality, due to the preliminary study before the operational step notably.

Research for the implementation of a communication tool:

- a diagnosis of existing elements was carried out;
- joint work with the other partners launched (Départements du Doubs and du Jura, Région Rhône-Alpes, Régional and Départemental Committee of Tourism...) to federate the various current initiatives to work out on a common product: an interactive communication tool (personal digital assistant with GPS, to be rent in information tourist offices or to be downloaded via Internet) managed by the Natural Regional Park of Haut-Jura was launched in July 2006 on this territory and will integrate messages promoting the Jura axis to tourists.

No discrepancies were remarked.

Conventions:

- convention (official agreement) with the Départements of Doubs and Jura;
- a second agreement was signed with same partners and tourism actors : the Regional Committee of tourism, tourism committee of Départements and the Regional Park of Haut-Jura to guarantee the collaboration for the tourist enhancement, via interactive communication tools notably.

Manuals:

- creation of a leaflet;



### Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders

- guidelines for local actors;
- newsletter about the projects.

#### Financial instruments

Incentive for the carrying out of a feasibility study paid by Franche-Comté Region.

- Increase in the number of operations due to subsidies granted by partners but also to communication between municipalities on the field (meetings, guidelines, technical assistance).
- Quality of thoughts and projects notably related to 2 issues: urban planning projects are often related to a question interesting local representatives, for instance safety or refurbishment of a public building, the case study gave the opportunity to have more a general rather than a one-sided approach in urban arrangement by integrating identity, friendliness issues etc and by integrating the whole village.

### Critical aspects

#### Limits and barriers:

- Direct implementation of recommendations of the previous study is sometimes difficult:
  - no compliance with safety norms or technical or financial problems (Départements)
  - imposing qualitative solutions in a classic system of co-financing is difficult
- Complexity of number of key actors in the sphere of spatial planning: multiplicity, different skills
- Outstanding pilot operations: very difficult choice to make

#### Adopted strategies to overcome these limits:

- Information, awareness campaigns for key actors in the preparation stage (recommendations) of the project, which aims at a general quality and identity and not homogeneity along the axis
- Support to project managers including during the operational stage

Selection of pilot actions focused on solutions for problems and representative and therefore transferable situations: overall analysis, mixed functionality, "concertation" with local people and shop-holders, landscape charter, quality in the choice of materials, shared management of local projects.

### Lessons learned

#### Time for reactivity

- Significance of the pedagogical skills for general studies
- Significance of funds as financial incentive
- Interest of networking, in 2 cases notably :
  - for technical assistance to project managers, a good



### Transferability

- coordination between the local manager and the local representative of the Département enables to improve local projects, to create some etc. and to have regular and informal exchange of information
- for the interactive communication tool, networking enables to use one identity: the tourist road of Jura Mountains for different projects and means of communication, it enables to search for synergies between 2 different projects and give even closer collaborations for the future.
- Significance of the financial incentive of subsidies for small project managers (small towns)
- Significance of having a long-term project because urban arrangements needs at least 3 years, even 5 years, to be carried out (from the idea to the final steps)
- A partnership between regional and departmental stakeholders for a support to other local authorities is a good means of synergies.
- Communication and popularization activities toward project managers consist in conceiving technical guidelines and 2 releases of a short "magazine" (4 pages), it was occasion to get further in the propositions, to search for good practices, to bring new ideas, therefore it was also a benefit for local actors and institutions involved in the case study.
- Finally it is possible that a technical assistance may be used in other case studies, to spread the action of institutions involved in these case studies.

### Case study Follow-up

- Planned continuation:
- Assistance to local actors for arrangement projects is planned by the partners but its form has to be determined
  - Development of tourist enhancement tools and notably interactive communication tools implemented for the Tourist Road of Jura Mountains and/or other parts of the territory
  - Expansion of the project beyond regional borders toward Switzerland and Rhône-Alpes Region

Arrangements should be pursued in small towns.

### Common issues with other projects

Search for a high standard environment as a factor contributing to maintaining current and future population and to offer a combination: know-how, environment and inheritance. Within AlpCity, there has not been exchange of information with other similar cases. However it seems that thanks the different meetings that common methods appear as far as networking is concerned notably.

### SSC Experts'

This project was very complex and interesting: the case



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

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### **comments and recommendations**

studies dealing with different topics can be seen as an input for future implementation. The main issue consisted in providing technical assistance to the municipalities in developing concrete projects, strategies and communication with the aim to balance local and regional dynamics.

**Enhancing the image and promoting cultural historical sites for the reinforcement of the regional attractiveness of the "Petites Cités Comtoises de Caractère"**



**AlpCity Partner  
Work Package  
WP Coordinator  
Subjects involved  
and their role**

Franche-Comté Region (France)

Urban environment (WP7)

Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy)

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- coordinated the operations to support the network of "Petites Cités Comtoises de Caractère" in order to guarantee and promote their specificities
- provided local project managers with technical and financial support

Association of "Petites Cités Comtoises de Caractère" (28 municipalities):

- engineering support for the general process
- in situ advice and technical assistance to local project managers

Municipalities and groups of Municipalities :

- management of their own local project

**Spatial area involved**

28 municipalities of Franche-Comté Region.

**Project budget**

€ 92.000,00

**Project purpose**

The aim of this project was at providing technical assistance and favouring exchange of experiences among 28 municipalities involved in the network. The network has been operative since



### Project methodology

1989 and several operations have been set up in terms of rehabilitation and cultural heritage valorisation (especially in terms of tourist promotion). This established long co-operation was enhanced by the project through a strong co-operation and technical support derived by appropriate expertise. The technical and administrative support to towns included the launching of an engineering mission for the setting up of an urban scheme of character, exchange and networking of experiences.

The methodology was based on improving the co-operation among networks components and external project partners and some best practices exchanges.

The setting up of specific working groups gathering the local decision-makers and all the authorities concerned (other qualified communities, services of the State, technicians) represented an important step of the participatory process implemented.

The build up of a network (together with the other communities: the groups of municipalities, «Pays») and of an organised process (which involved the local population).

### Project activities

Technical and administrative support to towns: launching of an engineering mission for the setting up of an urban scheme of character.

Exchange and networking of experiences.

Supporting the follow-up of "test" cities committed to the process, technical assistance for the follow-up of their work in respect to the defined programme, administrative and financial support.

4 new "urban schemes of Character " carried out: spatial planning studies and definition of a rehabilitation programme for urban centres.

3 new cities committed to the process: setting-up of a follow-up organisation, a shared process, the definition of a common file of requirements to prepare the study period.

Awareness on the process raised among 5 cities.

Annual report and evaluation of the 2004 activity programme.

### Achieved results

Increase of stakeholders' awareness.

Good cooperation among involved cities.

Establishment of common strategies.

Process and activities:

- supporting follow-up of "test" cities committed to the process, technical assistance for the follow-up of their work in respect to the defined programme, administrative and financial support. Every action has clear objectives and is assessed according to an annual programme at the network scale

### **Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved**

### **Instruments proposed, revised and finalised**

### **Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders**

### **Critical aspects**

(agreement association/Regional Council).

6 steps within the process:

- step 1: raising the awareness and commitment of the city: setting up a steering committee
- step 2: advising and helping the definition of the programme
- step 3: preparing and coordinating preliminary studies
- step 4: preparing and coordinating the multi-annual programme: finding partnerships and co-financing
- step 5: operational programme
- step 6: assessment: given the methodological, technical and financial objectives for every arrangement action.

Objectives achieved:

steps 1 to 4 were tested at the network scale and allow to understand more clearly every field of action, to structure the requirements and to justify communication needs.

The communication tools were conceived to facilitate the dissemination, "concertation" and evaluation. They are information supports: public information meetings, events...

Launching of multi-annual programmes in 7 cities.

The start of "quality/continuity" studies in 5 cities. 8 cities are carrying out work in order to improve the quality of life - pedestrian paths, leisure spaces, road safety.

The programme was launched with 4 "test" cities and 16 cities are really involved for the time being.

The mission has been stopped since mid 2005 for internal reasons (because of the long-term absence of the only manager of the association).

A convention (official agreement) between the Region and the Association.

A common methodology for a preliminary study for an "urban scheme of Character".

Manuals and a town map in three dimensions.

Financial incentive for the studies sponsored by Franche-Comté Region

16 other cities committed to the programme out of the 28 cities members of the network.

Economic improvement has taken place thanks to the work of enterprises and handicrafts.

New municipal process: fairs, local media, discussion and information meetings

Limits and barriers:

- Random appropriateness of the objectives of the programme by local project managers
- Transfer and sharing of information not always spontaneous



	<p>from local project managers as well as from consultants in charge of the project</p> <p>Adopted strategies to overcome these limits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implementation of a genuine project pedagogy between project managers, consultants and partners</li><li>• General approach: urban, environmental, heritage, approach, which takes the various uses in account</li><li>• Progressive and adapted: implementation by successive stages</li></ul> <p>Qualitative (obligation to select for the pre-operational study a multi-field team)</p>
<b>Lessons learned</b>	<p>New local practices have to emerge from this programme, which needs a real project logic (actors/external experts/partners) and some time to share a common methodology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• so that local representatives really support this programme</li><li>• to implement a good practice in terms of discussion and partnership</li><li>• to promote the transfer and share of information</li></ul> <p>The implementation of the “urban schemes of character” requires a good and strict framework for each partner, given the high number of key-actors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• technical assistance has to be defined precisely to preserve the core objectives of the programme</li><li>• key actors have to be involved in the conception of the technical requirements</li><li>• respect of agreements of phases to facilitate the coherence and effectiveness of on-going partnerships</li></ul>
<b>Transferability</b>	<p>Methodology with technical requirements and a progressive dynamic of networking and in the long term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• evaluation criteria, based on the common requirements</li><li>• communication tools, with a common basis but adapted to local backgrounds and capacities</li></ul> <p>Exchange meetings on site, in every city with the involved key actors and audience, in “test” cities to share their process.</p>
<b>Case study follow-up</b>	<p>The project continuation has been planned with the modification of the partnership between the Region and the association, so that it relies more on coordination, engineering actions, selection of innovative techniques and less on a simple technical assistance.</p> <p>Arrangements should be pursued in the towns but with other systems.</p>
<b>Common issues with other projects</b>	<p>Search for a high quality environment as a factor of maintaining current and future population and offering a combination: know-how, environment and cultural heritage.</p>

**SSC Experts'  
comments and  
recommendations**

Within AlpCity, there has not been exchange of information with other similar cases. However it seems that thanks to the various meetings common methods appear notably as far as networking is concerned.

The topic can be compared to those ones of Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, Veneto Region and Piedmont Region, but in this case there is a network of 28 municipalities. The aim was also at providing technical assistance, favouring exchanges of experiences and preliminary studies. The project was very interesting and could provide the other ones carried out by Italian Regions with additional inputs. This network has been existing since 1989 and several operations have been set up in terms of rehabilitation and cultural heritage improvement.

**Renewal of downtowns –  
Development of the  
Integrated Action Plan –  
Development of the concept  
of landscape preservation**



**AlpCity Partner  
Work Package  
WP Coordinator  
Subjects involved  
and their role**

Municipality of Grainau (Germany)

Urban environment (WP7)

Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy)

*Municipality of Grainau (Project Partner)*

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**Spatial area involved**

Municipality of Grainau (3.704 inhabitants).

**Project budget**

€ 46.926,00

**Project purpose**

This case study owned multiple purposes:

- The renewal of the village centres as well as the one of the Waxensteinstrasse in collaboration with the Plankreis München and the Government of Upper Bavaria. This section of the project focused on raising the attractiveness and the residence-quality within the village. The concept was thoroughly adjusted according to the requirements to support prosperous economic and tourist development.
- The development of the Integrated Action Plan through the Plankreis München in collaboration with the Municipality of Grainau, the Alpenforschungsinstitut, Mr. Heider's office and the Government of Upper Bavaria. The Municipality of Grainau selected the Plankreis company, to work out an Integrated Action Plan together with all the participants involved in the AlpCity Project. The authorities' aim was at bringing all the individual AlpCity projects led by Grainau together under only one package.
- The development of the concept of landscape preservation by the Alpenforschungsinstitut.



### Project methodology

The adopted methodology foresaw the analysis of the present situation and the discussion with experts on the possible scenarios.

The Plankreis company was charged of the coordination activity. In order to monitor and enhance collaboration among experts a local steering committee has been formed by the Municipality of Grainau with the first Mayor and two local councils, the Plankreis München, the Alpenforschungsinstitut, Mr. Heider's office and the Government of Upper Bavaria. Some meetings were organised for the individual projects in order to arrange the further procedure.

### Project activities

Elaboration of a development concept for the renewal of the village centres and the Waxensteinstrasse in Grainau. The company Plankreis Munich was charged of the planning activities for the renewal. The first planning phase is completed. As a first step the renewal of the chapel place was implemented by summer 2006. The planning and the implementation of further steps has to be subsequently realized. The second part of the project covers the planning of the lower village square renewal. The concerned inhabitants and the local population were involved in the planning process (e.g. collecting ideas/decision on design-alternatives etc.).

Furthermore the Plankreis company was entrusted of drafting an Integrated Action Plan, which summarises results, ideas and measures of all the AlpCity case studies in Grainau. This Integrated Action Plan has been designed in such a manner that it can be amended by further ideas and measures. The first version has already been finalized. The integrated action concept includes various modules, containing interfaces and interactions between various measures and ideas of the individual case studies. It is expandable at any time. The figure below visualizes the design for compiling the integrated action plan. All external experts involved in the Grainau AlpCity case studies participated in the creation of this concept. As a follow-up module for the Integrated Action Plan the Alpine Research Institute was assigned to elaborate a landscape preservation concept for Grainau.

### Achieved results

Establishment of the local steering committee with all external experts from trade and tourist industries, the Government of Upper Bavaria and the Municipality of Grainau.

Ascertainment of fields of action and priorities

Realisation of the renewals in Grainau

Inclusion of a detailed list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and critical issues/problems to be faced through the Integrated Action Plan.

**Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved**

**Instruments proposed, revised and finalised**

**Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders**

**Critical aspects**

**Lessons learned**

Definition and inclusion of objectives/strategies and measures into the Integrated Action Plan.

Participation/Involvement of the local population in local decisions.

Raising awareness and self-confidence of local population as an important step for recognizing the exceptional and unique village character of Grainau.

Assignment of a concept of landscape preservation as a follow-up module of the Integrated Action Plan.

All the results were met according to the initial project.

Agreements for the renewal of the chapel place between the Plankreis company and the Municipality of Grainau have been concluded.

The finalization of the Integrated Action Plan, which can always be extended with new modules.

One important step of the implementation of the Integrated Action Plan consists in the renewal of the village chapel place: the village recovered its original character through this measure. Further steps will follow. This is important for both the economic interests of the population and the tourism in Grainau. An additional important effect induced through the improved attractiveness and measures implemented in Grainau will be the improvement of living conditions. Through the measures undertaken the framework for tourism and trade has been upgraded. Therefore increasing income for the local stakeholders and a secondary positive effect dealing with trade, business, high quality tourism is expected in Grainau.

The main problem regarded the cooperation with the Plankreis München followed a decelerating trend. The fulfilment of the project was endangered by those delays. Due to exerting pressure and „pushing forward“ the project the Municipality managed to put the planners back onto the time schedule so that the measures undertaken were implemented in time. It took additional effort and more work for the Municipality to realize the renewal of the chapel place and the village places as well as the Waxensteinstrasse in time.

One of the factors of success was the assignment to external experts of the consultancy activity. Neutral persons enabled to mediate and objectively communicate impressions, requirements, wishes and prejudices to other experts, the Government of Upper Bavaria, local stakeholders and the Municipality of



**Transferability**

Grainau. Thanks to their skills and competences they were able to find solutions with the information available.

The following element can be useful to be transferred:

- Combination of bottom up and top down method
- Overall guidance and coordination by the municipality
- Utilization and combination of experts' and local stakeholders' know-how
- Inter-sectoral adjustment, integration and combination of results for the development of suitable common strategies and particular strategies for each sector
- Motivation, integration and involvement of the local population (this is possible foremost in small alpine towns)
- Neutral external moderators presenting a realistic image of the present situation and the reasons for deficits
- Early clarifying of the decision procedure concerning setting of priorities, which measures are to be further pursued and how this will be financially and personnel organized in order to ensure a fast and target-oriented implementation
- An expert based economic analysis and evaluation including steps and measures for a successful development by exploitation of local resources and involvement of local stakeholders
- Strong guidance and communication of the municipality/ discussions and dialog with the stakeholders and experts is perceived as a factor of success foremost in the long run.

**Case study follow-up**

The Integrated Action Plan is a sort of work in progress; some new projects and changes are expected to be inserted according to the development of needs and policies of the Municipality of Grainau.

**Common issues with other projects**

Close interrelation of all AlpCity case studies (in different Work Packages) implemented in Grainau - integration and adjustment of a common strategy and at the same time establishment of individual objectives and measures within each case study. There have been also interesting exchanges of information and suggestions with the other case studies of WP7.

**SSC Experts' comments and recommendations**

The project points revealed to be interesting, because of the engagement for the urban environment developed in an integrated way, through the creation of the Integrated Action Plan containing all the pilot cases managed by the Municipality of Grainau within AlpCity.

## Chapter XII Work Package 8 cooperation among towns

### 1. Introduction

The Work Package 8 relates to the realization of three case studies on the “cooperation among towns” in the alpine space, with a special focus on the administrative cooperation among small mountain towns, so as to create and implement networks and associations, improve services and bring about an exchange of experiences.

Cooperation among towns, especially in the shape of networks, is particularly crucial for the development of small towns.

In a context of competition and being undersized in an economy dominated by large cities, structured agreements among towns can help them to reach a higher “critical mass”.

Cooperation is also a way to develop exemplary operations, through the transfer of experience and knowledge from one associate town to another.

At a more local level, agreements between towns that are geographically close to one another enable them to organise their amenities at a town cluster level. When amenities are designed for larger demographic basins, they are of a much better level. By grouping towns together, it becomes possible to develop a polycentric structure in which the towns complement one another. Cooperation is a less governed and more bottom-up type of public action. The towns cooperate with one another on a voluntary basis, working towards objectives that they themselves set according to the issues they have in common. This system seems far more flexible and appropriate than organized institutional procedures. It encourages innovation through the exchange of experience, and, through the internal complementarities it promotes, also prevents the scattering of low-performance small-sized facilities. From this point of view, agreements are an instrument of sustainable development, which is supported as such by European policies.

The fields of action included in this package concern the set up of a network to develop and improve services and a network to promote best practices dissemination.

The selected case studies are:

- Surveying the experiences of small mountain towns in different areas (Alps, Jura and Massif Central). Rhône-Alpes (France).
- Technical assistance for small towns. Rhône-Alpes (France).
- The territorial organisation of Franche-Comté Region. Franche-Comté Region (France).

Within the AlpCity Project, the theme of cooperation is somewhat special. It is a general objective and a method that most partners have targeted when preparing their thematic aim. This Work Package, however, has taken the network of Alpine towns as its thematic aim. The operations have assumed several shapes:

- scientific knowledge about mountain towns, with an analysis of the region's spatial structure, a statistical study of mountain towns connected with the AlpCity issue, so as to gain a better understanding of their role and specific features;



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- an inventory of existing town networks in the Alps;
- debate sessions among small towns on their problems and development needs. These working meetings help to develop awareness of common issues, and thus encourage the emergence of network structures;
- a system of support for the projects of small towns, in the shape of regional assistance in development engineering. In addition to the direct assistance given to the various small towns, the methodology used (call for projects, selection of design offices) is intended to enable an examination of their problems and development processes, as well as a detailed analysis of requirements.

## 2. Case studies cards

### Surveying the experiences of small mountain towns in different areas (Alpes, Jura, Massif Central)



**AlpCity Partner**  
**Work Package**  
**WP Coordinator**  
**Subjects involved and their role**

Rhône-Alpes Region (France)  
Cooperation among towns (WP8)  
Rhône-Alpes Region (France)  
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Design offices (6 consultations as part of a public procurement contract)

Local authorities

**Spatial area involved**

21 small towns selected among 200 mountain centres situated in the Alps, Jura and Massif Central. The following criteria were taken into consideration during the selection:

- dominating functions;
- specificity and advantages of the mountain development;
- distance/proximity to a medium or large-sized town;
- economic character related to agriculture, tourism and services activities;
- function in relation to the surrounding area.

**Project budget**

€ 43.060,00

**Project purpose**

The Region launched a call for proposal addressed to mountain small cities localised in the Alps, Jura and Massif Central.



### Project methodology

The call concerned towns with a population of around 5000 inhabitants situated in rural areas, far from town agglomerations. The aim of the call was at selecting about 20 municipalities chosen among 200 candidates, which should participate into the AlpCity Project. Through the case study a real survey was carried on the different experiences of small mountain towns in order to get a detailed portrait of these French mountain areas by outlining differences and similarities in resources and needs.

To prevent any arbitrary operations and meet the diversity of local needs, the Region has defined the spatial area to be considered (with the aid of INSEE, the French National Statistics Office): municipalities with less than 5,000 inhabitants, in mountain areas and that have employment centres and/or service centres and that are not in urban areas. On this basis (i.e. 207 municipalities/small towns) a call for bidders wishing to benefit from the development engineering was launched.

To analyse the applications and ultimately select 21 engineering interventions over 20 small towns and communautés de commune (inter-municipal groupings) a technical committee (whose members included representatives from the Region's divisions, State departments, INSEE, resource centres, and the RA expert on the scientific committee) met twice.

Elected officials and technicians from the small towns and communautés de communes were called together on 2 occasions by the Region, once at the beginning, following the call for bidders and once at the end, as part of a feedback workshop with the design offices and technical committee.

### Project activities

Selection of targeted mountain towns (Massif central, Jura, Alps).

Statistical analysis and collection of data regarding the selected towns and regrouping communities.

Development of 21 diagnostic studies on each individual situation.  
2 meeting in Rhône-Alpes with towns and regrouping communities.

### Achieved results

Outlining of projects and process of development to the mayors of little towns and the President of regrouping communities.

Involvement of different local actors.

Respect of sustainable development criteria.

Project and process design including the statistical data collected.



**Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved**

No discrepancies were found between planned and achieved results.

**Instruments proposed, revised and finalised**

During a meeting held on March 28th 2006 a proposal was presented concerning cooperation among little towns at regional and European level together with a call for raising funds (with the aid of the Region and EU) to contribute to the implementation of projects, to the development process and to tutoring innovation in small mountain towns.

**Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders**

The involvement of local stakeholders and the exchange of information among the participants offered the chance to take advantage from the set up of a network among small towns, even if each valley owns its local identity and history, apart from its economic and development peculiarities.

**Critical aspects**

It is evident the relevant heterogeneity of the participants in this case study. The great effort to constitute such a network of different small mountain towns has been supported by the convincement of the valuable patrimony of experiences rooted in these areas and exploitable to create an alternative path of development.

**Lessons learned**

Since the call spread far and wide it is correct to affirm that cooperation and networking are the main tools for development available to small mountain towns. Through the survey it has been possible to increase the value of some best practices experiences found in the concerned areas.

**Transferability**

The concept of network among small towns is the most important element, which can be successfully transferred to other contexts. A cooperative network allows:

- to find together alternative resources for development
- to overcome territorial boundaries in order to share trans-national experiences
- to spread the cultural heritage and the local know-how
- to federate communication and promotion activities
- to polarize the supply of equipment and services
- to organise the development process and strategies

**Case study Follow-up**

The next case study can already be considered the second step of this one. Moreover the collection of experiences and best practices can be further enriched and improved. The constituted network can also carry on a transfer and accompanying activity through the AlpCity Regional Urban Observatory.



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### **Common issues with other projects**

A meaningful connection exists with the other case studies of this Work Package, but also with the ones related to the improvement of life quality and services (WP6).

### **SSC Experts' comments and recommendations**

The French Project Partner Rhône-Alpes Region started an effort to unify small mountain centres in a network to exchange knowledge and to promote own interests toward the central and metropolitan areas. This is an interesting attempt to ameliorate the network basis of small entities and peripheral regions. It was done on the Rhône-Alpes Region level and brought together common experiences in receiving regional engineering advice. Maybe it could be useful to enlarge this network building on a supra-regional or even European level, but it is necessary to evaluate all the costs and benefits of this enlargement also taking into account other experiences of networking like for example "Alliance in the Alps".

## Technical assistance for small towns



**AlpCity Partner**  
**Work Package**  
**WP Coordinator**  
**Subjects involved**  
**and their role**

Rhône-Alpes Region (France)  
 Cooperation among towns (WP8)  
 Rhône-Alpes Region (France)  
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 Tel. +33 04 72 59 42 31  
 Fax + 33 04 72 59 47 84  
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6 consultants :

- Groupe INDIGO - CEDDAET (Développement durable des entreprises et des territoires)
- DMS Conseil (Développement médecine et santé)
- ELO (L'expertise de l'emploi)
- Luth médiations (Conseil en ingénierie culturelle, valorisation du patrimoine et sensibilisation des publics)
- IDES Consultants (SILOE)
- SITELLE (Développement territorial - emploi - politiques sociales - Europe)

Local authorities

**Spatial area involved**

21 small towns selected among 200 mountain centres situated in the Alps, Jura and Massif Central.

**Project budget**

€ 43.060,00

**Project purpose**

This project is closely connected to the previous one for what concerns the spatial area involved and the final aim. More specifically in this case study the scope consisted in providing the selected municipalities with technical support for the



	<p>improvement of their capacity building and spatial management. The action targeted the upgrading of the life quality of the mountain/rural inhabitants by using different tools, like participation process, correct exploitation of natural resources, improvement of services supply. The intended aim is at increasing the autonomy of elected officials in small towns in carrying out their projects and development processes. The development engineering input may help to resolve stalemates brought about by low budgets and technical manpower resources in small mountain villages.</p>
<b>Project methodology</b>	<p>The methodology includes participation of civil society, networking, exchange of experiences.</p>
<b>Project activities</b>	<p>The main phases: analysis of small mountain towns, rollout of engineering at the local level, regional feedback workshop.</p>
<b>Achieved results</b>	<p>Accompanying realisation projects in little towns and regrouping communities. Depending on the engineering concerned, the contributions were made by means of technical and political meetings at the local level, through contacts and by putting partners in touch with one another, through public meetings, assistance in the production of questionnaires etc.</p>
<b>Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved</b>	<p>No discrepancies were remarked.</p>
<b>Instruments proposed, revised and finalised</b>	<p>Development of equipment, services, activities: all tools of technical assistance.</p>
<b>Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders</b>	<p>On the whole, the small towns and communautés des communes appreciated the contribution made by the engineering to the progress of their projects and development processes. Adapting to the different contexts and demands, and depending on the case in hand, the design offices contributed new perspectives and method, put the towns and communautés des communes in touch with various players and local and outside partners, and provided the practical substance they needed to move forward in their projects and development processes. Through various projects and approaches, the whole of the local population is affected, including holiday home owners and tourists.</p>
<b>Critical aspects</b>	<p>Problems encountered during the rollout: rewording of a number of projects at local level (but resolved in swift consultation between the Region, design offices and elected officials or technicians); quality differences in work carried out by design offices.</p>

**Lessons learned**

Little towns and regrouping communities in mountains need diagnosis/advises and finances for developing projects.

**Transferability**

As in the previous case study the concept of network among small towns is the most important element, which can be successfully transferred to other contexts. A cooperative network allows:

- to find together alternative resources for development
- to overcome territorial boundaries in order to share trans-national experiences
- to spread the cultural heritage and the local know-how
- to federate communication and promotion activities
- to polarize the supply of equipment and services
- to organise the development process and strategies.

**Case study Follow-up**

The work carried out within this Work Package as in the other AlpCity Work Packages has highlighted several types of network, which could be developed in parallel. These different levels complement one another, are not in contradiction with one another, and are not redundant.

- At local levels: organisation of development projects and amenities between small towns that are geographically close to one another (such as a library network, network of tourist towns, etc.).
- At a regional and/or international and mountain level: networks for exchanges about shared issues, about approaches to project and development processes: services centre, business development, urban planning and housing problems, circulation, improved access, development and planning strategy, participation of the resident population and of second home owners/tourists, town skills centre, taxation, etc.
- At a European Alpine level: creating contacts between small towns/territories at the European level so that they can carry out joint projects (concerning heritage, biodiversity, training of health professionals for developing countries, etc.).

**Common issues with other projects**

At the start of the programme, two "networks" of towns already existed in Rhône-Alpes: large town centres and their urbanized areas, and medium-sized towns and their urbanized areas. Within the AlpCity framework, the Region's intention aimed at taking care of small towns so as to learn more about their concerns and their need for exchanges on their issues (this was in addition to its policy of territorial agreements).

**SSC Experts' comments and recommendations**

In this second case study of Rhône-Alpes Region again the creation of contacts among small towns characterised by the same problems seems remarkable, because it allows exchange

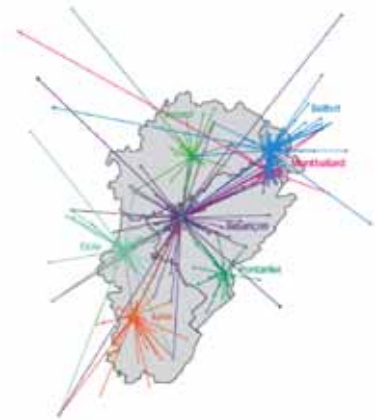


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of ideas to share common aims. The advantages of this applied method consist in the possibility of a more confident methodological approach, more effective approved projects (thanks to market analysis), a project risk reduction and a better ranking of priorities in development and planning processes.

## The territorial organisation of Franche-Comté Region



<p><b>AlpCity Partner</b></p> <p><b>Work Package</b></p> <p><b>WP Coordinator</b></p> <p><b>Subjects involved and their role</b></p>	<p>Rhône-Alpes Region (France)</p> <p>Cooperation among towns (WP8)</p> <p>Rhône-Alpes Region (France)</p> <p><i>Région Franche-Comté (Project Partner)</i>            Direction de l'Aménagement du Territoire            4 Square Castan, 25031 Besançon Cedex France            Michel FOURNIER            Tel +33 03.81.61.64.23            Fax +33 03 81 83 12 92            E-mail: michel.fournier@cr-franche-comte.fr</p> <p>Person in charge of the project:            Pascal BÉRION (pascal.berion@univ-fcomte.fr)            University of Franche-Comté and National Centre for Scientific Research            UMR 6049 ThéMA            32 rue Mégevand F-25030 Besançon cedex            "Maison de la Géographie de Montpellier", UMR Espace Marina DUFÉAL</p>
<p><b>Spatial area involved</b></p>	<p>The region located between the Rhine axis north and the Rhone axis south, between two mountain ridges (Vosges in the north-west and Jura in the south).</p>
<p><b>Project budget</b></p> <p><b>Project purpose</b></p>	<p>€ 54.000,00</p> <p>This case study came out from the need of a dynamic overview of the territorial organisation, which takes the inter connections with its neighbours (Bourgogne, Alsace, Rhône-Alpes, Switzerland...) into account.            The aim of this planned study was at identifying the structure of the territory of the region as a whole (mountain area and off-</p>



mountain area) on the basis of urban clusters, regardless of whether they are on the region's territory or connected to its neighbouring French regions and Swiss cantons.

This project enabled to check out the efficiency and limits of the “dominating flows” method for the spatial analysis and identification of urban systems, which are present in a regional space.

The project objectives can be summarised as follows:

- to propose an identification of polarization systems (employment and services mainly) which structures the regional territory,
- to analyse the hierarchical organisation of existing poles and their links,
- to test the efficiency of some usual spatial divisions and in some cases to redefine them or to give other models, which are more suitable to regional characteristics.

The expected benefits aimed at improving the structural and dynamic knowledge of the regional space in view of:

- identifying networks of main towns and their surrounding villages (existing of (in)formal network/connections between small towns),
- analysing regional policies and adapting them to local context and relationships.

### Project methodology

The case study implementation consisted in buying, selecting and analysing the relevant territory statistical data followed by calculations and maps design. At the end a database of the territorial organisation of Franche-Comté Region has been set up. A study methodology focusing on developing good practices transferable to other studies/territories: analysis of usual definition criteria of territories and anticipation of potential adaptation to local specificities.

Based on spatial analysis, the study was carried out in three steps:

1. Status of the art (analysis methods adapted to the study issues. The aim is at discussing the pros and cons of each method to choose the one to be developed in this project);
2. Analysis based on selected criteria, obtained results were presented, discussed and gave a model vision of the organisation of the regional territory;
3. Results analysis and a study report.

### Project activities

Work of spatial analysis with maps and analysis in the following fields:

- population dynamics
- attraction and polarisation of urban areas
- spatial typology given population and socio-economic data



### Achieved results

- hierarchization of towns and small cities

The scheduled timetable was the following:

- November 24th 2005: first technical committee
- December 2005 and March 2006: intermediary reports
- May 2006: study final report

Dissemination of the results in scientific papers or at an international conference.

Thanks to the first results, a better understanding of the organisation of “home-job” trips has been reached. Results gave an original approach to this field, something rather new at this geographic scale.

As far as business functions are concerned, it brought also a new overview given the use of unusual statistic and literature sources.

The study met its main objectives, however it is possible to outline three limits:

- some deeper thoughts are necessary to pursue the investigations about “home-job” trips and the duration of the project (7 months) is not sufficient for it,
- statistic data are complex to handle and demand a significant amount of work to select and calculate the indicators,
- fields of shops are difficult to study because there are few literature sources adapted to our geographical requirements.

### Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved

This project has been an opportunity to get a real state of the art, which should be completed by some modelling work, which couldn't be carried out because of the project's seven-month duration.

### Instruments proposed, revised and finalised

A study report has been issued.

The release of results in a scientific magazine or an international conference has been proposed.

### Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders

A study in close partnership with Franche-Comté Region: a research team and a local authority work closer for that spatial planning mission.

The achieved results give useful elements for further discussion and modelling as far as spatial planning is concerned.

Moreover relationships have strengthened between the laboratory, local authorities, urbanism agencies and the National Statistic Institute via the setting up of a technical steering committee.

### Critical aspects

Seven months to carry out this kind of ambitious study revealed not to be really sufficient.

### Lessons learned

This kind of projects should start by buying and selecting the necessary statistical data before analysing (in order to avoid wasting time in repeating calculations and maps). The setting



### Transferability

up of the database represents a long and time-consuming process given data access times allowed by data providers.

The case study is transferable to other areas if similar indicators can be used for the geographic scale (municipality). In this field, a cross-border look (France-Switzerland) was proposed thanks to the data put at disposal by the cross-border statistical Observatory of the Jura area.

### Case study Follow-up

Researchers of the Théma Laboratory are very interested in pursuing their investigations about this topic. Franche-Comté Region will use these results for its future regional policies planning for the period 2007-2013. Some first results are already integrated in the Regional framework for sustainable territorial planning, which is currently carried out.

### Common issues with other projects

Although there is an obvious link with the action carried by Rhône-Alpes Region in Alpcity (urban polarisation of the regional territory), this case study is still at a preliminary and research step whereas Rhône-Alpes' one is already a project of network setting-up.

This case study was introduced as substitute after the Territoire de Belfort's withdrawal and therefore began later than the other Alpcity pilot projects (November 2005). Last trans-national meeting (before the conclusion of the case studies scheduled by the end of May 2006) was held in December 2005 and so there was no opportunity to exchange information with other case studies. Since the first results have just emerged, they could be the ground of a future trans-national work.

### SSC Experts' comments and recommendations

In spite of the brief duration, this research produced very useful results for future spatial policies planning (especially for the period 2007-2013). From this experience it is clear that the success of a research at a trans-regional and trans-national level requires to set up a network between the institutions and all the actors involved (universities, laboratories, statistical observatories, etc.) in order to exchange methodology and achieved results, but also statistical data. For this reason the formation of a steering committee reveals to be very useful to monitor the research and as place for fruitful exchanges and discussions during the monthly meetings. Of course this can be considered just the first step of a more lasting process of territorial organisation in the region.





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## **Part three** policy implications and recommendations with prospects of future scenarios

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## Chapter XIII the project itinerary: from the project idea to some final considerations and recommendations

### 1. Introduction

The AlpCity Project derives from the idea that the Interreg IIB Alpine Space Programme can show interest in investigating the conditions of the small alpine towns as vital space for the populations resident in the Alps, who find essential services in those small centres. The picture is not homogeneous: there are vital and dynamic areas, mostly in the north-eastern Alps like in Bavaria, Tirol and Trentino; but there are also areas experimenting a critical phase, like in some zones of Piedmont Region, where industrialisation produced an apparently irreversible decline apparently irreversible. AlpCity aimed at facing all the problems of these towns by finding inspiration in the experience accumulated within the EU Urban and Leader Programmes, which advise an integrated approach to elaborate solutions for urban decay and marginality of mountain areas.

### 2. Final considerations

In order to draw out some important conclusions from the AlpCity Project, it is useful to outline the following crucial final considerations:

- Confirmation of the added value of cooperation and trans-national partnerships (effective and strategic), with a strong persuasion that the joined elaboration of methods, tools and strategies for the territorial protection and integrated promotion guarantees a major effectiveness if compared to isolated actions. This initiative should enhance an horizontal-vertical agreement among institutions acting at different government levels (states, regions, local authorities) with a special attention to a model (e.g. a Laboratory for the development of the small alpine towns in line with the principles promoted by UN Habitat), which allows to act according to and in synergy with the European (Lisboa and Goteborg Agendas) and international (UN Habitat) initiatives.
- Need of a shared strategy for sustainable development starting from the awareness of the differences among territories from the cultural, economic, social and vocational points of view. On the basis of this marked diversity among the alpine areas, the role of the most advanced Regions appears fundamental in comparison with the less developed ones.
- Need of an integrated approach to solve the marginality of mountain urban areas (previous EU initiatives implemented by Piedmont Region: Urbact and Leader).
- Enforcement of the awareness that the Alps are valuable as deposit of cultural and natural

resources not replaceable for the future of Europe.

- Strategic value of an approach enhancing the local actors' participation in terms of success and sustainability of individual initiatives/projects, but also if integrated development plans/programmes in the medium-long run.
- Importance of networks for the exchange of knowledge and know-how, but above all for the capitalisation of cooperation experiences through innovative (not only information) tools, in order to improve connections among the Alpine Space territories and actors (best practices, seminars, training courses, web platforms, twinning activities, etc.).

### 3. Recommendations

Consequently the following recommendations have been formulated:

- To promote effective, stable and strategic trans-national partnerships, which voice the needs and priorities of the local stakeholders in the small alpine towns with an outstanding echo on upper levels (EU, national and regional authorities).
- To enforce and promote a dialogue and a fruitful exchange among the (strategic) levels of EU Programmes (Alpine Space, but also other ones within Interreg III A-C Programmes) and the projects in terms of results, lessons learned both related to contents and contractual/management procedures.
- To formulate strategies and innovative territorial government tools through:
  - The exchange of successful experiences, best practices and related lessons learned on spatial planning, promotion, revitalisation and management of the Alpine Space
  - Experimentation of innovative tools (e.g. e-government, marketing) for advising decision-makers ("Laboratory of best practices" including the sections: policies, projects, training, twinning activities, institutional building actions).
  - Setting up of a network (trans-national and international) with features of learning organisation (according to the UN Habitat model promoted in the framework of the "Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme") and aimed at finding, selecting best practices and transferring the lessons learned in order to accelerate the diffusion process of innovation and to formulate a common strategy for the sustainable development of the alpine urban systems within the larger scenario of the knowledge society and economy.
- To allow the growth of new territorial vocations through the involvement, commitment and empowerment of the key local actors (support to gender policy and actions)
- To increase the value of local peculiarities and to capitalise endogenous potentials, human resources and local identities as attracting factors for investment
- To reduce social and spatial disequilibria by supporting the development of peripheral areas, through cooperation and enforcement of urban-rural networks
- To improve connections between regional centres (medium towns), peripheral areas and economic centres of the Alpine Space, both in terms of infrastructures and ICT solutions
- To trigger synergistic and sustainable development effects and to link EU resources to national and regional programming
- To contribute to the development of an European strategy of urban sustainability; to link this



contribution to the global framework (above all with reference to the Alpine Convention), some international institutions and organisations like UN Habitat take care of.

### 4. Proposals

The proposals related to the project future are based on the awareness that it is necessary to formulate and share regional strategic and governance policies, favouring the small alpine towns in line with the European and international strategy for urban sustainability. The final aim consists in the official acknowledgement (and adoption/integration in the European development strategies) of these regional/trans-national policy recommendations by European and/or international subjects with positive spin-offs on different levels (the local one included) of the Alpine Space.

The proposal concerns a “Laboratory supporting the sustainable and integrated development of the small alpine town”, which can provide some elements for the future formulation of a trans-national strategic and landscape plan shared on a large scale, devoted to the small alpine towns (environmental certification, energy certification for building renewal, main trans-national communications networks, etc.) and taking into account the need of:

- Introducing lasting innovation in enterprises and in the management of the alpine territories
- Increasing the value of subjects devoted to the development and improvement of the economy and the alpine environment in order to train a new generation interested in settling and working in the presently marginal alpine regions
- Creating new job opportunities in order to enhance the settlement in the alpine towns of people coming from other areas and to brake the flight, through the promotion of industries (apart from tourism), which can play a pivotal role for the alpine economy, such as breeding, wood industry, niche agriculture, etc. Moreover an essential role for productive innovation can be represented by the Information and communication technology
- Supporting the most important economic sectors, through a specific attention paid to the small enterprise in the framework of strategic programmes proposed by the same associated alpine communities and aiming at diversifying economic activities, as foreseen by the European directives belonging to the programme on rural development and territorial cooperation
- Developing and enforcing relationships and exchanges between towns, both by promoting the setting up of networks and associations among small towns in order to elaborate common development strategies, the shared services and functions management; and also enhancing the creation of programmes and relationships between small and big towns, with a particular attention towards culture, scientific research, training and access to information. For this purpose Regions share the necessity to design proper tools supporting associations among small alpine municipalities, but also the cooperation between big cities and associations of small municipalities by applying information technologies too
- Developing and testing the introduction of new urban functions in the small towns in order to make them more attractive, through specific regional initiatives proposed by local actors as for example the international mountain school of the Maritime Alps
- Improving the competencies of the local communities in elaborating development



strategies, in urban planning, in planning and designing public works and in managing services. Regions share the need to provide assistance to small alpine towns according to the example of the project led by Rhône-Alpes Region (France) within AlpCity, which organises exchanges among young public officers interested in working in the small alpine towns, sponsors post-graduated internships in the most attractive and efficient small alpine towns, etc.

- Considering the chance for a Common Alpine Market of public works and services by promoting the participation of the most qualified enterprises in tenders, the adoption of eco-compatible techniques in public works design and implementation, the approval of common prices for bio-building materials, etc.

The Laboratory proposal foresees a structure, which follows the model of the Regional Urban Observatory implemented by the UN Habitat to monitor the implementation of the Habitat Agenda on global level (please see AlpCity Guideline n.5 "Features of the AlpCity RUO")

Basic activities of the Laboratory for the small alpine towns with a medium-long term perspective:

- Setting up of a new trans-national (or international) partnership led by Piedmont and constituted by regions (some of them already part of the AlpCity partnership) and other key subjects for the development of the alpine space (e.g. CIPRA, UNCEM etc.) with the purpose to strategically and operatively contribute to the Laboratory for the small alpine towns. The Partnership could include, with a medium-term perspective, a Committee of Regions for the small alpine towns composed by the presidents of the regions or their representatives with the task of supervisor of the elaboration and management of shared policies, the testing of guidelines and the definition of first hypothesis for a trans-national strategic and landscape plan dedicated to the small alpine towns of the member Regions. Each member of the Committee would be assisted by a regional officer and the Committee would be chaired in turn by the president (or his representative) of one of participating regions. Within each partner region there is a committee with the task of implementing the shared policies, of testing the guidelines and contributing to the definition of first hypothesis for a trans-national strategic and landscape plan dedicated to the small alpine towns. Representatives of local authorities (provinces, departments, mountain communities, municipalities) take part in the Committee
- Setting up and management of a regional Laboratory for the small alpine towns (according to the UN Habitat RUO model) dealing with technical assistance and research, collection and exchange of best practices, led by Piedmont Region together with the other Regions, which are committed in co-financing about 50%
- Setting up of a structure dedicated to the Laboratory by Piedmont Region, the regional officers and representatives from other key subjects involved in the project can refer to. The structure has the following objectives:
  - to accomplish the functions of a secretariat of the Committee of Regions and to coordinate the activity of the regional committees
  - to manage the laboratory in driving and assisting the local authorities through the other regional structures with the purpose to create, test and promote new tools (operative and strategic) in order to support the decision-making processes and the exchange of



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best practices

- To support the regional structures in implementing the shared policies, testing the guidelines and defining the first hypothesis for a trans-national strategic and landscape plan dedicated to the small alpine towns
- to promote (fund-raising included) and managing a “Best Practices Award” on trans-national level
- to organise an international conference dedicated to the development of the small alpine/mountain towns (in cooperation with other institutions already involved in the promotion of similar events like CIPRA, ISCAR) with the presentation of the activities and results of the Laboratory for the small alpine towns and of the “Best Practices Award”
- Comparison on the policy guidelines with the Committee of Regions, with the request that the policy supporting the Alps takes the problems of small alpine towns into consideration and a specific programme can be approved dedicated to the creation of trans-national strategic networks among the small alpine towns
- Presentation of the guidelines to the national authorities and conclusion of an agreement aimed at supporting also financially the Laboratory for the small alpine towns as permanent structure for their strategic development.

## Chapter XIV the Regional Urban Observatory/Laboratory: from a project idea to a project proposal

As described in Chapter VII, the AlpCity Project inherited from UN Habitat the idea of setting up a Regional Urban Observatory, which has been combined with the concept of a Laboratory for the small alpine towns. This means that the activities of collecting best practices and transferring the relative lessons learned are coupled with the experimentation of innovative tools for technical assistance and for driving small alpine centres to define and implement strategic projects.

The proposal is for a '**Best Practices Observatory /Laboratory**' conceived as an operational and strategic project able to support other Interreg projects (operational level) as well as the Interreg Programmes (strategic level).

The core activities include:

- **Networking activities and setting up of a solid partnership** among Regions, Institutions and other key actors (e.g. CIPRA; ISCAR, UN Habitat, Alpine Convention etc...) as partners of the Best Practices Observatory/Laboratory
- A **Learning Centre** focused on technical assistance and a tutoring role for the diffusion of lessons learned and formulation of guidelines to support a tailor made transfer of the outlined best practices. Six guidelines have been already finalised in the framework of AlpCity ([http://www.ocs.polito.it/alpcityruo/en/library\\_ruo.htm](http://www.ocs.polito.it/alpcityruo/en/library_ruo.htm))
- The outlining and transfer of **lessons learned** able to support inter alia the formulation of strategic policies (EU and Programme levels)
- **Institutional and capacity building, training and twinning activities** able to support the sustainable development of the Alpine Space at a local level (beneficiaries: mountain communities, municipalities, NGOs, CBOs etc.)
- The search, selection, collection, diffusion and transfer of **Good and Best Practices** with reference to the subject of sustainable development of the Alpine Space living environment (specific attention could be addressed to small alpine towns) at a trans-national/international level
- The development and updating of the '**Best Practices database**' already set up within the AlpCity Project ([http://www.ocs.polito.it/alpcity/scheda\\_db.htm](http://www.ocs.polito.it/alpcity/scheda_db.htm)). The database, as well as the submission and selection processes, have been developed in line, and in collaboration with the UN Habitat, which is successfully implementing the 'Best Practices and Local leadership Programme' at a world wide level since 1996 (<http://www.bestpractices.org>)
- **Information and Publicity activities** including a web site, publications, newsletters, the organisation of seminars and meetings



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- Launch and organisation of a [Best Practices Award](#) open to the world with a call for best practices submission in the field of the sustainable development of the Alpine Space. The Best Practices Award could be promoted in line with the International Best Practices Award organised by the UN Habitat.

In short this Observatory/Laboratory is just a tool conceived to enhance the elaboration of spatial sustainable policies shared by all the Project Partners and targeting upper political levels.

## Chapter XV **concluding and looking ahead**

### 1. **The importance and the need for transnational innovative cooperation**

The research put in evidence the decisive importance of the experiences exchange and the dissemination of lessons learned from the best practices: each individual local situation is too small to be able to solve complex problems in the best way; all together they constitute a great system of cooperation/competition.

In spite of the different history and places, the existence of shared problems has been recognised together with the need to elaborate common strategies in order to solve them. Within this frame, a better knowledge of the various national juridical regulations, the different national and local policies, and the diverse implemented tools, revealed to be enlightening.

A further relevant result is represented by the shared awareness that the definition of a common strategy has to vigorously target innovation: AlpCity is a project developed within the European innovation strategy, since it pays a particular attention to policies involving public authorities.

The setting up of a permanent network with functions of learning organisation, aimed at selecting best practices and transferring the lessons learned, fulfils the objective to create an accelerator of the diffusion processes of innovation, particularly within the public authorities.

In fact one of the most important results of AlpCity consists in the common acknowledgement of the usefulness of building up a permanent partnership recalling the Regional Urban Observatories model promoted by UN Habitat, with a twofold purpose:

- a. developing a network aiming at innovation diffusion and formation of a common strategy for the sustainable development of the alpine urban systems, in the framework of the more general scenario of the knowledge society and economy;
- b. contributing to the development of the European strategy for urban sustainability and linking this contribution to the global environment, UN Habitat takes care of.

### 2. **The Lead Partner's point of view**

#### 2.1 **Criticism and challenges of a strategic and integrated project management**

Acting as the AlpCity Lead Partner, Piedmont Region can summarise the main project criticisms and challenges as it follows:

1. The Interreg III B Programme is quite complex in terms of internal structure. It presents different levels of cooperation and management namely.



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- a. The EU Level including the actors such as the Managing Authority (MA) and the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) as financial and technical counterpart as well as the EU policies and regulations. At a national level the programme is supported by the National Contact Points, who act as contact points for project applicants in their respective countries.
- b. The trans-national level, which refers to the partnership. AlpCity involves eleven Partners from five countries. This level presents two sides: one linked to the relationship, cooperation among the different partners as well as the situation of each member of the partnership in terms of internal organisation, expectations, previous experiences in EU Projects and attitude/willingness to cooperate at a trans-national level.
- c. The local level, which refers to the final project beneficiaries as well as the local actors involved in the project (e.g. Mountain communities, mayors, population, NGOs, civil society etc.).

In line with this articulated structure the Lead Partner faces several challenges including a complex and delicate leading role of supervision, coordination and management (technical and financial issues).

2. The financial system is complex due to the requests and obligations of the EU financial regulations and rules as well as the huge number of partners to be supervised and coordinated in order to respect the overall EU financial mechanism and key deadlines. One of the most difficult issue related to the financial system of the Interreg IIIB Alpine Space Programme is linked to the necessity for the EU Project Partners to obtain the Certifications of Expenditures at a national level. Each EU country involved in the Alpine Space Programme has its own national certification system and bodies. Therefore the coordination of several different partners' situations represents a serious challenge for the Lead Partner as well as the Project Partners.
3. The relevant number of partners involved in the project partnership represents a challenge in terms of coordination, development of trust, fruitful relationships, balanced involvement, transparent and efficient information, effective and pleasant collaboration. The main obstacles are inter alia the different languages, expectations, internal organisations, attitude and willingness to collaborate at a trans-national level. However these obstacles represent also the indicators of the success of the project with reference to the capacity and willingness of the different actors to face and overcome them. It is understood that the Lead Partner plays a key role.
4. The AlpCity Project involved eight senior experts in the project issues as members of the Scientific Steering Committee. The coordination and management of these experts represented a relevant challenge. However the experts' individual contribution to the project has been relevant too.
5. The AlpCity Project was first of all an idea officially submitted in a 'paper version'. The main challenge consisted in shifting from a 'paper' to concrete actions and results. However on the basis of the official acknowledgements received from the Managing Authority and the Joint Technical Secretariat we could affirm that the AlpCity Project has achieved more

results than the original ones expected.

6. The AlpCity Project is in the framework of the Alpine Space Programme, which includes more than 50 projects (2000-2006). However it has been quite difficult to foster synergies with other projects and set up fruitful collaboration. The Joint Technical Secretariat organized specific seminars in order to support the exploitation of synergies among projects as well as the exchange of experiences, know-how and information. However a concrete collaboration with other projects similar to AlpCity represented a real challenge.
7. AlpCity not only achieved the expected project results but also started to think about its own future. The capacity to have and foster a clear project vision is a key asset especially because we are often busy in dealing with daily problems and priorities. The reflections and proposals linked to the future actually risk to lose the attention they deserve. The proposal for a 'Best Practices Observatory/Laboratory' or 'Regional Urban Observatory/Laboratory' is launched as follow-up of AlpCity in line with the UN Habitat Programme 'Best Practices and Local Leadership' and its 'Global/Regional and Local Observatories'.

## 2.2 Lessons learned from the management of the project

1. Importance of the leading role of the Lead Partner, which actually has to be assertive, clear and 'good' enough (effective and efficient) to guarantee at least the achievements of the basic project results, the involvement of most of the partners and then the full success of the project and hopefully its follow-up.
2. Importance of the partnership, which actually has to be real; effective (not only on the paper) in terms of cooperation, involvement, commitment; complementary in terms of skills, previous experiences, expectations, missions. It has to be highlighted that a change in the partnership (inclusion of a new partner and/or withdrawal of a partner) creates serious problems and delays in the project implementation due to the necessity to formally review the basic project documents (e.g. Partnership Agreement and Application Form).
3. Importance of a project vision linked not only to the present time (of the project, of an action, of an idea) but also to the future. A vision is necessary for giving a 'different' sense to the project and a 'different' reason to be involved in.
4. Importance of human resources and human relationships (not only the professional ones). People make the difference in doing something. Therefore it is crucial the choice of people, institutions, experts to be involved in the project, their commitment, expertise, knowledge, relationship but above all their willingness to cooperate in a trans-national and multicultural environment. It is important the participatory role, the bottom-up approach the Lead Partner is able to foster, the capacity and willingness to empower people in order to allow them to act as main characters within the project.
5. Importance of communication, information which have to be transparent, effective, efficient and participatory.
6. Importance of the capacity to simplify things and issues in order to concretely face problems, criticisms as well as to prevent them. The ability to make easier complicated and 'delicate' issues, situations and relationships is also the basis for enjoying the own work and improving the others' ones. This reflection is made with a specific reference to the



complicated financial Alpine Space Programme organisation, which actually could be simplified.

### 3. The Scientific Steering Committee's (SSC) point of view <sup>(1)</sup>

#### 3.1 Cooperation problems

This project can be considered particularly difficult due to the high number of partners involved, high number of case-studies and of course different local situations. However, this transnational cooperation has been started even if some challenges make the SSC work difficult as well as the one of the project managers.

It is important to consider the different political structures of the various partners involved in the project, because the result of the cooperation depends also on the level you cooperate. Actually the Regions present a higher bureaucracy even if it differs from one country to another.

The main challenges are:

1. Different cultural background. Even terminology is used differently: for example with infrastructure is meant something to be constructed physically, but in the Czech-Republic infrastructure is related to investments. Therefore, there could be some misunderstandings.
2. Different tongues. Even if a project common tongue is chosen, it is often very difficult its concrete adoption from all the actors involved. Therefore, the existence of different tongues becomes a real problem.
3. Lack of time. A project usually lasts two-three years. However, considering that the start usually takes 6 months, the time for cooperation is reduced.
4. Different rules and laws. Partners have different national juridical structures, rules and laws. These differences produce some consequences in relation to the financial and administrative aspects and to the transferability of the projects design to other countries, institutions or authorities. When a project budget is finalised, it is very difficult to consider these aspects that later on affect the actual project implementation.
5. A good leadership. Actually a successful project implementation depends on the leadership role carried out by the Lead Partner. Without an efficient and effective leadership a project will fail. The main responsible leader of a project should concentrate on qualitative and not quantitative aspects during the project implementation.
6. Internal cooperation and communication. The presence of a large number of partners requires an efficient communication system. Each actor involved in a project has to contribute to the communication activities in order to achieve the suitable results.
7. Commitment. Many EU projects fail because there is a lack of commitment of the respon-

1) *The authors of this section are Loredana Alfaré, Michael Tyrkas and Gian Paolo Torricelli.*



sible institutions. The project managers need to be supported and projects activities should be widespread at all levels in order to start the follow-up process.

8. Capacity building. A large partnership includes also partners with low or absent experience in EU projects. This causes delays and misunderstandings. In such cases it would be useful to organise specific meetings for enhancing the partners' capacity building.

### 3.2 Case studies: evaluating their implementation and weighing the pros and cons

The following grid summarises the main results of the case studies assessment. The following paragraphs offer a detailed comment: this evaluation aims at stressing the most important methodological assets of the project. Participatory process, networking, follow-up activities, sustainable development are topics included among the European objectives and they reveal to be equally transversal in the particular cases studied in the different Work Packages.

	<b>Innovation</b> (what is new, experimental and interesting)	<b>Difficulties and strategies for overcoming them</b>	<b>Contributions to the main goals of the project</b> (endogenous development, urban regeneration)	<b>Contribution to strengthen territorial anchoring</b> (culture, identity, specificity)
<b>Participatory process</b>	In the greater part of the cases study, they have been implemented with success. In much case studies the participatory methods can be considered as an innovation. When it is not an innovative element the results shows that a participative process cannot work without a method and a good moderator. Not always the participatory processes are the only solution, in some cases, has been placed side by side a directive approach top-down. Importance of the active role of the local Institutions.	In a generalized manner the involvement of the local population asks time and energies. Difficulties have been found when the local project had to deal with technical or specialized arguments. The figure of the project leader or of the coordinator is central for the success of the local project. To establish a participation process is not easy because of personal conflicts etc but exchanges between population and experts, adapted methods, the common issue of the project could generally overcome the problems.	Nearly all the local projects have caught up their objectives in the previewed terms.	In many cases the participatory processes have allowed to develop to the sense of belongings, especially by specific categories of persons (as an example owners of abandoned buildings).
<b>Network</b>	In general draft we have "short networks" between local community, regional administration and experts or technicians. The exchange between partner (transnational "long networks") is in part lacked, also for language and cultural issues; to improve. In various cases they have been exchanges with other European projects, also	The difficulties of exchanges between the partners are often due to problems of cultural, language, administrative approach. The language is a problem. The translations in English often they render poor the contents of the single local project.		We have a community of problems. Some are related to the mountain but the majority are much more general ones: problems of engineering, know-how, distance, diversification, etc. These problems are statistically more present in the mountain area, like showed in the study, but are not specifically linked to mountainous places.



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	thanks to the contribution of the experts. Also for the dissemination of the results a specific network is necessary			The starting assumption is checked: small cities out of metropolitan areas have structural problems of development, whether they are or not in mountains. We can also see the difference in mountain situation: mountain appears when there is tourist development. Tourism offers an alternative that do not have other local areas, whether they are out or in the mountain area.
Does the project assure a follow up?	Various plans preview directly or indirectly a continuation (follow-up) Two kinds of follow up: Follow-up of the contents Follow-up of the methods (i.e. participatory process) Often the guidelines insure a follow-up directly in the local or regional law (i. e. in planning)	The follow-up does not only have to be left in hand the local administrations, but it must be an active support of the regions. There are several case studies dealing with the same topic. A cooperation among them and with external projects can give the opportunity to have a follow up and implementation.	For this kind of local projects the follow-up would have to be realized to three levels • Municipality • Mountain Community • Region A good follow-up is the integration of the lessons learned in regional mountain policies: Regione Veneto will use the guidelines as bases for the definition of the PRG (Master Plan) and Area Plans of the study areas. Regione Rhone-Alpes prepares a guidelines for a regional strategy for mountain development.	The network established for this project will share and continue their activities together with other projects in order to improve the method and pass from feasibility study to an executive project which include also marketing strategies for tourism.
Sustainability principles (integration of social, economic and environmental aspects)	Mostly all projects integrate the sustainability as a basic principle (economic, environmental, social)		In many cases the information do not appear sufficient to the appraisal	We can see for the whole of the projects a "mobilization" of the territory in various aspects: a) the invention of local resources b) a broader and more open approach of territory: through various relationships strategies, international comparisons, international economic strategies, new partnerships ... c) anchoring in the territory: through patrimonialisation (culture, knowledge, know-how), federation (collective promotion), local and spatial structuration (to organize, equipment, services), integration and coordination. It is a new local/global relationship which is set up. The natural/ environmental characteristics of the area involved is a resource of great importance for a sustainable and modern tourist development that foresees a large number of offers (sports, excursions, thematic, nature, wine and food) for which the recovery of the building heritage, concerning buildings that are not used, can be considered a decisive element of support.

### 3.3 Internal and external cooperation

One of the first aims of cooperation is at exchanging information among subjects: within AlpCity several case studies have accomplished this important task. There are several advantages in sharing experiences among case studies:

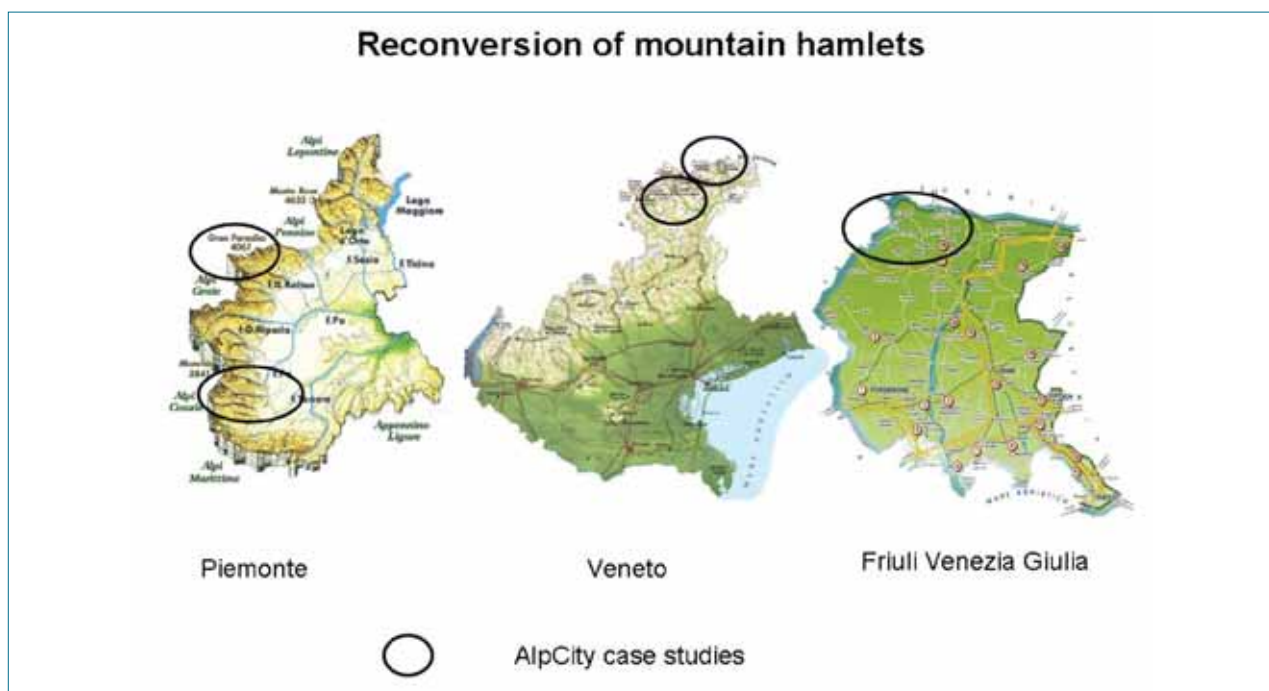
- establishing possible cooperation for the future;
- exchanging and comparing methodologies;
- finding out best practices;
- improving personnel know-how;
- avoiding the same mistakes;
- exporting/importing the model or method to/from other contexts.

#### 3.3.1 Cooperation within the AlpCity Case Studies

A good example of cooperation among AlpCity case studies is offered by Work Package 7. The main common issue regards the “recovery of mountain hamlets” followed by the participation process adopted, the feasibility studies, the architectural techniques and some guidelines. The involved partners held a meeting in Venice on the 19th of April 2006 in order to discuss and to compare methodology and results achieved within their case studies and to propose a shared follow-up.

The interested projects were carried out by three Italian Regions:

- renewing and optimising the use of abandoned rural buildings, which were once used for productive activities. (Veneto Region)
- the renewal of abandoned mountain hamlets (Piedmont Region)
- living in mountain areas (Piedmont Region)
- guidelines for reclaiming abandoned villages in the borderland with Austria and Slovenia. (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region).

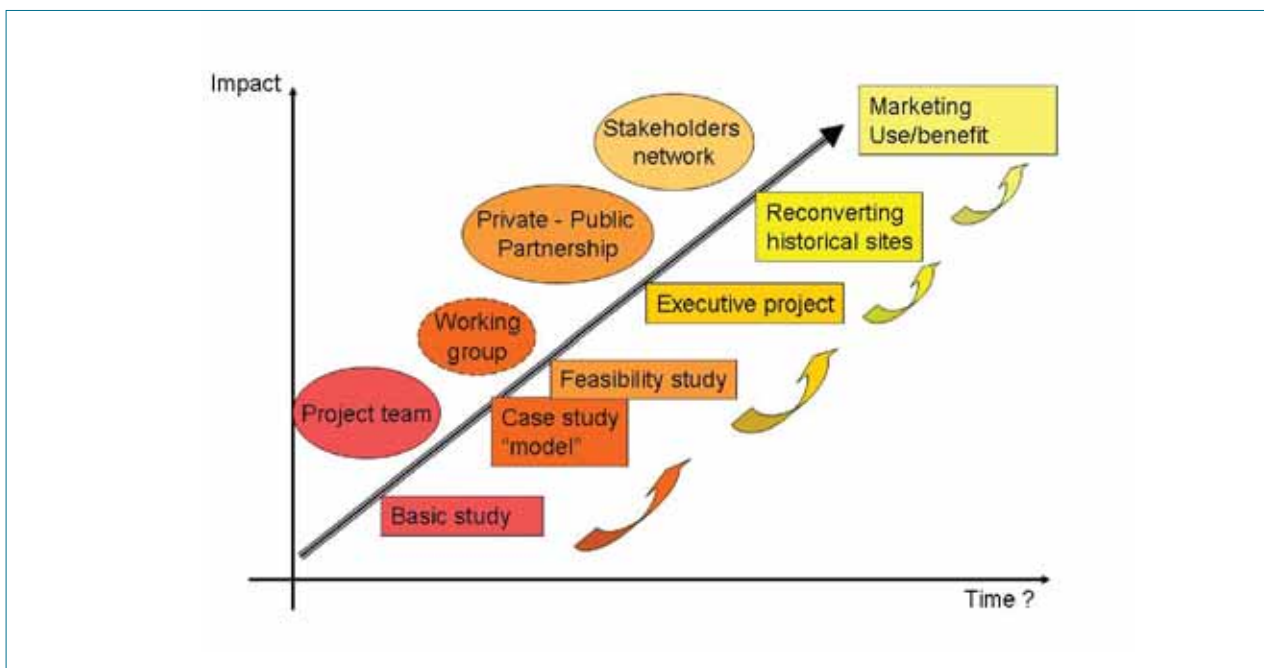




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The presentations illustrated by each Region showed the way the individual projects intend to recover the cultural and natural heritage of the alpine villages by improving the socio-economic situation of their inhabitants. The applied approach consisted in providing case studies, models and tools to improve the intangible heritage (e.g. training).

Only few studies are actually focusing on a very important aim: to re-use buildings and to develop these marginal areas. The dominating aim of public authorities is still the conservation of the cultural heritage. At present the funds to reconstruct the sites are missing, therefore the success of such projects mainly depends on private investors.



The diagram on projects steps shows that studies are only the first steps toward implementation. At the same time the development of cooperation structures have to be considered, since the projects teams have to be replaced by a working group supported by public-private partnership and stakeholder networks in order to get investments and impact.

### 3.3.2 Cooperation with external projects

#### a. Cooperation among case studies of WP 7 with Interreg III C – RFO Innoref sub-projects STS and RECOVER

The previously mentioned regions participating in the Venice meeting also discussed about methodology and results with the representatives of other projects financed within Interreg IIIC - RFO INNOREF. In particular the representative of the 2 INNOREF STS and RECOVER sub-projects provided some technical advise on mountain tourism due to the good and long experience in the management of a “multi-building hotel” strategy.

The meeting represented also an occasion to compare the different approaches and highlight

synergies among the different projects starting a potential long-term cooperation in view of the next programme period.

**b. Cooperation among the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region “Environmental certification” case study of WP 7 and Interreg III–RFO Innoref Aedes sub–project and Cadses Warema project**

The second Friuli Venezia Giulia case study dedicated to the environmental certification cooperated in the organisation a meeting on the 30th of March 2006 in Udine (Italy) with the representative of the Innoref Aedes sub-project sharing results. The established network of AlpCity can to be useful also for the Cadses Warema project titled, which as the aim at creating a Biosphere Reserve in Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region.

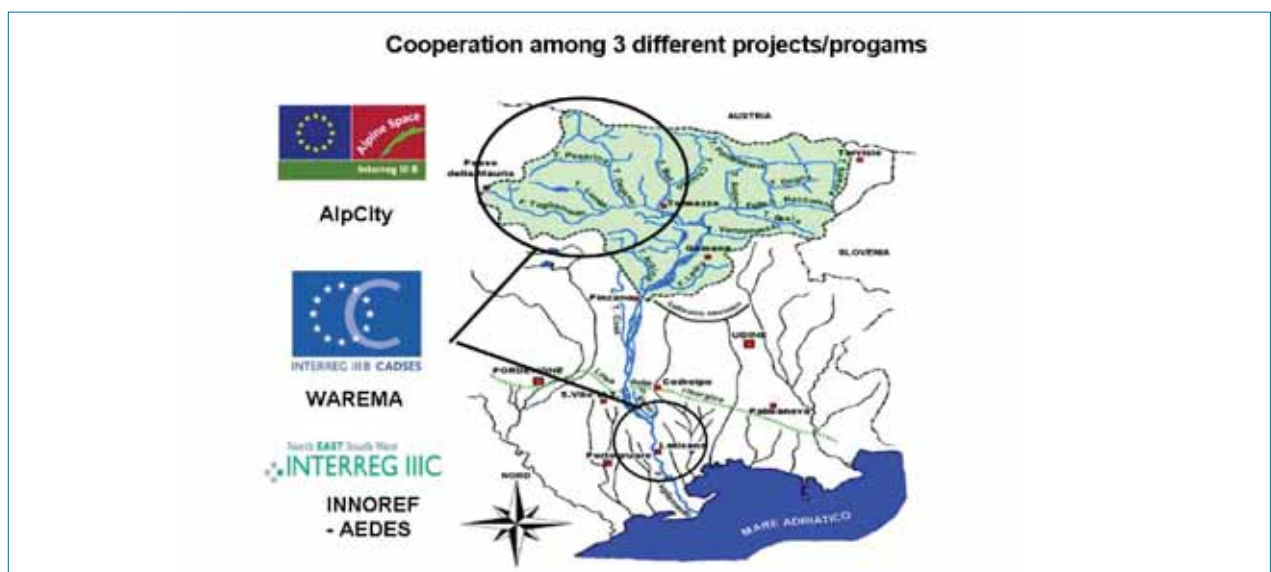
The future cooperation among the 3 projects will consists in:

- The exchange of know-how and experience between EMAS communities
- The creation of a Network of EMAS Communities for co-operative activities
- A long-term process for a regional development of the Tagliamento area as Unic Selling Proposition (USP) for Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region.

Since all projects have environment and participation process as common denominator, the AlpCity case study managers will start to create the awareness of the local population in the upper Tagliamento, while Aedes will do the same in the lower area. Warema will coordinate the process creating the watershed partnership .

Advantages for Friuli Venezia Giulia Region:

- 1) to promote synergies among different programmes gives an added value to the involved projects;
- 2) to avoid duplication of existing works
- 3) to save money
- 4) to increase visibility due to resources efficient allocation
- 5) possibility to create new partnerships and projects.





### **c. Cooperation between Veneto Region case study and a project financed by IMONT: the know-how on conservation of the local traditional building**

Veneto Region studied the renovation and optimum use of abandoned rural buildings that were once devoted to production. In this context the “tabià” (rural buildings used as hayloft/cowshed) were chosen as a good example of abandoned rural buildings that are now starting to be used for tourism.

The same subject was faced up by another research financed in 2004 by IMONT, the Italian Institute for the Mountain (Istituto Nazionale per la Montagna), with the title “Neglect and change in alpine cultural landscapes. A research about knowledge and conservation of local building traditions in Comelico valley (Belluno, Italy)”.

The aim of this project was at improving the quality of recovery, nowadays very low, as the changes of use often sacrifice the very values could be appreciated in the original rural architecture, i.e. its authenticity.

Thanks to the involvement of three members of the IMONT project working group, some of its best outputs have been adopted in the AlpCity activities, in particular the survey on local technical building know-how, that was carried out in Comelico valley, as both projects share this focus study area. The scientific supervisor of the IMONT project has been charged of the editing of the final AlpCity publication of Veneto Region.

## **3.4 Knowledge transfer**

As stated in the Application Form, disseminated results such as the best practice database, model case-studies, methodology, common strategies, practice/policy guidance, links/reports, etc. have been published on the AlpCity web site in order to reach a wider public, especially the local authorities to whom the project is addressed. Another objective of the project was at encouraging regions to create technical assistance systems to support alpine authorities in designing/carrying out projects of local development/regeneration. It was expected that the project could create a permanent network of regions, local authorities and experts on the project topics. Due to the trans-national dimension of the problems small alpine towns face a trans-national approach was considered as the most promising strategy. Concerning this last item, AlpCity proposes an output (Laboratory/Observatory), which goes further to what foreseen at the beginning of the project.

In this sector the projects produced the best results. Dissemination activity played an important role in the second part of the project, the effort of the Lead Partner has been successfully and awarded by the Interreg IIIB Alpine Space as a “successful story”.

## **3.5 Case studies transferability**

For what concerns the case studies transferability the adopted methodology in almost all case studies (participation process) can be considered a good tool of transferring project results to the local population and to improve the exchange of know-how among the projects dealing with the same topic.

**Franche-Comté and Rhone Alpes** case studies could have been a good example of interaction and support among the regions and the local authorities but the process was not easy due

to the mentioned lack of management and capacity building. Nevertheless the effort in providing technical assistance is remarkable and the gained experience will be useful for providing suggestions and technical advises to other subjects which intend to carry out a similar experience. For Rhône-Alpes, the Region's support consisted in forms of technical assistance to ongoing and foreseen development projects of local groups. Municipalities can undertake initiatives and the region fills the methodological gaps and acts in order to increase the chances of the projects success, because it has a special interest in so doing. **Niederösterreich** partner had already a good experience in participation process at local level and the results achieved by both case studies can be transferred to other contexts especially for what concern the organisation of the workshops dedicated to such particular topics. **Lombardy Region** has achieved good results which can be transferred, especially the cooperation model between retailers and great distribution and the integrate approach in the trade sector. Both case studies have used training with the aim at enhancing the capacity building of the economic operators. The major element of innovation is the concept of a new model of cooperation among retailers and great distribution with the aim at creating a spirit of solidarity with reciprocal benefits: for the great distribution increasing sales volume and purchasing local typical products with a high guaranteed quality; for the retailers achieving economies of scale playing a new role in the selection and furniture of local typical products.

**The Municipality of Grainau** has adopted a public-partnership approach with the involvement of external experts and moderators, a sort of participation process. This combination of internal/external know-how has produced acceptance of decisions and a real participation of stakeholders. Furthermore the integration of several sectors in "one overall concept" has produced remarkable results in the implementation of the case studies and such successful strategy can be exported. However at present the different structural conditions and given standards in the alpine countries require a very specific adaptation of the chosen strategy. The transferability will of course vary in respect of different *national* political decisions structures (competences; hierarchies-local, regional, national ones; financing of local, regional, national authorities; regional planning; investment decisions) and in respect of cultural aspects and the topic or problem to be solved. There is no patent remedy which could be applied and/or transferred arbitrarily without adaptation on the specific case.

Concerning the participatory process the degree of involvement has to be considered and balanced very thoroughly depending on the individual topic and problem. Obviously the extent of top-down and bottom-up processes that are necessary for the successful implementation of the principal of subsidiarity, have to be fixed individually. Involvement can vary from simple information to strong participation and integration of local population. In particular cases (where a special know how is necessary) a too strong involvement of the population might result in inefficient and ineffective discussions and might cause delays. The problem might be solved through detailed planning and organization of a counter-current process. The strategy should aim at a mixture of top-down and bottom-up approach, depending on the particular problems to be solved. The process should be designed in a manner that a strong acceptance for decisions can be generated. Experience proves that participation and integration of stakeholders in many cases contribute to generate creative and innovative solutions. The projects developed in bottom-up workgroups usually ensure a long term endogenous development, due to the development of concrete ideas of the local population. Often it is possible to generate a first impulse for the establishment of individual corporate feeling and for



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interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaboration.

Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region has carried out one case study concerning the

### Levels of involvement of local stakeholders during bottom-up processes:

Information/discussion ➤ questioning ➤ contextual contribution ➤ active involvement and personal responsibility during implementation ➤ financial involvement

environmental certification of a mountain area. The customer analysis aimed at providing information and trends about tourism in the valley, as well as the guidelines for obtaining the EMAS certification should be transferred to other mountain context.

The case studies concerning the recovery of the mountain hamlets carried out by Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Piedmont Regions can provide a set of different tools aimed at improving the management of such areas and at the same time at providing decision makers with technical advises and, more important, to draw regulations to be included in the small alpine towns master plans.

### 3.6 Case studies follow-up

Most of case studies has shown the intention to continue their activities after the project conclusion. The main obstacle is the financing aspect but with the new programme period and with national funds it will be possible to find financial resources for their implementation. If we consider the adoption of the guidelines issued by the different case studies by the local authorities we can say that all the involved local authorities as follow-up have shown interest in keeping into account the recommendations in revising master plans, area plan etc.

Two regions have already started to implement their AlpCity Project (Friuli Venezia Giulia with the project Warema financed by Cades Programme) and Lombardy through the Objective 2 Call "Measure 1.11 "Support to trade services requalification and development of closeness services".

For Rhône-Alpes a first follow up will initially take the form of a comparative statistical analysis of the small mountain towns and then all their problems will be integrated in a perspective document about regional territorial policies.

The studies elaborated and the work groups established during the Alpcity project in Grainau will be enhanced, pursued and implemented on basis of a public-private partnership development process (tourism, city renewal, pupil exchange, retail sector). Furthermore Grainau will take part in Dynalp, which offers additional financial resources for supporting further sustainable development projects.

### 3.7 Lesson learned

At the end of a project the lessons learned are always many and through Alpcity (due to the number of case studies facing different topics) we have learned a lot.



According to the Coordination Reports we can summarise the most important and common lessons:

- 1) The important contribution achieved by the active involvement of the citizens (in particular of key persons) in the project since the very beginning will avoid local rivalries by making local authorities and stakeholders converge toward a common aim. If correctly implemented, it leads to great improvement of problem solving capacities.
- 2) The participatory approach gives positive results only if is supported by a method and especially if there is a situation of conflict. If conflict is absent the involvement should be based on demonstrating the economic, environmental and social advantages for the citizens.
- 3) Local communities need the support of professionals (external experts) for developing their strategies and funds for financing project implementation. A good and experienced project team consisting of local administration, local stakeholders and external experts, consultants seems to be a good strategy for finding realistic and realizable solutions and in order to overcome the lack of willingness for “innovative” changes and in order to improve capacity building of the local authorities.
- 4) An expert based economic analysis and evaluation including measurable indicators can guarantee a successful development and exploitation of local resources.
- 5) Strong guidance and communication as well as cooperation and dialog with stakeholders can improve the project performance.
- 6) Networking is important but building up a network it takes time and a coordinator/moderator is needed being a long lasting process.
- 7) Set up of specific clusters at local level is necessary, supported by the Regional Authority commitment.
- 8) Regular exchange of internal/external information is necessary as well as a long-term project (minimum 3 years) for projects dealing with urban rehabilitation considering the time spent for the call, selection and administrative tasks due to the EU rules on transparency.
- 9) To use a top-down approach is possible only if the charged body has the capacity to deal with project procedures, on the contrary because of the low capacity building of the local authorities a mix of the top-down and bottom-up approach seems the best solution especially for technical projects.

## 4. Some Project Partners' point of view: proposals for the future

### 4.1 Rhône-Alpes

#### Proposals and recommendations by WP8 for the continuation of the AlpCity Project

##### Transnational researchs among small towns of “massif”

The Alpine Space should be a spatial area to lead such trans-national researches (cross-border analysis) to improve our knowledge of the specific relation among small towns of a “massif”



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(“Jura” between Franche-Comté and Rhône-Alpes Region and also Switzerland, “Alps” between all the regions concerned) and also the links between these two mountains. But it implies to have or to find similar indicators between the different areas. In this field, a cross-border look (France-Switzerland) was proposed thanks to the data put at disposal by the cross-border statistical observatory of the Jura area.

In that way, it should be useful to discuss jointly about polarisation functions related to employment and services within the Alpine Space. A scientific work with expertise would be interesting (for example method to test the accuracy and limits of the «dominating flows» methodology).

### Forming of regional networks of small mountain towns in each partner Region and cross-border coordination

The work carried out within this WP as in the other AlpCity WPs has highlighted several types of network, which could be developed in parallel. These different levels complement one another, are not in contradiction with one another, and are not redundant.

- At local levels: organisation of development projects and amenities between small towns that are geographically close to one another (such as a library network, network of tourist towns, etc.).
- At a regional and/or international and mountain level: networks for exchanges about shared issues, about approaches to project and development processes: services centre, business development, urban planning and housing problems, circulation, improved access, development and planning strategy, participation of the full-time population and of second home owners/tourists, town skills centre, taxation, etc.
- At a European Alpine level: creating contacts between small towns/territories at the European level so that they can carry out joint projects (concerning heritage, biodiversity, training of health professionals for developing countries, etc.).

*Operating conditions:* management means at the regional/cross-border level and assistance at the local level.

Tools for finding out about and analysing the specific features of small towns: research programmes, mechanisms for monitoring changes in small mountain towns (an “observatory”), transfer systems (good practices database).

### Call for projects at the European level for small mountain towns

#### *Aims:*

Alongside Urban type programmes: to give small towns located outside the influence of large towns/urbanized areas the means to resolve their problems and introduce endogenous projects aimed at maintaining and developing activities and services in mountain areas:

- means to carry out projects and strategic approaches for the future (backup in engineering and execution),
- means to support innovation and experimentation in public/private projects (see incubators).

*Funding:* Regions and Europe

## 4.2 Lombardy Region

### Potential developments of the AlpCity Project

The hypothesis to go on with the AlpCity Project through Best Practices collecting, selecting and evaluating activities, is coherent with the activities of Lombardy Region (Commerce, fairs and markets division), which instituted the Regional Observatory of Commerce in 2002. Among its activities there is the monitoring of the commercial network in all its forms and typologies, in order to make available all the information about the network features, its intersections with territory and the demand evolution, innovation and application tools of regulations supporting commercial activities. Since there isn't any structure dealing with best practices, AlpCity could be an occasion to start working on urban centres.

Through AlpCity all the needs emerged for what concerns the development of commerce in potential areas and particularly in the small tourist resorts:

- Lack of courage to start experimentations
- Lack of entrepreneurial skills
- Low training level
- Lack of models to be applied
- Lack of institutions supporting choices and decisions of business man
- Lack of the local Authorities' association efforts to promote attractive events
- Lack of territorial integration among initiatives and resources
- Lack of cooperation among the different levels of distribution

There is a strong need for the Region to start not only studies and researches, but also identifying the best actions to be implemented, promoted and disseminated. Also some intermediate subjects should be identified on the field, who can act as efforts multipliers.

## 4.3 Provincial Government of Lower Austria

### Planned Activities: Objectives of the project “Cooperation of small-medium alpine towns in Lower-Austria”

Small-medium alpine towns have to face many problems. These challenges are similar to the distrusts of other small alpine cities in other European countries. But towns do not always have enough financial and human resources to solve all their problems and to manage the future in a successful way.

Networks for small-medium alpine towns in Lower-Austria allow to group and to effective use available strengths.

Together the cities can share costs and human resources to solve common problems. This is a good way to manage the collective future.

This shows that networking is a reasonable way to handle problems and we are interested in experiences of other countries. This will be the next step of grouping and effective using available power. Now this exchange should be made more professional by human and technical assistance. In the last decade organisations and institutions with cross border character, networks for exchange of experience and know how transfer have been initialised.

Based on these networks in different fields cooperation should be installed which can help small-medium alpine towns to improve services and to ensure sustainable development.



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The process shall be documented to make it transferable to other local authorities.

### Main objectives

- Supporting the development of cooperation and networks of authorities and NGOs from a local to a provincial level
- Strengthen the role of urban areas as engine for sustainable growth of a region
- Reducing territorial and social unbalances by fastening the development of peripheral regions by cooperation of their centres
- Capitalising endogenous potentials, human resources and local identities

### Main target groups

- local, regional and provincial decision maker
- local, regional and provincial authorities
- economic actors
- NGOs dealing with the themes of the cooperation networks

### Target area

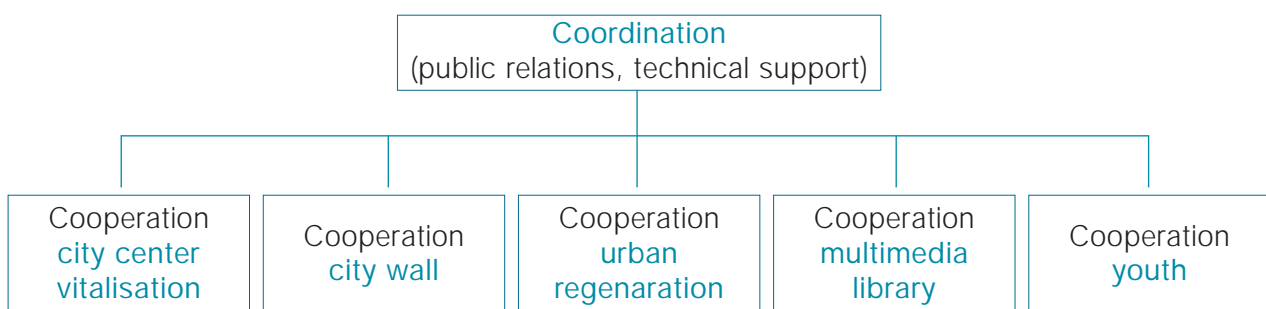
- Urban areas and their hinterland facing the problems of urban sprawl
- Centres of peripheral areas

### Quality target of the process

- Participation of authorities, stakeholders, inhabitants, NGOs
- Transparency of decisions
- Supporting the process of decision making with technical assistance
- Transferability of the experiences to other institutions

### Setting up of networks and tasks

- selection of local authorities during the project preparation phase
- conception and program for realisation
- preparation of data concerning the fields of networks
- research of best practice examples
- implement structure of organization between local authorities, associations and appropriate authorities
- set up of infrastructure for networking and know how transfer
- carry out of projects using efficient financial and personnel resources
- encourage new and innovative forms of development
- public relations work



## Cooperation to improve quality of life and services in small-medium alpine towns

### Cooperation planned

- *Cooperation City Centre Vitalisation in small-medium alpine towns*

The main focus of Urban Regeneration in Lower-Austria is the stimulation of city centres. In the future this aim should be fulfilled with a program which concentrates on grouping and effective using of available strengths.

There are three focuses which could be used:

- promotion of city centre mall
- promotion of trade
- aimed promotion of housing to stimulate city centres

Now these programs were tested in some communes and networking allows to exchange and to create common knowledge and strategies.

International networking would increase the chance on grouping and effective using available strength and to exchange different knowledge and strategies. Together the towns can use their common resources to solve problems which small alpine cities have to face.

- *Cooperation Town Wall Cities in small-medium alpine towns*

Town walls were important for the development of prosperous towns. Now these walls are very interesting for tourists who are concerned in history.

They want to get detailed information, including pictures and general information about walled towns.

Cooperation can help to exchange expert knowledge concerning city walls, tourism and so on. Furthermore this cooperation can advertise the historical offering. The cooperation of the cities makes the product fit to the tourist market.

- *Cooperation Urban Regeneration in small-medium alpine towns*

Regeneration of towns dealing with urban regeneration will guarantee the know-how transfer to other local authorities all over Europe. New forums of participation in the towns will be installed to face the near problems of spatial development of urban areas. Best practices will foster the transferability of experiences to other communities.

- *Cooperation multimedia library in small-medium alpine towns*

Libraries occupy a central position in our society as access to knowledge. This knowledge is developing all the time. Because of this it is important to keep up with the time and to use new information systems.

In the last years the urban regeneration program in Lower-Austria has realised some multimedia based libraries.

Cooperation should be installed which can help libraries to improve services and to ensure sustainable development. This would be an instrument for innovation and sustainable prosperity growth.

- *Cooperation Youth in small-medium alpine towns*

The aim is to integrate the youth in decision making, forming of opinion and design process. The



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network should help to exchange experiences and topics. Another aim is to invent methods for a sustainable involvement of the youth in these processes. Together there should be a way to find answers for the challenge Youth in Lower-Austria.

Furthermore these activities and outcomes should be exchanged with other small-medium alpine towns in other countries. A cooperation between local authorities and associations could give new ideas, new impulse, and new points of view.





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## annexes

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## Annex A **analysis of the main Best Practices Databases related to the sustainable urban development**

### a. Selected databases

This text seeks to carry out a study of the main international databases containing Best Practices for urban sustainability. The analysis has been conceived with the purpose of identifying possible frames of reference for the AlpCity Best Practices Database.

In the course of this study we took only international, rather than national databases, into account.

We selected three international databases:

- The UN Habitat database: [Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme](#) <sup>(1)</sup>;
- The European Union [Database on Good Practices in Urban Management Sustainability](#) <sup>(2)</sup>;
- The ICLEI <sup>(3)</sup> [European Good Practices Information Service - Local Sustainability](#). <sup>(4)</sup>

The last one stopped working for Europe in 1999. It is very similar to the EU database, of which it was just a duplicate.

Thus the main reference databases are the UN Habitat and the EU ones. Both of them are important as regards the design of AlpCity possible future international relations.

Although cooperation between AlpCity and international groups, organisations and agencies is not currently specified in our short-term plan of action, we consider it useful to lay down the foundations such a cooperation might be built up on at a later stage.

Bearing in mind the AlpCity Project should bring about a network inspired by the [Regional Urban Observatory](#) (RUO) model, taking part in the UN Habitat [Global Urban Observatory](#) (GUO), the AlpCity Best Practices Database should be predisposed for insertion in the GUO's network of Urban Observatories.

An analogous collaboration could be conceived with regard to the EU database. The European Commission is currently preparing its Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment. The first

1) [www.bestpractices.org](http://www.bestpractices.org)

2) <http://europa.eu.int/comm/urban>

3) *International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives*

4) <http://www3.iclei.org.egpis/>

drafts prepared by experts in the field do not, so far, seem to take into account the issues surrounding the sustainable development of small towns in problem areas, such as most mountain regions and, in particular, the Alps.

This issue would merit particular attention if a common European strategy for sustainable urban development is to be established.

The AlpCity activities could contribute towards filling in this gap in policy, especially when we bear in mind that the Interreg Programme is among the sources the Commission draws from whilst preparing its strategy.

## **b. Databases designed for a possible international cooperation**

Moving on to a more technical analysis of the two databases, we can see how the UN Habitat model offers more interesting points for the AlpCity Best Practices Database, both with regard to its layout and from the point of view of the functions included in and complementary to the database itself. In fact, The UN Habitat AlpCity Best Practices Database is not just an archive of Best Practices. It is rather part of a [Learning Centre](#), which aims at circulating theoretical knowledge, methods, guidelines, indicators, etc., thus facilitating the transfer of lessons learned.

This integration of the Learning Centre with the AlpCity Best Practices Database is of particular interest. The AlpCity Best Practices Database, in fact, derives from a pragmatic awareness of learning processes, according to which a study of concrete examples is deemed an efficient route for acquiring practical knowledge. In general, however, teaching based on case studies can never be fully independent from instruction in theory, method and technique.

As a matter of fact, if we wanted innovation in government skills to be spread, we could not assume that such innovation derived purely from examination of practical case studies. Innovation, if it is to meet new challenges, requires an ability to represent the facts from new perspectives, a knowledge of generally accepted effective methods, an ability to create an interactive network between the organisations, on whose successful cooperation depends, etc.

The AlpCity Best Practices Database cannot function independently of theoretical and methodological teaching facilities. Consequently, the institution managing the AlpCity Best Practices Database must also serve the functions of a Learning Centre. What's more, the AlpCity Best Practices Database procedure itself requires that criteria and indicators be defined whereby the practices can be evaluated and selected. The AlpCity Best Practices Database assumes that a guideline for Best Practices has already been put into place before its activation, taking for granted that the Best Practices definition itself is, by nature, subject to continuous innovation and enrichment. Hence the Learning Centre role considered as a virtual space where knowledge for innovative Best Practices is constantly updated.

All things considered, the AlpCity Best Practices Database and the Learning Centre constitute two strongly interrelated activities, which a network of organisations carries out in order to provide incentives for and empower its own innovative capacities, both from the point of view of government and from that one of governance.

The particularly important need for incentives merits some consideration in its own right. The AlpCity Best Practices Database can in many ways be seen as a cooperative instrument for providing incentives. The fact that an organisation's practice comes to be formally recognised



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as “best” can stimulate competition, whilst the practice circulation and spread further the ends of cooperation.

UN Habitat Dubai International Award is interesting, in part, from this point of view, inasmuch as it is a tool for integrating the AlpCity Best Practices Database at an international level.

Finally, there remains one more issue, which should not be ignored, if we want tools like the AlpCity Best Practices Database and the Learning Centre to perform their respective tasks effectively.

The development of a common strategy requires an ability to combine practical skills with scientific research. On the part of the network it requires an ability to observe the various issues affecting its component parts and to define the problems it intends to act on: more precisely it requires the institution of a permanent observatory. Hence the opportunity to construct a Regional Urban Observatory (RUO) in accordance with the UN Habitat model.

The AlpCity Best Practices Database, Learning Centre and Regional Urban Observatory come together as interrelated and synergetic instruments *of governance*. One without the others would not just be weakened; it would risk having hardly any effect at all.

The layouts of the three chosen databases are presented on the following pages. These ones are preceded by a table illustrating their general contents. Finally, we provide the websites of other Best Practices Databases, which are of some interest to AlpCity.

### C. General submission form scheme

#### TITLE

#### Responsible organisation

Type of organisation and targets

#### Database management

Who manages the database? What skills do they possess? Who is in charge of selecting case studies?

#### Description

Topics, aims and features of the database

#### Topic categories

Detailed description of the issues the database focuses on

#### Database entry layout description

Detailed description of the internal layout of the database

#### Classification criteria

Criteria for classifying Best Practices (topic area, geographic area, geographic scale of reference, etc.), on the basis of which cases are selected

#### Selection criteria

What is the procedure adopted to select and define the initiatives chosen as “best”? Is there an available guideline?

#### Submission form

Is an online submission form available? Can it be filled in online?

#### Links to other initiatives/databases on the same topic

Is the database final aim at forming and/or implementing a strategy/programme? Are the Best

Practices collected in the database shared with other databases?

### Cultural background

Is the database accompanied by a research programme (e.g. re. Indicators), a learning centre or another organisation offering teaching in theory and method, or carrying out research and cooperating with others in order to develop new best practices (i.e., thematic forums, taskforces of experts, etc.)?

### Transfer

Is the database accompanied by activities and information relating to the transfer of lessons learned from best practices? Are relevant guidelines provided?

### Prize for the best practice

Will a prize be given for the Best Practice? If so, specify the type of prize (recognition, money, etc.) and the deadline.

**Website** Specify

### NOTES

Which are the most interesting elements arising from the study of this database? To what extent could these elements be transferred to other databases and, in particular, to the AlpCityLUO one? Is it possible to connect this database to the AlpCityLUO one?

## d. Legend cards of the main databases

### BEST PRACTICES DATABASE IN IMPROVING THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

#### Responsible organisation

UN Habitat

#### Database management

The Best Practices database is compiled and updated through the cooperation of various organisations and international agencies (Best Practices Partnership), coordinated by the UN Habitat; the Together Foundation, with the support of the Municipality of Dubai and the British government.

The policy-making branch of the Best Practices Partnership is the Best Practices Steering Committee, which is in charge of managing all the practical and concrete aspects of the Best Practices and Local Leadership Campaign.

The secretariat and the coordinator of the Steering Committee come from the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). Also involved is the Municipality of Dubai, main sponsor of the *Dubai International Award for Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment*. The partners are entirely independent institutions/organisations who have underwritten and adhered to the policies of the Steering Committee to the highest possible degree allowed by their own institutional commitments.

A Technical Advisory Committee is in charge of the Best Practice selection procedure. This committee reviews all the practices presented and prepares an exhaustive report, which includes:

- a) a description of the selection procedure;
- b) a list of about 100 *Best Practices*;
- c) a shortlist of about 48 of the cases presented, which is forwarded to the Best Practices Jury for the final awards selection procedure.



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The *Best Practices* Jury proceeds with the judgement of this shortlist so as to select up to twelve initiatives that merit the *Dubai International Award*.

All the cases selected from point b) onwards are included in the database.

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### Description

The database was founded with the aim at monitoring the implementation of Habitat Agenda, through the observation and documentation of the way the public sector, the private sector and civil society are collaborating to improve *governance*, to eliminate poverty, to provide housing, land and basic services, to protect the environment and to support economic development. The database is an efficient instrument for:

- analysing current trends and emerging problems;
  - connecting people and organisations involved in the implementation of Habitat Agenda;
  - *capacity building* through knowledge management tools and methods;
  - giving rise to technical cooperation between the different parties involved, answering the need for experience and skills already tried and tested;
  - developing new policies inspired by those ones already successfully implemented.
- 

### Topic categories

- Social-economic development
  - Infrastructures
  - Transport
  - Environment management
  - Local government
  - Housing
- 

### Database entry layout description

- Title
  - Country
  - Region
  - Category
  - Sub-Category
  - Town dimensions
  - Ecosystem
  - Period
  - Type
  - Summary
  - Contacts
- 

### Classification criteria

It is possible to carry out a "basic search", using key words, or an "advanced search", specifying one or more of the criteria the classification of *Best Practices* is based on, i.e.:

- Period: year when the project took place
- Category and sub-category
  - 1) **architecture and urban design**: affordable/ecological design; green building; sustainable community design; landscape design; historic preservation; eco-compatible construction materials;
  - 2) **children and youth**: 0-9 year-old; 10 year-old to adult; health and nutrition; educational and vocational training; environmental programmes with a youth focus; children's participatory planning and leadership development; recreational/cultural programming;

- legislation/advocacy; community support programmes; especially difficult circumstances (abuse, war, child labour); children exposed at risk;
- 3) **public engagement and cultural vitality**: community participation; social and cultural vitality; expression and activity; public spirit and civics; arts and cultural development; respect for cultural diversity;
  - 4) **Disaster and Emergency Measures**: reduction of vulnerability; public awareness and preparedness; contingency planning and early warning systems; response capacity; hazard and risk reduction and mitigation; life-line systems; post-disaster rehabilitation/reconstruction; risk assessment and zoning; gender specific risks and needs;
  - 5) **Economic Development**: local/metropolitan economic development; industrial development; enterprise development (formal & informal sectors); investment development; human capital formation and entrepreneurship; training; cooperation opportunities; micro-credit; equal access to economic resources;
  - 6) **Environmental Management**: pollution reduction; urban greening; environmentally sound technologies; environmental remedies; environmental health; integrated assessment; monitoring and control; and "green" accounting; ecological sustainability; incentives for sound management; resource management; eco-tourism; indicators of sustainability;
  - 7) **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion**: gender roles and responsibilities; gender specific needs; women empowerment; access to resources; control of resources; legislation; removing barriers to equity; ethnicity; social integration; women's safety;
  - 8) **Housing**: affordable housing; homelessness; access to housing finance; slum and settlement upgrading and improvement; construction industry; building materials and construction technology; equal access to housing resources and ownership; rental housing; by-laws and standards;
  - 9) **Housing and Human Rights**: Implementation of the right to adequate housing; prevention of forced eviction; security of tenure; secure tenancy; provision of public infrastructure for adequate housing; housing accessibility; housing habitability and cultural adequacy; housing affordability; equal rights to ownership and inheritance (by women);
  - 10) **Infrastructure, Communications, Transport**: energy use; conservation and production; transport and mobility; communication and media; potable water provision; waste-management and treatment; drainage and sanitation; infrastructure technology; eco-sanitation; equal access to infrastructure (especially by women);
  - 11) **Land Use Management**: land use planning, geographical information systems, development incentives, open space conservation, land development, urban/suburban renewal, estate management, equal rights to ownership and inheritance;
  - 12) **HIV-AIDS**: municipal strategic plans for HIV-AIDS, public/private/community partnerships, information initiatives (local campaigns); media, legal/policy reforms;
  - 13) **Older people**: safe/accessible dwelling design; participation; health; employment and financial security; multi-generational activities; transport;
  - 14) **Poverty Reduction**: income generation; job creation; vocational training; access to credit; equal access to jobs; credit and training;
  - 15) **Production and Consumption Patterns**: waste reuse and recycling; energy efficiency; clean energy production; water use and consumption; resource conservation; consumer awareness; producer responsibility; production/consumption cycles;
  - 16) **Resilient Communities**: natural disasters; economic shocks; health crises; conflict and



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- terrorism; strategic partnerships;
- 17) **Social Services**: education, recreation, health and wellness; public safety; crime reduction and prevention; justice system reform; equal access to social services; vulnerable groups including women;
  - 18) **Technical and International Cooperation**: Multilateral/bilateral cooperation and assistance; city-to-city cooperation; networking; peer to peer exchanges and learning; training and continuous education; leadership development;
  - 19) **Technology, Tools and Methods**: software and hardware; management tools and systems; technology transfer; research and development; planning tools and techniques; networking; information and communications technology and systems; appropriate technologies; training and capacity building;
  - 20) **Urban and Regional Planning**: Local Agenda 21; capital investment programming; budgeting; community-based planning; urban renewal; conflict management and mediation; consultation process; cultural heritage conservation planning; regional planning; regional resource planning; metro/urban-wide planning; rules and regulations; strategic planning;
  - 21) **Urban Governance**: urban management and administration; partnership with civil society; legislation; public policy; participatory budgeting and decision-making; human resources and leadership development; decentralization; resource mobilization; institutional reform; management and information systems; visioning; transparency and accountability; monitoring; evaluation and auditing; metro/urban-wide government; women in leadership roles; public-private partnerships;
  - 22) **Use of Information in Decision Making**: indicators and statistics; mapping (Global Information Systems); management (Management Information Systems); Use of Information and Communication Technology; use of media and awareness-building; improved access and participation; policy making; research; gender disaggregated data and analysis;
  - 23) **Water and Sanitation**: water supply and demand management; services for the urban poor; low-cost sanitation; eco-sanitation; provision for basic services by micro-enterprises; public/private/community partnerships.
- Title
  - Language
  - Region
  - Country
  - Activity level regional; national; global; provincial; state; metropolitan; urban; neighbourhood; village;
  - Town population of the town: 0-50,000; 50,001-100,000; 100,001-250,000; 250,001-500,000; 500,001-1,000,000; 1,000,001-5,000,000; 5,000,001-10,000,000;
  - Ecosystem: arid/semi-arid; coastal; continental; upland; island; mountain; river basin; tropical/sub-tropical;
  - BP Type: prize winner; Best Practice; Good Practice; under review; not qualified; future practice.

### Selection criteria

#### Basic Criteria

- Impact: a Best Practice should demonstrate a positive and tangible impact on improving the living environment of people, particularly of the poor and disadvantaged.



- Partnership: a Best Practice should be based on a partnership between at least two of the following parties: government organizations or agencies, national Habitat Committees or Focal Points; multilateral agencies (United Nations Agencies, World Bank, etc.); cities, local authorities or their associations; non-governmental organizations (NGOs); community-based organizations (CBOs); private sector; research and academic institutions; media; public or private foundations; individuals chosen for the *Dubai International Award*.
- Sustainability: Best Practices must result in changes in at least one of the following categories: i) Legislation, regulatory frameworks, by-laws or standards formally recognising the issues and problems that have been addressed; ii) Social policies and/or sectorial strategies at a (sub) national level that have a potential for replication elsewhere; iii) institutional frameworks and decision-making processes that assign clear roles and responsibilities to various levels and groups of actors, such as central and local governmental organisations and community-based organisations; iv) Efficient, transparent and accountable management systems that make more effective use of human, technical, financial and natural resources.

#### **Additional Criteria**

- leadership and community empowerment
- gender equality and social inclusion
- innovation within a local context and transferability

#### **Submission form**

- Name of initiative
- City
- Country
- Region
- Has this initiative been submitted before? If yes, when, and with what title?
- Address
- Contact number
- Type of organisation: central government; local authority; state-controlled; private sector; non-governmental organisation; community-based organisation; international agency; foundation; professional association; academic/research; media; philanthropic association; technical experts/consultants; other
- The nominating organisation (only if different from the above mentioned)
- Partners (if there is more than one, please repeat the following details for each one): name of the organisation; address; contact information; type of organisation (as above); type of support provided (financial, technical, political, administrative, etc.)
- Financial profile: provide an overview of the Best Practice annual budget of the 3-5 year period leading up to its submission, indicating the sources and general percentages of contributions from each partner
- Category: select no more than three topics from the list provided above, describing the focus of their work. They should then select, as appropriate, the sub-categories from those themes that best describe the Best Practice
- Level of activity (as above)
- Eco-system (as above)
- Summary: In no more than 300 words, applicants should summarise the purpose and achievements of the initiative



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- Key dates: Provide no more than five dates and describe in no more than five or six words, their significance
- Description of how the work was carried out: In 2000 words or less describe the situation before the initiative began, the establishment of priorities, the formulation of objectives and strategies, the mobilisation of resources, the process, the results achieved, the sustainability, the lessons learned and the transferability.

### Links to other initiatives/databases on the same topic

The UN Habitat database is the main point of reference for all the other databases set up by international agencies. UN Habitat database promotes exchange and interconnectedness between itself and these other agencies. Particularly notable is the collaboration between this database and the *ICLEI Information Clearing House*, which includes programmes for the dissemination of information and the spread of good practices.

### Cultural background

The database is part of the broader *Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme*, which was launched by UN Habitat in 1997 with the aim at monitoring the level of implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the state of cities around the world. This programme promotes the creation of a global network among government agencies, local authorities and their associations, and professional and academic institutions, which would serve to identify and exchange successful solutions to issues arising from sustainable development.

This programme consists in

- a [Learning Centre](#), dedicated to improving public policy, management and governance through the sharing, exchange and transfer of knowledge and skills for a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable development. It contains case study material, training manuals and methods, and transfer guides for use by decision-makers, public and community leaders, city managers, researchers, human resource development experts and media;
- a section containing [Best Practices Briefs](#), which contains summaries of Best Practices organized under the following topic headings: transport and mobility; sustainable production and consumption; information; monitoring and evaluation; urban environmental planning and management; housing; gender and social inclusion; sustainable urban development; partnerships between government and civil society, between government and local authorities, or between public and private sectors; recycling and waste management; promotion of social dialogue; online publication of materials and use of ICT; inclusive decision-making processes and initiatives selected from Eastern Europe;
- a section entitled [What's New](#), which contains information and articles with regard to all events pertinent to the BPL (seminars, workshops, conferences, etc.);
- a [Partners](#) section, in which the Best Practices Partner Network, the Best Practices Steering Committee, and the different types of partner (full partners, associate partners and affiliates) are described;
- an [Intranet](#), to facilitate information exchange between subscribers;
- a [Laureate Forum](#), mainly concerned with "Transferring Experience" as part of "Awareness Building" (via the production of promotional material, reports circulated through the media, newspaper articles and newsletters) and with "Networking (reinforcing local, regional and national networks, building a homepage, video conferences, biennial meetings);
- an [e-NEWSLETTER](#), providing online information;
- a section on [Good Urban Policies and Legislation](#): between 1999 and 2001 the Commission

on Human Settlements decided to expand the documentation in the database to include examples of good policies or legislation, so as to bring about a translation of Best Practices into the policy sphere.

Hence, this section contains: examples of sustainable and socially inclusive policies and legislation and examples of national and local A21 action plans which were inclusive in both their planning and their implementation, improved quality of life, promoted the decentralisation of authority and resources, were based on partnership and were sustainable.

### Transfer

The *Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme* provides a set of *Guidelines for Transferring Effective Practices*, entirely dedicated to the transfer of lessons learned.

### Prize for the best practice

The *Dubai International Award for Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment* (DIABP), a biennial environmental prize set up in 1995 by the Municipality of Dubai in the Arab Emirates, will be awarded to the best applicant. This award aims at promoting recognition and increasing awareness of sustainable results attained in improving the living environment.

In 2006, the prize will be 480,000 US dollars, which will be divided up as follows:

- 360,000 US dollars to the twelve *Best Practices* selected;
- 120,000 US dollars for administrative costs including travelling and accommodation expenses for a maximum of two delegates selected for each winning practice;
- each winner also receives a trophy and a commemorative certificate.

The selection procedure is described in the "Database Management" section above. All the chosen cases are inserted in the database.

**Website** [www.bestpractices.org](http://www.bestpractices.org)

### NOTES

This is the most complete and best organised of the databases examined. Of particular interest is the *Learning Centre*, which is concerned with the dissemination of theoretical knowledge, methods, guidelines, indicators, etc. It's role is fundamental in defining a strategy, which takes into account the lessons learned from the Best Practices and translates this into policies which can be transferred into other contexts. On the basis of these considerations, the UN Habitat database is the main point of reference in the construction of the AlpCity *Best Practices Database*, and especially with a view to the foundation of a RUO.

## DATABASE ON GOOD PRACTICES IN URBAN MANAGEMENT SUSTAINABILITY

### Responsible organisation

European Union

### Database management

Not available

### Description

The database was established in order to promote the exchange of experiences pertaining to sustainable urban management, by means of the spread of good practices and successful policies.

The database concentrates on:



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- Integrated approaches linking environmental, economic, social and institutional issues;
- Multi-purpose measures solving more than one problem at a time;
- Sectorial action located within a strategic framework.

The main language of the database is English. Searches can be made in most of the European Union languages, and case submissions are encouraged in all national languages.

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### Topic categories

- Urban environment and quality of life
  - Governance and Local Agenda 21 processes
  - Integrated urban management
  - Job creation and urban regeneration
  - Social inclusion and equality
  - Urban and regional development
- 

### Database entry layout description

The first page of the entry gives, in a highly condensed version, the various data relating to the classification criteria (please see below); from this page users can access a second, more detailed entry, containing:

- abstract;
  - project status; starting and end date; financial support and cost;
  - project description: context, strategies, objectives, management, partnership, actions (with particular reference to innovative aspects); project impacts; evaluation; lessons learned;
  - contacts.
- 

### Classification criteria

- Project title
  - Type of area: business/commercial; capital city; coastal town; historic town; industrial; inner city; port; residential; rural; tourist
  - Type of funding agency: associations/networks; research sector; environmental agency; European Commission; international or foreign funding agency; local government; NGO; national/federal government; private sector; regional/provincial government
  - Name of city
  - Inhabitants: over 1,000,000, 1,000,000-99,999, 99,999-20,000, less than 20,000
  - Country
  - Topic area
- 

### Selection criteria

Not available

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### Submission form

- Title
- Abstract (max. 2,000 words)
- Type of area (as above)
- Type of funding agency (as above)
- Name of city
- Number of inhabitants
- Topic area (as above)
- Starting date of the project
- Language
- Comment

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### Links to other initiatives/databases on the same topic

The development of the *Database on Good Practice in Urban Management and Sustainability* is one of a series of actions being taken by the European Commission following the publication of the Communication "Towards an Urban Agenda in the European Union" in May 1997 and set out in the document "Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union - A Framework for Action" in 1999.

The database is being developed within the framework of an Integrated Commission Database Network incorporating all relevant European Commission databases and establishing links to related databases set up by other institutions (in particular with the ICLEI one), i.e.:

- [Territorial Employment Pacts](http://europa.eu.int/comm/pacts), for promoting and creating jobs at a local and regional level, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/pacts>;
- [European Local Transport Information Service \(ELTIS\)](http://www.eltis.org), which provides information on means of transport and relevant schemes and programmes implemented in European regions and cities, [www.eltis.org](http://www.eltis.org);
- [Urban Pilot Projects - Article to European Regional Development Fund](http://www.inforegio.org/urban/upp), which promotes innovation in policies for urban development, urban regeneration and social and economic cohesion, [www.inforegio.org/urban/upp](http://www.inforegio.org/urban/upp);
- [Local and Regional Energy Management Online](http://www.iclei.org/europe/larem), which transfers know-how between local and regional energy management agencies, [www.iclei.org/europe/larem](http://www.iclei.org/europe/larem);
- [SURBAN - the Database on Sustainable Development in Europe](http://www.eaue.de/winuwd/default.htm), which offers direct access to information on European cases of good practices for urban development, [www.eaue.de/winuwd/default.htm](http://www.eaue.de/winuwd/default.htm).

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### Cultural background

In parallel to the collection and analysis of Best Practices, the database organises a library containing a series of documents published by the Commission and other European institutions on the theme of sustainable urban development.

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### Transfer

The database provides neither specific indications nor guidelines on how lessons learned from best practices are to be transferred. Nonetheless, the application form does contain a section dedicated to Lessons Learned, to be filled in by the author of the project presented. This section does not appear on the final web page.

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### Prize for the best practice

Not available

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**Website** <http://europa.eu.int/comm/urban/>

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### NOTES

Since this database constitutes an important tool for the construction and implementation of a European Common Strategy for the urban environment, we deem it necessary to set up a link between this database and the AlpCity one, especially with a view to the establishment of a RUO and to a collaboration with the EU in the construction of the Thematic Strategy on Urban Environment. In particular, it would be interesting if the projects selected as best practices by AlpCity were included in the EU database, so as to bolster the European Strategy, which so far has not concerned itself with policies in small alpine towns.



EUROPEAN GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION SERVICE - LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY

**Responsible organisation**

ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives), EURONET (Environment Planning and Development), DGXI.

**Database management**

Not available

**Description**

This database was founded in 1996, with the aim at disseminating successful programmes for urban sustainability carried out in Europe by cities, rural towns, associations, national and regional government organisations, research and training institutes and the European Commission. The collection of case studies ceased in 1999.

**Topic categories**

- Local Agenda 21
- Territorial planning and urban development
- Building
- Nature and open spaces
- Transport
- Energy
- Climate protection
- Air quality
- Waste
- Water
- Land
- Noise
- Health
- Economy
- Social equality

**Database entry layout description**

- Title
- Abstract
- Policy objectives
- Project status
- Project background
- Implementation:
  - Strategy
  - Actions
  - Partners
- Analysis:
  - Results
  - Obstacles and conflicts
  - Lessons learned
- Contacts
- Bibliography

### Classification criteria

- Topic area (see above)
- Management Resources (internal; local/environmental policies; monitoring; economic resources; environmental education; collaboration and partnership)
- Country
- Type and dimension of local authority: metropolitan area: over 1 million inhabitants; town: 1 million-100,000 inhabitants small town: 100,000-20,000 inhabitants; other: less than 20,000 inhabitants
- Functional characteristics of area: residential, historical centre, industrial, port, capital city, town centre, rural, tourist, village
- Institutional characteristics of main participants: local, regional, national, supra-national government; NGO; community based group; public service; private individual; university/research institute; school
- Key words

### Selection criteria

*NB: Selection criteria do not refer to Best Practices, but to case studies presented for the prize.*

- Community participation
- Multi-sectorial partnership
- System approach
- Working within ecological standards
- Long-term planning
- Environmental benefits
- Social and economic benefits
- Mobilisation of community resources
- Scale of impact

### Submission form

*NB: here we cite the Application Form for project submissions for the Local Initiative Award.*

- Project title
- Name and details of local government body
- Name and details of referent
- General information on local government body: population, area and budget managed
- Information on project: start and end date; total budget; how was it funded? Who was the staff (including volunteers)?
- Prize category
- Specify the types of partner who have collaborated in this project with the local government body: women; young people; NGOs; community-based organisations; businesses; associations; research institutes; professional associations; religious organisations; marginal groups; foundations; media; sub-national, national or international governmental organisations
- Specify the type of support lent by each partner: financial; practical; technical; administrative; political; other
- Name and details of each partner
- Project Description:
  - Reasons behind the launch of the project: what was the situation prior to the project? Which partners took the lead initially? Why was the project launched?



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- Goals: in one or two sentences, explain the long and short-term aims of the project;
- Objectives: social, economic, environmental or other;
- Procedures employed: how was the issue of community participation dealt with? In what ways did the partners cooperate? What kinds of community resources were mobilised during the project?
- Project implementation: describe the main activities carried out including, if possible, the relative dates;
- Results achieved: How did the project effect local social, economic or environmental conditions? Did the project change local institutions or normative structures? Did changes take place in the community's working methods? Is it possible to provide quantitative data on the results achieved?
- Importance of the project: What worked? Why? What didn't work? Why? What would you do differently if you had to start the project again?
- Reports, articles and/or publications available on the project: Provide a list of publications produced as part of.

### Links to other initiatives/databases on the same topic

In 1993 the European Commission, together with the Expert Group on the Urban Environment launched the *Sustainable Cities Project*, with the following objectives:

- promoting new ideas on sustainability in European urban settings;
- fostering a wide exchange of experience;
- disseminating good practices on sustainability at the urban level;
- formulating recommendations for the EU institutions, national, regional and local authorities to assist the implementation of the Community's Fifth Environmental Action Programme.

The development of a new political approach to urban sustainability is among the main objectives of the *European Sustainable Cities Project*, which seeks to pass from the outlining of policies to their practical implementation, through the dissemination of information in such a way as to further the development of new management skills in sustainable urban development.

The *European Good Practice Information System - Local Sustainability* (since October, 1996) grew from the European Academy of the Urban Environment's pilot scheme which sought to develop a Good Practice Guide in 1995. The Information System was built up following the second European conference on *Sustainable Cities and Towns* in Lisbon, with the aim at spreading important examples of urban sustainability initiatives via Internet.

This database is consequently a joint effort between the EU and the ICLEI, the latter intending to build up the European branch of the broader *Information Clearinghouse Network* programme. The scheme also fits in with the *UN Habitat Best Practices Initiative*.

### Cultural background

The database is accompanied by a Document Library, which contains European and international documents and reports on matters pertinent to local sustainability.

The library is part of ICLEI's broader *Information Clearinghouse* for local environmental initiatives. This institution consists in:

- a [Member's Lounge](#), only accessible for members, and where all the ICLEI publications, the complete versions of the case studies and other documents are available;
- a section dedicated to publications and resources;
- the [Best Practices Information Services](#), i.e.
  - the [Thematic Centre on Local Government Initiatives for Sustainable Development and](#)



*Urban Environment*, which was established through a partnership between UN Habitat and ICLEI, born at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul in 1996. The Thematic Centre is responsible for the following activities:

1. *Good Practices Clearing House*: collecting and disseminating information on good practices in the area of local government initiatives for sustainable development and the urban environment, including:
  - Worldwide Case studies and project summaries worldwide
  - Case-studies in Latin America: *Capacidad para la Sostenibilidad*
  - European case studies: *Local Sustainability, the European Good Practice Information Service*
  - European case studies: *Best Practices, Vienna Hub*: the City of Vienna decided to play an active role in the UN Habitat Best Practices Programme, and to make the resources for urban environmental technologies available, both for Central and Eastern Europe and worldwide, by establishing a Best Practices centre in the city.
2. *Dialogue, Exchange, and Training*: promoting the transfer of experience, expertise and know-how through various means including training, education, management development, policy dialogue and improvement
  - International Training Centre (ITC)
  - Calendar of Upcoming Events
- *Local Government Case Studies*:
  - *Local Government Action on Water, Sanitation, and Human Settlements Case Summaries, 2004*
  - ICLEI Case Studies: Detailed descriptions of local "best practices," highlighting key local urban management concepts (short descriptions & links to order).
  - ICLEI *Members in Action 2000-2002* - as part of ICLEI's triennial report
  - ICLEI *Members in Action 1998-1999* (case studies 1998-1999)
  - ICLEI *Members in Action 1996-1997* (case studies 1996-97)
  - ICLEI Project Summaries Brief descriptions of local initiatives in communities worldwide.
  - *Local Sustainability The European Good Practice Information Service* (the database in question)
  - *Capacidad para la Sostenibilidad - Sistema de Información Latinoamericano sobre Experiencias Municipales Exitosas*, which serves a function similar to that of the European Good Practices Information Service for Latin American countries
- Initiatives, the ICLEI Newsletter, is published annually and reports on current organizational activities and plans, presenting articles on strategic issues facing the international local government community.
- The electronic newsletter, ICLEI e-News, offers brief updates of ongoing ICLEI programme and campaign activities, conferences, partnerships and Member activities
- Local Environmental Journal: ICLEI has established a formal relationship with Local Environment, an international refereed journal focusing on local environmental and sustainability policy.
- Calendar of Events: A list of upcoming events in chronological order
- Awards and Contests
  - Local Initiatives Awards: the only one of the Best Practices awards listed founded by the ICLEI
  - Dubai International Award for Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

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- Holcim Awards
  - World Habitat Awards 2001 - Call for Entries
  - Equator Initiative Awards: Call for Nominations
  - Job Database: Environmental job bank
- 

### Transfer

The database provides neither specific indications nor guidelines on how lessons learned from best practices are to be transferred. Nonetheless, the application form does contain a section dedicated to Lessons Learned, to be filled in by the author of the project presented. This section does not appear on the final web page.

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### Prize for the best practice

*Local Initiatives Awards* give international recognition for outstanding environmental and sustainability performance by local governments working in cooperation with community partners.

#### Awards Categories

- Governance for Sustainable Development
- Land Resources Management.
- Freshwater Management
- Atmospheric Protection
- Waste Management

**NOTE:** The last such award was given in 2000, even though the website refers to a further award in 2003.

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**Website** <http://www3.iclei.org/egpis/>

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### NOTES

The organisational model of this database recalls the one adopted by the EU database. The database is rendered somewhat obscure by the fact that the project selection criteria, rather than being provided on the project submissions form, are only outlined in the site dedicated to the *Local Initiatives Award*.

There is, furthermore, a certain degree of terminological confusion between the initiatives referred to as "Case Studies" and those identified as true "Best Practices" although, in practice, both of them seem coinciding. The European database was effectively shut down in 1999. The *Information Clearinghouse*, on the other and, remains thoroughly active on a global scale. The most recent case studies date back to the period 2000/2002.

## e. Websites

All of the websites listed below contain Best Practices Databases and are pertinent to the issues faced by AlpCity.

### a. Main Reference Sites

- UNCHS: [www.bestpractices.org](http://www.bestpractices.org)
- EU: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/urban/>
- ICLEI: <http://www3.iclei.org/egpis/>

### b. Secondary Sites

- [www.eaue.de.winuwd/default.htm](http://www.eaue.de.winuwd/default.htm), SURBAN - the database on sustainable urban

development in Europe, which offers direct access to information on European Best Practices for urban development;

- [www.inforegio.org/urban/upp](http://www.inforegio.org/urban/upp), Urban Pilot Projects - Article 10 European Regional Development Fund, promoting innovation in urban regeneration policies and social and economical cohesion;
- [www.unesco.org/most/bphome.htm](http://www.unesco.org/most/bphome.htm), MOST Clearing House Best Practices: the website of the UNESCO MOST (Management of Social Transformations) Programme, which offers up-to-date information on the programme's projects, publications and activities, including the Best Practices database itself, whose topics are: elimination of poverty, social inclusion, gender equality, housing, economic development, community participation and urban governance, and crime prevention;
- [www.bestpractices.at/main.php?page=hub/overview&lang=english](http://www.bestpractices.at/main.php?page=hub/overview&lang=english), the Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme of UN HABITAT and the City of Vienna. The Best Practices Hub website was set up by the City of Vienna in 1999 as part of the UN Habitat Best Practices Programme. The Programme is above all concerned with urban environmental technologies in central-western Europe. It collects programmes, projects and potential best practices, and disseminates experiences and lessons learned;
- <http://leonardo.cec.eu.int/bp>, Leonardo da Vinci Good Practices: the Community Vocational Training Action Programme database on the Application and Dissemination of Innovation - a Unit of the EU;
- [http://ewindows.eu.org/LocalAuthorities/urban\\_good\\_practices/URL1090889732](http://ewindows.eu.org/LocalAuthorities/urban_good_practices/URL1090889732), Eurowindows Environmental Information for Business and Local Authorities - Case Studies & Best Practices - UNEP Net;
- [www.mejorespracticas.org](http://www.mejorespracticas.org), Foro Ibero-Americano y del Caribe Sobre Mejores Practicas. This website was set up with the approval of the Spanish government to govern the Latin American and Caribbean section of UN Habitat Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme.

## Annex B **the AlpCity Best Practices Database**

### **a. Aim and organisation of the Best Practices Database**

The specific task of AlpCity Best Practices Database is furthering the circulation of innovative and effective practices to solve problems relating to a common strategy working out for sustainable development of small alpine towns. The Best Practices Database aims at:

- defining successful, exemplary and transferable procedures;
- publishing them so that other players could be acquainted with them and adopt them in their turn, contributing to their improvement.

The AlpCity Best Practices Database is divided up into topic areas and fields of action, which frame the common strategy.

In the Best Practices Database, each Best Practice is documented in an “Abstract Submission Form” and a “Non Technical Best Practices Report”, which are available in Annex B1 and B3 respectively.

### **b. How a Best Practice is selected**

There are two different paths to be included in the AlpCity Best Practices Database:

- through the research, which, as we mentioned in the previous paragraph, AlpCity carries out on individual case-studies falling into the topic areas and the fields of action defined by the common strategy;
- upon the proposal of single bodies belonging to the AlpCity network or of external organisations.

In this second case the interested organisations present their proposal to an apposite commission of experts, who are in charge of the evaluation process for the admission to the database. The evaluation is based on the criteria outlined in the present *Guide*.

The admission process is characterised by the following stages:

- submission of the case in question by the interested organisations or individuals, who should send off the Abstract Submission Form;
- pre-selection assessment advanced by the commission of experts;
- in case of positive pre-selection evaluation, the interested organisations or individuals should submit a Non Technical Best Practices Report to the commission as indicated in Annex B3;
- a final assessment is expressed by the commission, on the basis of the documentation contained in the Non Technical Best Practices Report;

- in case of positive final judgement, all the data will be inserted into the Best Practices Database.

## C. How a Best Practice is documented

As we saw above, the documentation describing a Best Practice in the AlpCity Best Practices Database consists in an Abstract Submission Form and a Non Technical Best Practices Report. The first one constitutes a very brief initial presentation of the Best Practice; the second one should provide with more analytic information, focusing above all on the transfer of lessons learned thanks to that Best Practice.

As you will see in Annex B1 and B3, both the Abstract Submission Form and the Non Technical Best Practices Report require the same list of topics to be treated, whose definition was inspired by the Submission Guide and Reporting Format for the Year 2006 of UN Habitat Dubai International award for Best Practices.

Topics are listed in succession:

- **situation before the initiative began:**  
brief description of the situation before the initiative, including major issues, trends and conditions in the area. Specification of the most affected social groups;
- **establishment of priorities:**  
list of the priorities of the initiative, the way they were established and actors involved, with particular attention to those working to promote the initiative;
- **formulation of objectives and strategies:**  
a summary of the main objectives and of the possible alternative lines of action taken into consideration, the way they were established, and the actors mainly involved;
- **mobilisation of resources:**  
description of the way financial, technical and human resources were mobilised and their sources. Specification of key actors (including women), organisations or institutions that were/are responsible and accountable for managing resources;
- **implementation process:**  
description of the problems faced in implementing the initiative, the way they revealed themselves and the remaining problems that remain to be solved. Description of which kind of people, communities, organisations and institutions took part in the initiative. Description of which of them participated in decision making processes and what inputs were provided with regard to the main problems. A summary of tools, methods, and/or benchmarks that were implemented for assessing performance and their users;
- **results achieved:**  
description of the extent the objectives listed above were accomplished, the way the initiative impact was quantitatively and qualitatively measured, and who benefited from them. Description of the effect the initiative has resulted in, for example:
  - actual improvement achieved in people's living conditions, including all the social groups and particularly the most disadvantaged ones;
  - better co-ordination and integration among various actors, organisations or institutions;



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- changes in local policies and strategies about social, economic and environmental issues;
  - improved institutional capacity;
  - changes of local decision-making, including the institutionalisation of partnerships;
  - recognising and addressing specific constraints and opportunities;
  - changes in use and allocation of human, technical and financial resources;
  - changes in people's attitudes and behaviours, also related to role definition of different social groups and weaker classes.
- **sustainability:**  
description of the way the integration of the social, economic, environmental and cultural elements of sustainability was achieved, particularly with regards to:
    - **financial aspects:** use and multiplier effect of financial resources, including cost recovery;
    - **social and economic aspects:** gender equity, equality and social inclusion, economic and social mobility;
    - **cultural aspects:** respect for and consideration of attitudes, behaviour patterns and heritage;
    - **environmental aspects:** reduced dependence on non-renewable resources (air, water, land, energy, etc.), and changed production and consumption patterns and technology;
  - **lessons learned:**  
description of the most important lessons learned and how they have been or are being incorporated in that initiative and/or in other initiatives. For each lesson learned, description of the critical points, particular attention should be paid to, in order to guarantee success; minimum requisites and what could be added to improve the final results;
  - **transferability:**  
description of the means which can be used to spread/transfer knowledge, skills and experience acquired through the Best Practice. Description of the way the initiative benefited from experiences or skills of other initiatives. Description of the way the initiative has been or is being replicated/adapted elsewhere, where and by whom. Description of what could be differently done, what could be avoided to help others in re-applying the scheme;
  - **political/normative support:**  
specification of the case the initiative has had political support or the prop of public legislation at a local, regional or national level, or the case political, legal or normative change has taken place as a result of the project.

We might yet add here that experience has taught us that transfer takes place through a bilateral and equal relationship between that Best Practice expert responsible for transfer and the potential user seeking to learn about it (CityNet, UNDP, UN Habitat, 1998). It is therefore very important to select a person in charge of Best Practices transferability whose name will be entered on the network's roster of consultants responsible for the transfer of Best Practices.

The AlpCity network potential for transfer will depend on its access to a qualified and accessible network of consultants willing to manage the transfer process on the basis of a bilateral relationship between equals.

## Annex B1

# Abstract submission form for the AlpCity Best Practices Database



**AlpCity**  
**INTERREG III B Alpine Space Programme**  
*Abstract Submission form for the  
Best Practices Database*



### 1. TITLE OF PROJECT/INITIATIVE

1a. Title

1b. City

1c. Region

1d. Country

### 2. PROMOTER

2a. Name and type of organisation

2b. Address

2c. Telephone

2d. Fax

2e. E-mail

### 3. PARTNERS

3a. Name and type of organisation

3b. Address

3c. Telephone

3d. Fax

3e. E-mail

3f. Type of support offered (technical, financial, political, administrative, etc.)

### 4. TOPIC AREA, FIELD OF ACTION AND PROPOSED ACTIVITY OF PROJECT (100 words)

*Brief description of the project, specifying the field of action and the topic area of the Common Strategy into which it will fit.*

- Economic development
- Services/quality of life
- Urban environment
- Cooperation among towns



## 5. CURRENT STATE OF THE INITIATIVE

- 5a. Launch date
- In progress
  - Finished

## 6. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROJECT

6a. Situation before the initiative began (100 words)

Briefly describe the situation before the initiative including major issues, trends and conditions in the area. Please specify which social groups were most affected, including women, men and youth e.g. ethnic minority

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6b. Establishment of Priorities (100 words)

List the priorities of the initiative, how they were established and involving whom. Please specify leadership specific roles where appropriate

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6c. Formulation of Objectives and Strategies (200 words)

Provide a summary of the main objectives and the alternative strategies of the initiative, how they were established and by whom, and which was the solution adopted. Define the main actors in the process and leadership specific roles.

---

6d. Mobilisation of Resources (200 words)

Describe how financial, technical and human resources were mobilised and where they came from. Specify key actors, organisations or institutions that were/are responsible and accountable for managing the resources.

---

6e. Process (400 words)

Describe the main steps of project implementation, the problems faced in implementing the initiative, how were they overcome and the problems that remain to be solved. Describe also how people, communities, organisations and institutions participated in the initiative.

---

6f. Outputs and Results Achieved (200 words)

Describe to what extent the objectives listed above were realised, in terms of

Output: the product of the programme's activity;

Results: the immediate advantages of the programme for the direct beneficiaries. An advantage is immediate if it appears while the beneficiary is directly in contact with the programme.

---

6g. Impacts (100 words)

Describe the consequences of the programme, which appear or which last into the medium-long term, both for the direct beneficiaries and for people or organisations that are not direct beneficiaries.

Describe how the initiative has resulted in, for example:

- Actual improvement achieved in people's living conditions including women and children;
- Better co-ordination and integration between various actors, organisations or institutions;
- Changes in local, national or regional social, economic and environmental policies and



strategies;

- Improved institutional capacity at the national, sub-national or local levels;
- Changes to local or national decision-making, including the institutionalisation of partnerships;
- Recognising and addressing specific opportunities and constraints;
- Changes in the use and allocation of human, technical and financial resources at the local/national level;
- Changes in people's attitudes, behaviour and in the respective roles of women and men.

#### 6h. Sustainability (300 words)

Describe how the integration of the social, economic, environmental and cultural elements of sustainability was achieved, particularly with regards to:

**6h1. Financial** The use and leveraging of resources, including cost recovery, indicating how loans, if any, are being paid back and their terms and conditions.

**6h2. Social and Economic** Gender equity, equality and social inclusion, economic and social mobility.

**6h3. cultural** Respect for and consideration of attitudes, behaviour patterns and heritage.

**6h4. Environmental** Reducing dependence on non-renewable resources (air, water, land, energy, etc.), and changing production and consumption patterns and technology.

### 7. INSTRUCTIONS FOR TRANSFER

#### 7a. Lessons Learned (300 words)

Describe the three or four most important lessons learned and how these lessons have been or are being incorporated in your initiative and/or other initiatives. For each lesson learned, specify obstacles to implementation and what can be done to overcome them.

#### 7b. Transferability (400 words)

Provide examples and/or means used for sharing/transferring knowledge, expertise and experience. Describe how your initiative has benefited from the experience or expertise of other practices. Describe how your initiative has been or is being replicated/adapted elsewhere, where and by whom? Describe what you would do differently or avoid doing if you were to help others in replicating your experience.

### 8. TRANSFERABILITY CONSULTANT

8a. Name

8b. Surname

8c. Telephone

8d. Fax

8e. E-mail



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### 9. PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR FILLING IN

9a.	Name	_____
9b.	Surname	_____
9c.	Telephone	_____
9d.	Fax	_____
9e.	E-mail	_____

### Principles of evaluation

The information contained in the Submission Form is divided into two categories:

- a **descriptive one**: it provides useful information to be acquainted with the submitted practice, but it can't be used as principle of evaluation;
- an **evaluation one**: apart from providing useful information to be acquainted with the submitted practice it is also valuable to assess whether it is a Best Practice and which standard it can reach. This is the information the principles of Best Practices evaluation are made up.

The principles of evaluation can be divided into two categories:

- criteria related to the **project features**;
- criteria related to the **transfer of lessons learned**.

In its turn each criterion segments in sub-criteria or indicators of evaluation: the assessment is expressed on the basis of these indicators.

Some of the indicated sub-criteria can be unimportant for the submitted practice. For example, some practices could be irrelevant on environmental aspects so that criteria related to environmental sustainability won't be considered.

It isn't necessary that a practice should result excellent according to all the criteria and sub-criteria in order to become a best one. So it is possible to have practices, which can be judged as best just referring to few criteria or sub-criteria they excel according to. Moreover they can become producers of lessons learned, worthy to be transferred.

It is important to remember that it should be possible to extract a "lesson learned" from each Best Practice, which constitutes the "know how", the real object of the transfer.

Obviously there is a Best Practice basic requirement: it must be an innovative and successful practice; its end must be attained by adopting, in contrast with the traditional practices, innovative elements, which revealed to be pivotal for the success of the action.

### CHECKLIST

1. Project title (*descriptive information*)

2. Promoter (*descriptive information*)

3. Partners (*descriptive information*)

4. Topic area, field of action and proposed activity of project (*descriptive information*)



## 5. Current state of the initiative (*descriptive information*)

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- In progress/finished  
Also ongoing practices could be qualified as Best Practices as long as the following conditions are respected:
  - The period of realization should be significantly long, more than three years;
  - The practices isn't near its conclusion;
  - There are the first results related to concluded stages and they are suitable to depict a Best Practice;
  - The persons in charge of the practice provide interested people with a six-month updating report and with information about their ongoing experience.

Ongoing Best Practices are collocated in a database appropriate section and they are specifically publicized, up to their conclusion, so the whole process of implementation can be followed.

---

## 6. Characteristics of the Project (information of evaluation)

### • 6.a. Situation before the initiative began

The more the faced problems are relevant and suitable to be transferred to other contexts and among social groups of interest where there are weak subjects, the more the submitted practice results appraisable.

- Faced problems
  - Economical/ social/ environmental importance: high, medium, low.
- Ongoing trends
  - Spreading in other contexts: high, medium, low.
- Most interested social groups
  - Weak social groups: relevant, scarce, absent.

**EVALUATION:** in this cell the evaluator formulates the judgment emerging from the score obtained referring to the 6.a criterion and he/she describes his/her reasons.

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### • 6.b. Establishment of Priorities

The more priorities have been identified through a participative process and there are weak subjects amongst the actors involved, the more the submitted practice results appraisable.

- How they have been established
  - Through a participative process: wide, limited, absent.
- Actors involved in the individuation
  - Weak subjects' role: important, limited, absent.

## EVALUATION

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### • 6.c. Formulation of objectives and strategies

The more all alternative options have been systematically examined, have been selected with suitable methods, groups of interest have been involved, weak actors have

participated in the decision-making; the more the submitted practice results appraisable.

- Alternative strategies taken into consideration
  - Consideration of the options: systematic, superficial, absent
- Selection modalities
  - Selection of options through scientific methods: systematic, superficial, absent
- Subjects involved
  - Involvement of interested subjects: wide, limited, absent
- Who has influenced the choices
  - Role of weak subjects: important, limited, absent

## EVALUATION

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- 6.d. Mobilisation of resources

The more the fund-raising ability is effective, the applied techniques are innovative, the human resources are local, all resources come from public-private partnerships, key-actors are representatives of local groups of interest, the managing authorities are local; the more the submitted practice results appraisable

- Financial resources
  - Fund-raising ability: high, good, limited
- Techniques applied
  - Innovative techniques: very innovative, sufficiently innovative, insufficiently innovative
- Human resources
  - Local resources: prevailing, sufficiently present, absent
- Origin
  - Public/private partnerships: numerous, limited, absent
- Key-actors
  - Representatives of local interests: numerous, numerically limited, numerically very limited
- Managing Institutions
  - Representatives of local interests: numerous, numerically limited, numerically very limited

## EVALUATION

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- 6.e. Process

The more a logical sequence of implementation steps has been followed, faced problems have been clearly identified together with those ones that remain to be solved, groups of interest have been completely involved both in the realization and in the decision-making, participants have offered some innovative contributions to problem solving; the more the submitted practice results appraisable.

- Main steps
  - Logical structure of the various steps: exemplary, good, not much clear
- Faced problems
  - Clearly identified: exemplary, good, not much clear
- Problems that remain to be solved
  - Clearly identified: exemplary, good, not much clear
- Subjects involved in the initiative



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- Involvement of subjects interested in the implementation: high, modest, absent
- Subjects involved in the decision-making
  - Involvement of subjects interested in the decision-making: high, modest, absent
- Contributions of participants to the problem solving
  - Innovative contributions: numerous, limited, absent

### EVALUATION

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- 6.f. Outputs and results achieved

The more outputs and results have been effective and innovative; the more the submitted practice results appraisable.

- output:
  - efficacy and innovative contribution: relevant, good, limited
- results:
  - efficacy and innovative contribution: relevant, good, limited

### EVALUATION

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- 6.g. Impacts

The more impacts have been relevant, effective, innovative and have implied a wide range of effects; the more the submitted practice results appraisable.

- Medium-long term effects both on direct beneficiaries and on other subjects about:
  - Improvements of the population's quality of life: relevant, good, irrelevant
  - Improvements of the coordination amongst actors, organizations, institutions: relevant, good, irrelevant
  - Improvements of local policies on social, economical and environmental subjects: relevant, good, irrelevant
  - Improvements of institutional capacity: relevant, good, limited
  - Improvements of decision-making: relevant, good, irrelevant
  - Improvements of the capacity of recognizing and addressing constraints and opportunities: relevant, good, irrelevant
  - Improvements of human, technical, financial resources allocation: relevant, good, irrelevant
  - Improvements of people's behaviour and attitudes, mainly in relation to problems regarding weak subjects' role: relevant, good, irrelevant

### EVALUATION

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- 6.h. Sustainability

The more the practice is able to self-finance, contributes to the growth of social equity in relation to gender problems, social inclusion, major social and economic mobility, increases the value of existing cultural resources and promotes cultural integration, contributes to a more effective exploitation of environmental resources, to the reduction of pollution, to the development of innovative technologies from an environmental point of view, to the recovery and improvement of the environment and landscape; the more the submitted practice results appraisable.

- Financial aspect:
  - interest in cost recovery: high, limited, null
  - interest in the leverage effect: high, limited, null
- Social and economical aspects:
  - interest in gender equity: high, limited, null
  - interest in equality and social inclusion: high, limited, null
  - interest in economic and social mobility: high, limited, null
- Cultural aspect:
  - interest in increasing resources value: high, limited, null
  - interest in cultural integration: high, limited, null
- Environmental aspect:
  - interest in sparing non-renewable resources: high, limited, null
  - interest in the reduction of pollution: high, limited, null
  - interest in adopting eco-sustainable technologies: high, limited, null
  - interest in action of environmental and landscape reclamation and recovery: high, limited, null

## EVALUATION

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### 7. Instructions for transfer (*information of evaluation*)

- 7.a. Lessons learned

The less criticalities are traceable and the more minimal requirements are easy to be found, the practice is susceptible of improvements in successive applications; the more the submitted practice results appraisable.

- Criticalities:
  - Presence of criticalities: high, reduced, absent
- Minimal requirements:
  - Conditions to guarantee minimal requirements: very binding, sufficiently binding, easily grantable
- Possible improvements:
  - Room for other improvements coming from successive applications: very large, appraisable, limited

## EVALUATION

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- 7.b. Transferability

The more the means used for transfer are easily available, the practice proved to be good in other cases, a competence has been accumulated in order to avoid mistakes; the more the submitted practice results appraisable.

- Means available for transfer
  - The availability of means is: very complex, relatively complex, relatively easy
- Other experiences the submitted practice has drawn from
  - Efficacy attained thanks to other experiences: very high, appraisable, modest



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- Performed transfers
  - Application in other local contexts: numerous, limited, absent
- What avoiding in case of replication
  - Competence acquainted to avoid mistakes: high, good, still limited

### EVALUATION

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## Annex B3 Standard index for the AlpCity Best Practice Database non technical Best Practices report

### Non technical Best Practices report

The Non Technical Best Practices Report should provide more detailed information on the project than what contained in the abstract submission form, which serves only to provide with basic information so that Best Practices database users can quickly understand whether the Best Practice is of interest to them.

Should the Best Practice be recognised as interesting, the Non Technical Best Practices Report can be downloaded. In any case it must occupy no more than 20 pages of 2,000 spaces each.

The Non Technical Best Practices Report must be based on a standard index, which is subdivided into the same topic areas as the Abstract Submission Form, reproduced at the beginning of the Non Technical Best Practices Report so as to provide users with an introductory summary. Particular attention should be paid to the chapter on lessons learned and to the instructions for transfer.

The standard index is as follows.

### STANDARD INDEX

Submission Form for the Best Practices Database

#### 1. *Characteristics of the project*

- 1.1. Situation before the initiative began
- 1.2. Establishment of priorities
- 1.3. Formulation of objectives and strategies
- 1.4. Mobilisation of resources
- 1.5. Implementation process
- 1.6. Results achieved
- 1.7. Sustainability
  - 1.7.1. Financial aspects
  - 1.7.2. Social and economic aspects
  - 1.7.3. Cultural aspects
  - 1.7.4. Environmental aspects

#### 2. *Instructions for transfer*

- 2.1. Lessons learned (300 words)
- 2.2. Transferability (300 words)
- 2.3. Political/Normative support (200 words)



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Further annexes may be published as and when they prove necessary in illustrating important aspects of our activity. These may consist in: maps, tables of data, technical information on particular tools employed, etc.

## Annex B4 Indicators' typology for the evaluation of socio-economic programmes

### Resource Indicators

Provide information on the financial, human, material, organisational or regulatory means used to implement programmes.

Examples of resource indicators include: the total budget (quantity of resources); annual budget absorption (resource absorption rate); percentage of expected over/under spending; percentage of European financing in the total public financing; number of people working on the implementation of the programme; number of organisations involved in the implementation.

### Output Indicators

Represent the product of the programme's activity. More precisely, an output is considered to be everything that is obtained in exchange for public expenditure.

Examples of output indicators include: kilometres of roads built; progress rate of the building of a road; hectares of urban wasteland rehabilitated; capacity of purification plants built; number of trainees whose training was paid by the programme; and percentage of this training of which the quality is certified.

### Result Indicators

Represent the immediate advantages of the programme (or, exceptionally, the immediate disadvantages) for the direct beneficiaries. An advantage is immediate if it appears while the beneficiary is directly in contact with the programme. The full results may be observed when the operator has concluded the action and closed off the payments. The operators easily know result indicators, so they are generally quantified exhaustively during monitoring.

Results indicators provide information on changes which occur for direct beneficiaries, for example, time saved by users of a road; reduced rates for telephone calls; qualifications earned by trainees; new tourist activity generated by a farmer; use of new productive capacity created by a firm; and the satisfaction of businesses which have received consultancy services.

### Impact Indicators

Represent the consequences of the programme beyond its direct and immediate interaction with the beneficiaries. An initial category of impacts group together the consequences for direct beneficiaries of the programme, which appear or which last into the medium term (specific impacts), e.g. traffic on a road one year after it is opened; the placement rate of trainees after twelve months. Some impacts are unanticipated (spin-offs) but indicators are rarely created for unanticipated impacts.

A second category of impacts consists of all the consequences that affect, in the short or



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medium term, people or organisations that are not direct beneficiaries. These impacts may be similar (e.g. improvement of the quality of life for people living near a rehabilitated industrial wasteland; improvement in the quality of beaches near a new purification plant). They may, in contrast, spill over to affect people or organisations far from the programme, as in the case of macro-economic impacts.

### Indicators of Effectiveness, Efficiency and Performance

In general, evaluations must address a set of specific issues to enable the assistance to be assessed in detail (European Commission, 2000). These issues are:

- **Relevance:** To what extent are the programme's objectives relevant in relation to the evolving needs and priorities at national and EU level?
- **Efficiency:** How were the resources (inputs) turned into outputs or results?
- **Effectiveness:** How far has the programme contributed to achieving its specific and global objectives?
- **Utility:** Did the programme have an impact on the target groups or populations in relation to their needs?
- **Sustainability:** To what extent can the changes (or benefits) be expected to last after the programme has been completed?

Using the definitions given above, we can measure such concepts as effectiveness and efficiency of a programme:

- **Effectiveness** compares what has been done with what was originally planned, i.e., it compares actual with expected or estimated outputs, results, and/or impacts.
- **Efficiency** looks at the ratio between the outputs, results, and/or impacts and the inputs (particularly financial resources) used to achieve them.

Effectiveness and efficiency ratios can thus be calculated for each stage of the programme or Measure. These indicators can provide useful information for programme managers and evaluators, assisting them to make better (re)programming decisions.

Table 1 shows the complementarity between indicators and the measurement of effectiveness and efficiency.

Table 2 effectiveness and efficiency indicators.

	Indicators	Effectiveness	Efficiency
Operational objective (measure/operation)	Financial/physical output	Actual/planned output	Output compared to cost
Specific objective	Result	Actual/planned results	Results compared to cost
Global objective	Impact	Actual/planned impact	Impact compared to cost

## Annex C **an excerpt of the AlpCity Best Practices Database**

### a. AlpCity Best Practices Database Management: the format

Here are the essential steps carried out to implement the AlpCity Best Practices Database:

1. Finding out about the working international databases
  - The United Nations Habitat Database: Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme [www.bestpractices.org](http://www.bestpractices.org)
  - The European Union Database on Good Practices in Urban Management Sustainability <http://europa.eu.int/comm/urban>

2. Drafting of the AlpCity Guideline n. 2



3. Selection of the model database: the UN Habitat one







4. Drafting of the AlpCity Guideline n. 4







## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

5. The AlpCity Best Practices Database Abstract Submission Form
6. Checking usability of the Form
7. Submission to the Project Partners
8. Partners' Feedback
9. On line worldwide call for Best Practices

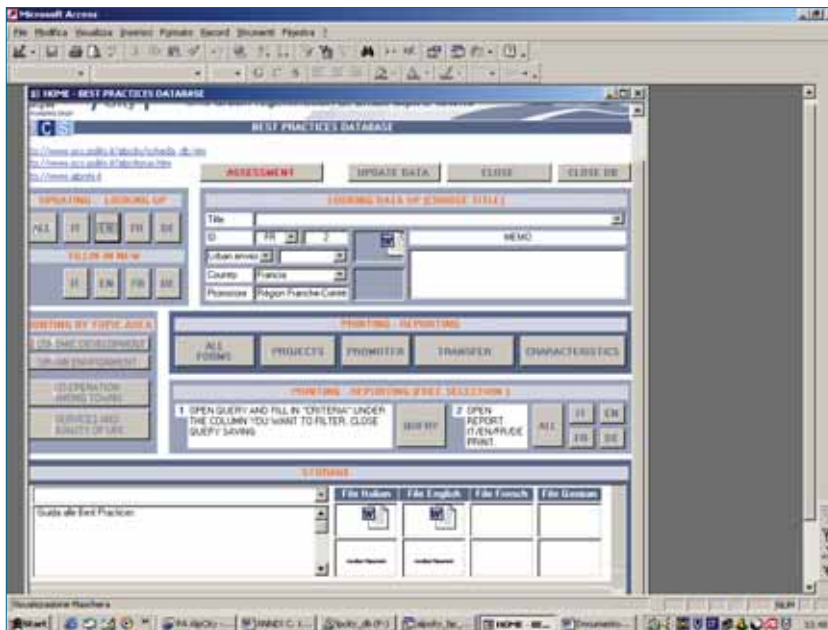
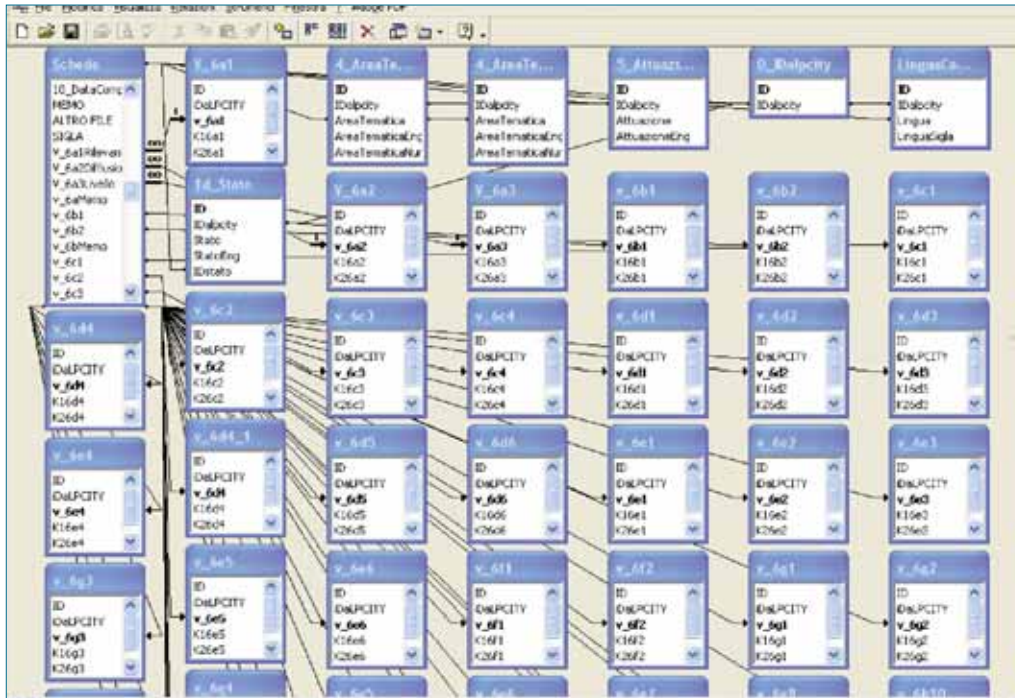
	'Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns'		
 <b>ANNEX I</b> <b>ABSTRACT SUBMISSION FORM FOR THE ALPCITY BP&amp;D</b>			
		<b>ALPCITY</b> <b>INTERREG III B Alpine Space Programme</b> <i>Abstract Submission Form for the</i> <i>Best Practices Database</i>	
<b>1. TITLE OF PROJECT/INITIATIVE</b>			
1a. Title			
1b. City			
1c. Region			
1d. Country			
<b>2. PROMOTER</b>			
2a. Name and type of organisation			
2b. Address			



**Worldwide Call for Best Practices**  
Join us into the AlpCity Database!



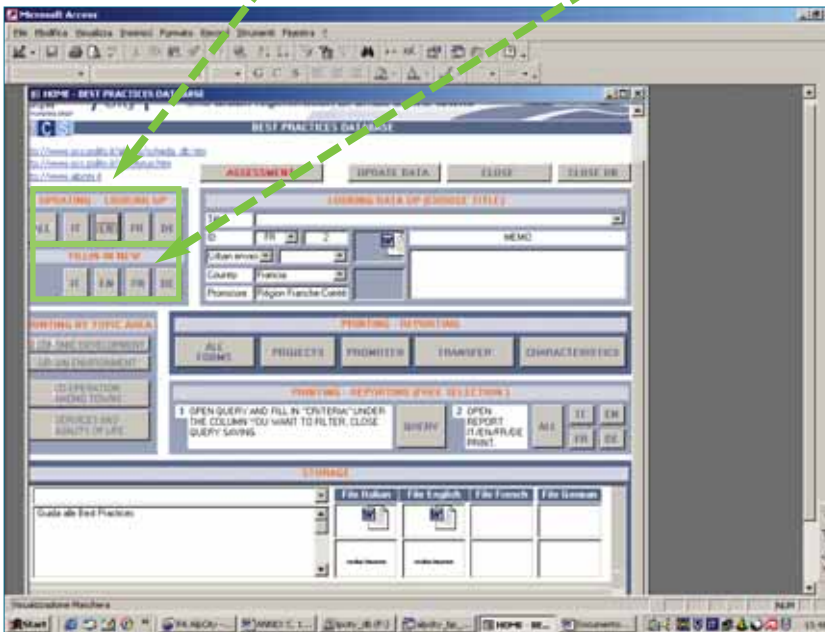
## 10. Implementing and managing the AlpCity Best Practices Database: the Microsoft Access Interface



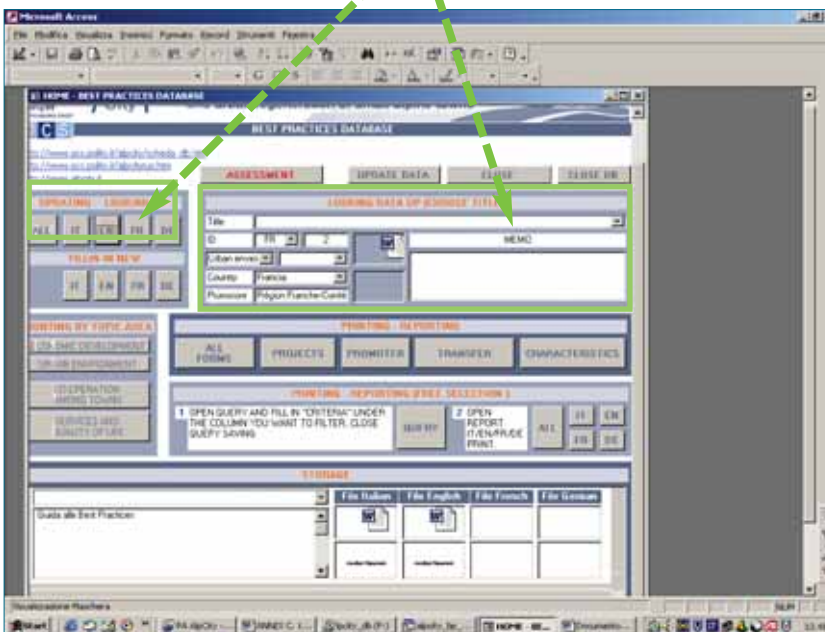
**b. AlpCity Best Practices Database Management: a demo of data entry, queries and reports**

Updating data

Filling in data

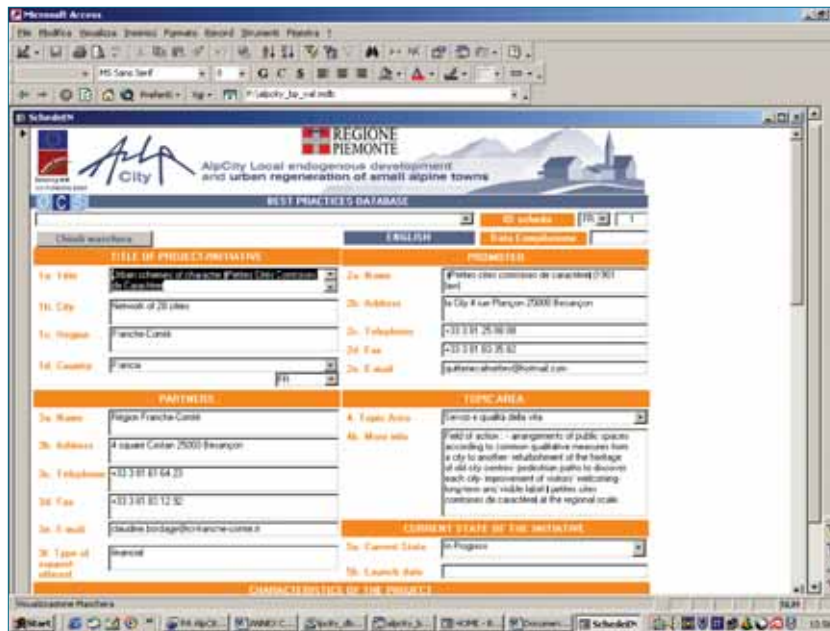


Looking up data

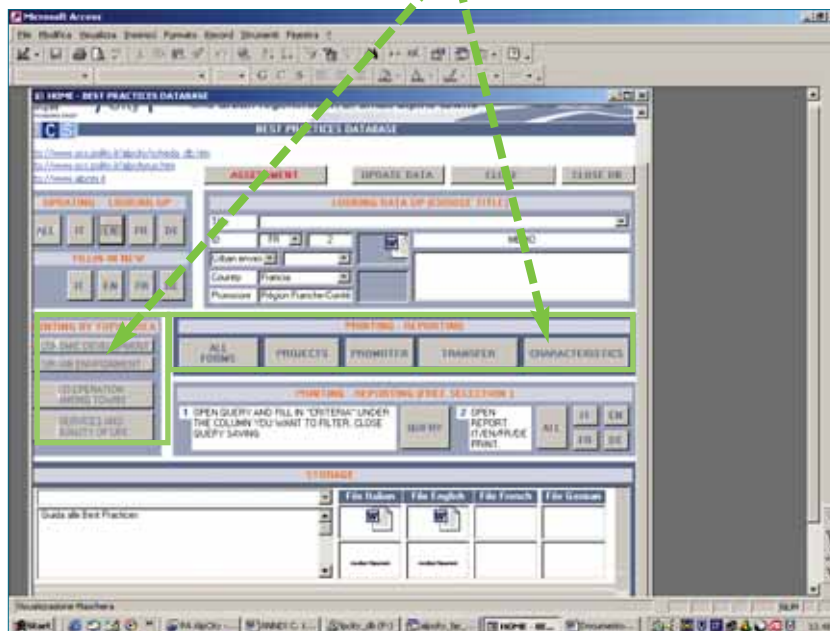




## Interface of a Best Practice Card



## Reporting printing

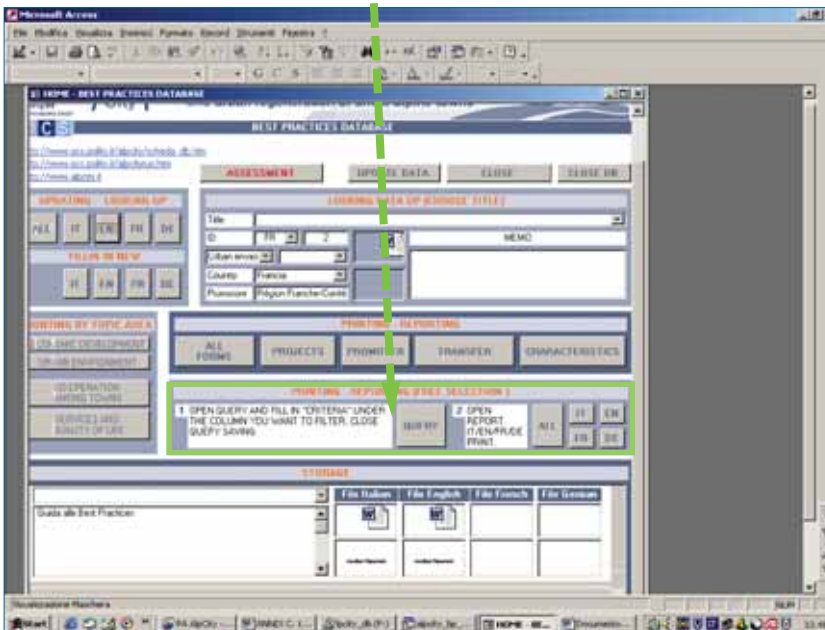


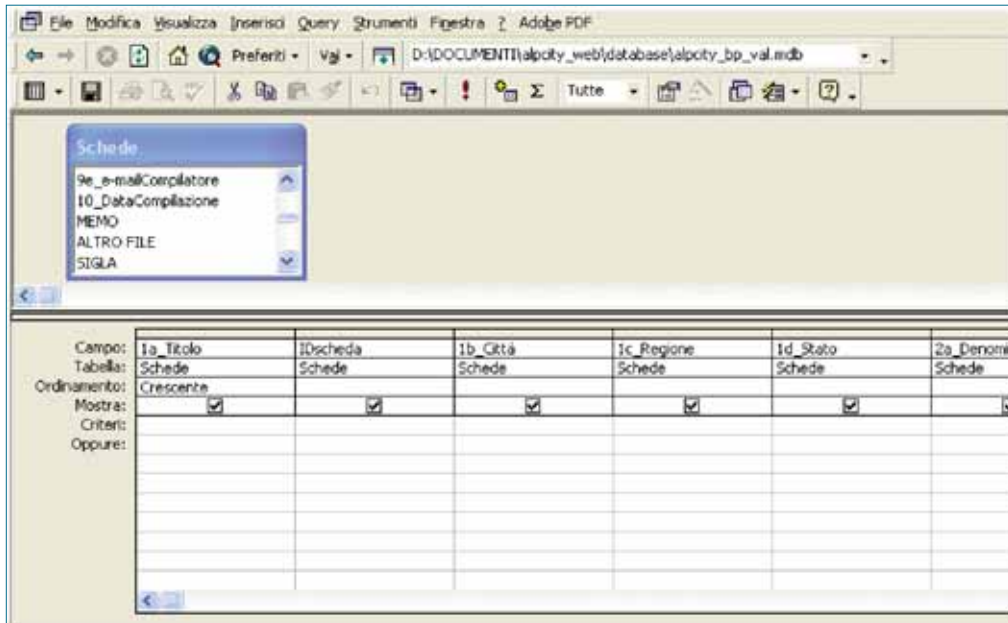


## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns



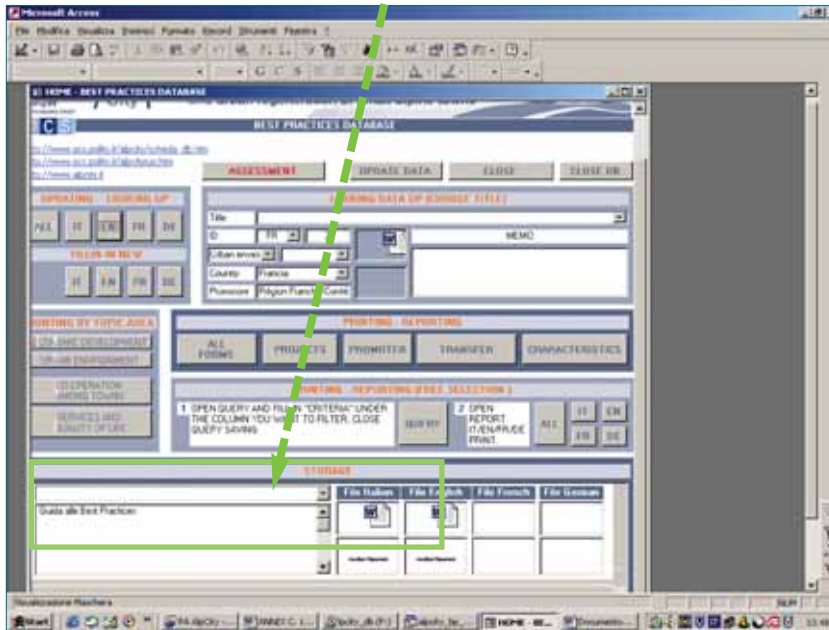
Data selection





Campo:	1a_Titolo	1d_Scheda	1b_Città	1c_Region	1d_Stato	2a_Denominazione
Tabella:	Schede	Schede	Schede	Schede	Schede	Schede
Ordinamento:	Crescente					
Mostra:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Criteri:						
Oppure:						

Storage

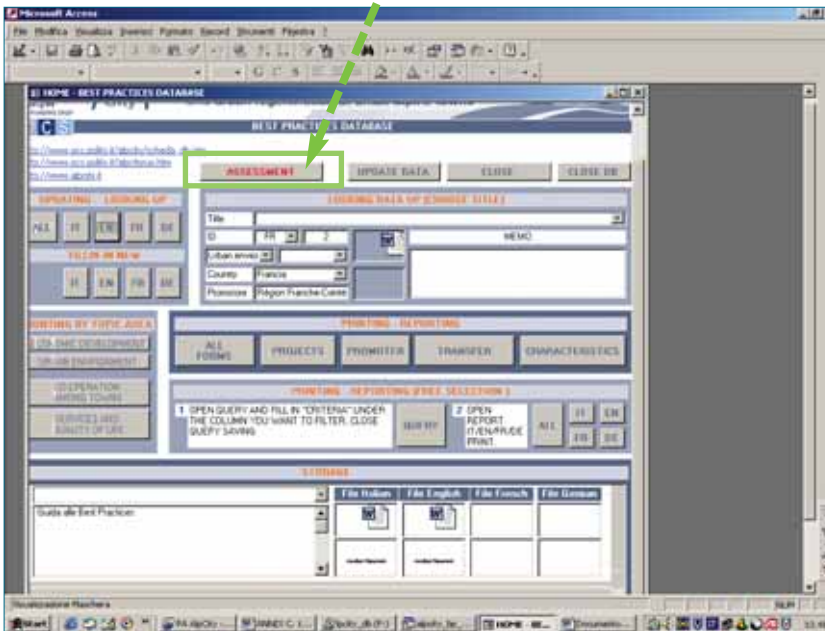


The screenshot shows a Microsoft Access form titled 'BEST PRACTICES DATABASE'. The form contains several sections: 'ASSESSMENT', 'UPDATE DATA', 'CLOSE', and 'CLOSE DB'. Below these are sections for 'FORMS', 'PROJECTS', 'FORMS', 'TRANSFER', and 'CHARACTERISTICS'. A 'STORAGE' section is highlighted with a green box, and a dashed green arrow points from the word 'Storage' above to this section. The 'STORAGE' section includes a list box with 'Data all Best Practices' and buttons for 'File History', 'File Upload', 'File Upload', and 'File Upload'.

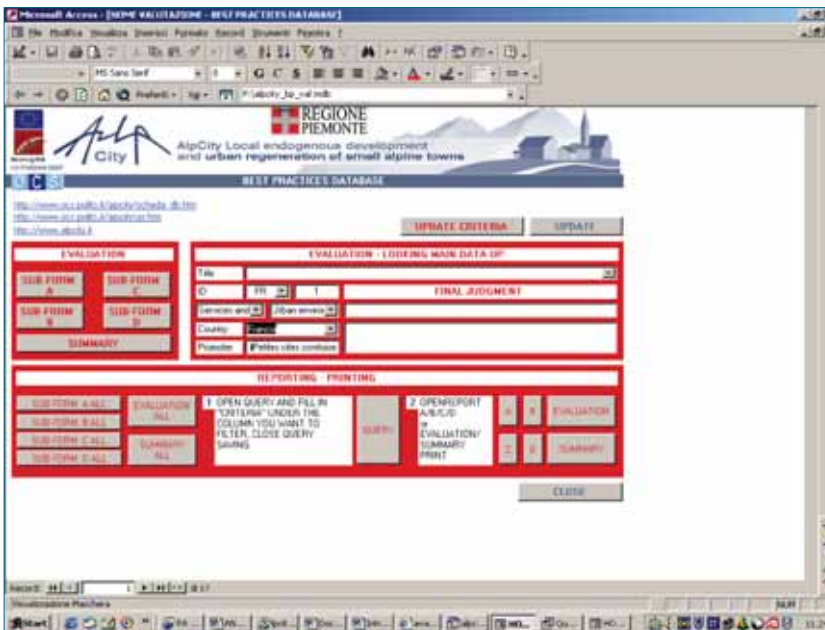


## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

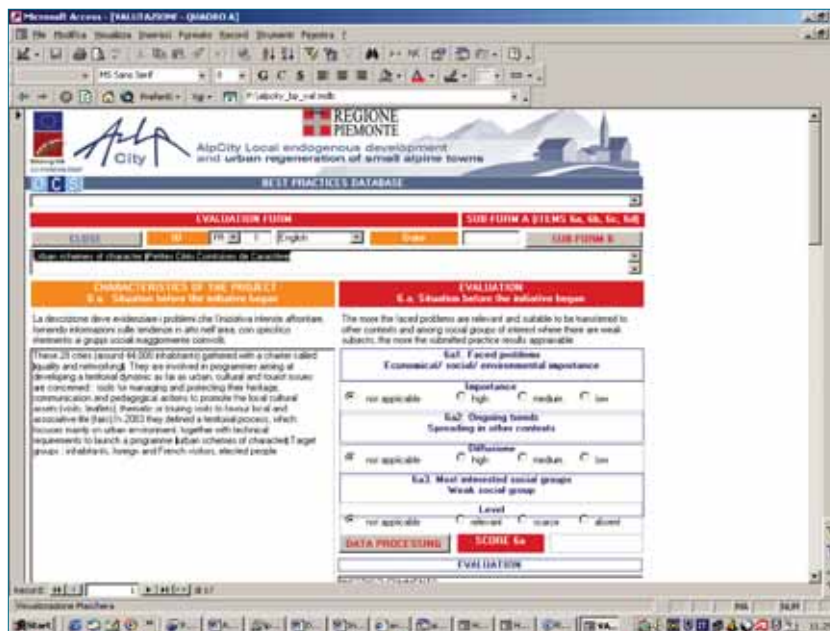
### Assessment



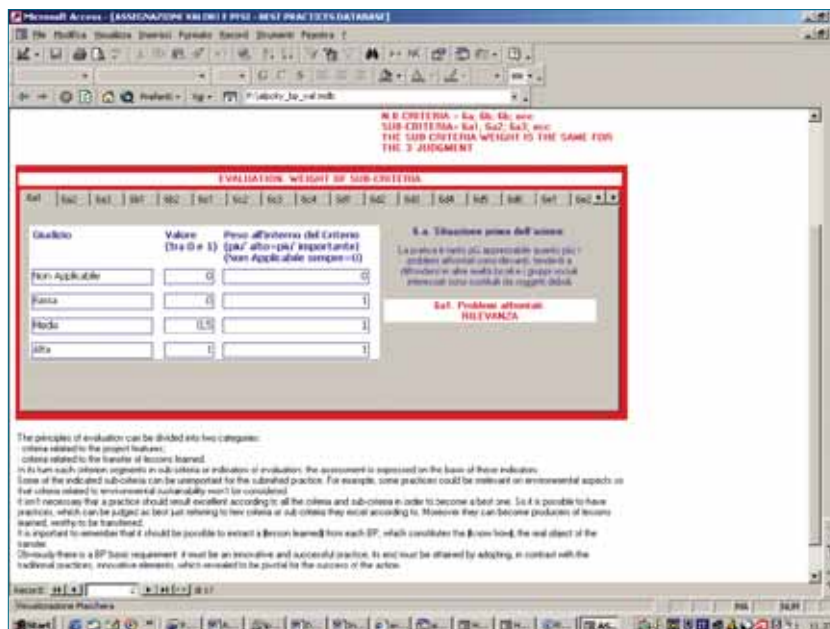
### Example of an assessment



## Example of a sub-form



## Evaluation criteria

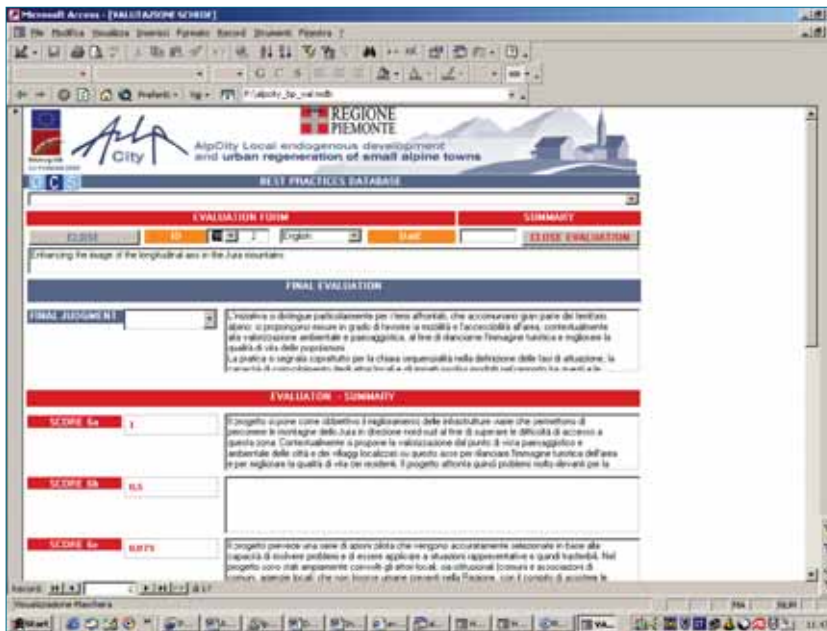


Qualitativo	Valore (Da 0 a 5)	Peso attribuito dal Criterio (Da 0 a 100)
Non Applicabile	0	0
Bassa	1	1
Media	2,5	2,5
Alta	5	5



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

### Evaluation – summary



Publishing on the web: [www.ocs.polito.it/alpcity/scheda\\_db.htm](http://www.ocs.polito.it/alpcity/scheda_db.htm)



## C. AlpCity Best Practices Database Use: the online interface



AlpCity Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

Public Area | Last update: 03/23/2008

**WP 9 - BEST PRACTICES AND FUTURE SCENARIOS**

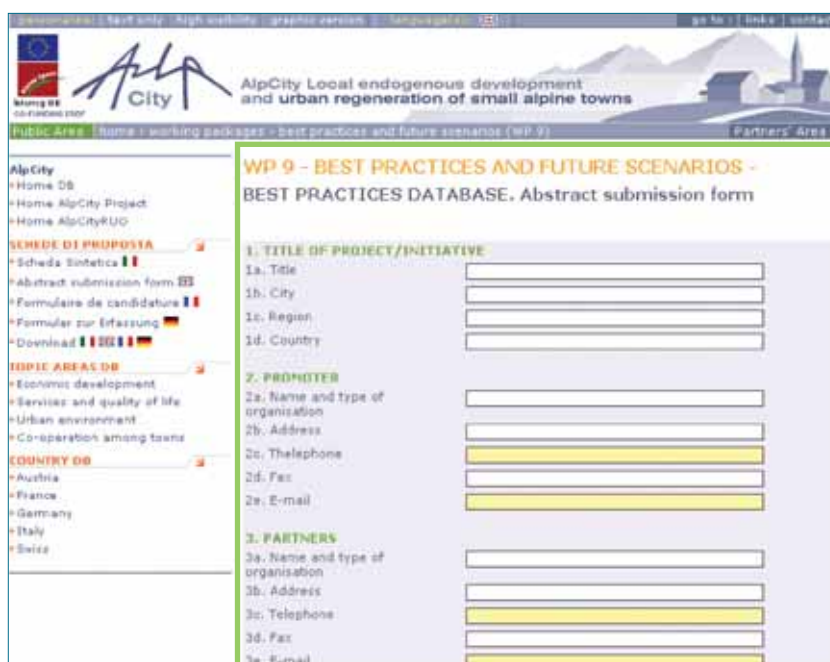
**BEST PRACTICES DATABASE**

I gruppi che richiedono l'inserimento del proprio caso di studio nel database delle Best Practices di AlpCity devono compilare la seguente **Scheda Sintetica** seguendo le istruzioni riportate vicino a ciascuna voce.

Chi non utilizzasse un client di posta elettronica sul proprio pc, può scaricare la **scheda** in formato .doc e inviarla successivamente a [alpcity@regione.piemonte.it](mailto:alpcity@regione.piemonte.it)

**BEST PRACTICES DATABASE**

- Enhancing the image of the longitudinal axis in the Jura mountains (English)  
Urban environment  
L'iniziativa si distingue particolarmente per i temi affrontati, che accomunano gran parte del territorio alpino: si propongono misure in grado di favorire la mobilità e l'accessibilità all'area, contestualmente alla valorizzazione ambientale e paesaggistica, al fine di rilanciarne l'immagine turistica e migliorare la qualità di vita delle popolazioni. La pratica si segnala soprattutto per la chiara sequenzialità nella definizione delle fasi di attuazione, la capacità di coinvolgimento degli attori locali e gli impatti positivi prodotti nel rapporto tra questi e le istituzioni, l'apporto di contributi innovativi e l'alta competenza raggiunta ai fini della trasferibilità.
- Eredità Olimpica a Pral e Pragelato (Italian)  
Economic development  
L'iniziativa affronta temi pregnanti rispetto alla realtà cui si riferisce e ricerca prospettive di sviluppo (sociale ed economico) per le comunità locali a partire dal recupero e dalla promozione delle risorse presenti sul territorio. L'approccio adottato si distingue soprattutto per il coinvolgimento degli attori locali che, grazie all'ampio processo partecipativo introdotto, diventano attori privilegiati dello sviluppo locale.
- Realizzazione di due casi studio per il recupero e riutilizzo di edifici produttivi e rurali nell'area della Comunità Montana dell'Agordina e della Comunità Montana Gemello Superiore (Italian)  
Urban environment



AlpCity Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

Public Area | Home | working packages | best practices and future scenarios (WP 9)

**WP 9 - BEST PRACTICES AND FUTURE SCENARIOS -**

**BEST PRACTICES DATABASE. Abstract submission form**

**1. TITLE OF PROJECT/INITIATIVE**

1a. Title

1b. City

1c. Region

1d. Country

**2. PROMOTER**

2a. Name and type of organisation

2b. Address

2c. Telephone

2d. Fax

2e. E-mail

**3. PARTNERS**

3a. Name and type of organisation

3b. Address

3c. Telephone

3d. Fax

3e. E-mail

d. AlpCity Best Practices Database Use: a demo of database consulting

The screenshot shows the website interface for the AlpCity Best Practices Database. The main heading is "WP 9 - BEST PRACTICES AND FUTURE SCENARIOS" and "BEST PRACTICES DATABASE". A prominent blue box labeled "SUBMISSION FORM" highlights the instructions for submitting proposals. Another blue box labeled "TOPIC AREAS" highlights the list of thematic categories. A third blue box labeled "COUNTRY" highlights the list of participating countries.

This screenshot shows the "PRE-SELECTION JUDGEMENT" section of the database. A blue box labeled "PRE-SELECTION JUDGEMENT" highlights the detailed descriptions of the selected best practices, including their titles and topic areas. Dashed green arrows point from the labels "Title" and "Topic Area" to the corresponding fields in the list of practices.



## e. An example of the AlpCity Best Practices Database Abstract Submission Forms



**AlpCity**  
**INTERREG III B Alpine Space Programme**  
*Abstract Submission form for the  
 Best Practices Database*



### 1. TITLE OF PROJECT/INITIATIVE

- 1a. Title: Urban Regeneration Programme in Niederösterreich  
 1b. City:  
 1c. Region: Niederösterreich (Lower Austria)  
 1d. Country: Austria

### 2. PROMOTER

- 2a. Name and type of organisation: Office of the Provincial Government of Niederösterreich - Agency for Regeneration of Towns  
 2b. Address: Gaswerksgasse 9  
 2c. Telephone: +43 2732 82522  
 2d. Fax  
 2e. E-mail: hubert.trauner@noel.gv.at

### 3. PARTNERS

- 3a. Name and type of organisation: Association for Village and Urban Renewal in Lower Austria  
 3b. Address: Hofgarten 3/4  
 3c. Telephone: 02622 78467  
 3d. Fax: 02622 78467-4  
 3e. E-mail: helga.zodl@dorf-stadterneuerung.at  
 3f. Type of support offered (technical, financial, political, administrative, etc.): technical support

### 4. TOPIC AREA, FIELD OF ACTION AND PROPOSED ACTIVITY OF PROJECT (100 words)

The overall goal of the Urban Regeneration Programme is to improve the quality of life in urban areas. To support a sustainable development, a widespread participation process was initiated in each city, which joined the programme. Individual goals for the city were set in cooperation of local politicians, the local administration and active citizens in each town. The citizens took the development of their city in their own hands. Decision-making became more transparent. The goal was also to strengthen the regional and local identity. So each city developed its individual "guidelines" for development and a number of projects that would bring them closer to their goals.



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

During the duration of the programme, the work showed that in most cities emphasis was set on core topics like the regeneration of the inner cities (mainly economical development), improving life for young people, new media (Internet), culture and arts and the development of networks or other cooperation.

This year, the 500th local project will be supported. 49 cities in Lower Austria (i.e. 2/3 of all cities in Lower Austria) have successfully taken part in the program.

A network of walled cities, a youth network, a network of multimedia libraries and a network of inner cities have been installed.

### 5. CURRENT STATE OF THE INITIATIVE

- 5a. Launch date
- In progress
  - Finished

### 6. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROJECT

#### 6a. Situation before the initiative began (100 words)

At the beginning of the 90-ies, people moved out of small and middle-sized towns, into the region of Vienna, the Austrian capital. The bigger the distance of the town to Vienna, the bigger was the effect.

The economic activities and cultural activities in the towns were often low and therefore especially young people migrated. This movement caused a "brain drain" from the rural regions. The Urban Regeneration Programme was one measure taken to stop this development. The Programme targets the "Soft Factors" for economic development by improving the quality of life in towns.

#### 6b. Establishment of Priorities (100 words)

List the priorities of the initiative, how they were established and involving whom. Please specify leadership specific roles where appropriate

#### 6c. Formulation of Objectives and Strategies (200 words)

The Urban Regeneration Programme in Niederösterreich has 4 main objectives, which were issued in the guidelines 1995:

1. Democratisation and Reconciliation of Interests  
This is achieved by the encouragement of public participation in the whole urban regeneration process with a special focus on disadvantaged groups in society.
2. Ecology  
All decisions are taken by applying ecological criteria. Sustainability must be respected in the usage of soil, air, water, infrastructure and mobility.
3. Regional Responsibility  
Cities in the Renewal Programme seek cooperation with others and look for solutions, which are also beneficial to the region around.
4. Service-oriented administrative structures

The main players in the process in each town are the city council and the citizens. A process coordinator, provided by the Association for Village and Urban Renewal in Lower Austria, is responsible for the participation process. The resulting concept and action plan are the keys

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to additional funding for projects, provided by the Agency for Regeneration of Towns.

#### 6d. Mobilisation of Resources (200 words)

Funds are provided by the Province of Lower Austria, the European Union (ERDF Programme) and the participating cities.

In every city a professional coordinator, provided by the Association for Village and Urban Renewal in Lower Austria, is charged and is responsible for the urban regeneration process for the first four years. The coordinator is employed by the Association for Village and Urban Renewal in Lower Austria (partner 2). This person coordinates the local activities and is paid by the city and the province.

Furthermore, the process requires the active participation of the citizens of every city. The participation in work groups is voluntary and is an integrative part of the whole process. Financial support for urban regeneration projects is provided by the Agency for Urban Regeneration, when an active participation process is implemented. During the regeneration process, projects are developed in each town. Key players in applying for financial support are the city council and the city administration.

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#### 6e. Process (400 words)

The initiative started with a pilot phase of four cities. Experiences and results were evaluated and after two years, standards and guidelines were set.

In each participating city, the intensive phase of the Urban Regeneration Process lasts four years.

The first step in urban regeneration consists in developing an integrated concept and an action plan for the regeneration of the town by the participation of the inhabitants.

Every regeneration process starts with a kick-off event, where every citizen can get information about the programme and can also give his/her opinion and initial ideas. People can also sign up for workgroups. The external process coordinator is presented and takes the first steps. The coordinator is responsible for the participation process and presents projects to the Agency for Regeneration of Towns. They keep contact to the Agency and also other departments of the Lower Austrian Administration.

Later, an advisory council for urban regeneration consisting of local political representatives, members of the city-administration and citizens (i.e. spokesmen and women of workgroups and opinion leaders) is installed. The council includes from 20 to 30 persons. Additional working groups for individual projects or topics can be necessary and useful.

Starting with a SWAP-analysis the advisory council creates the regeneration concept.

This concept sets goals in the fields of environment and ecology, function of the town for the region, housing and population, working and economy, social and health services, green space and recreation, traffic and technical infrastructure, culture and education, tourism and agriculture. Some measures are suggested to reach these goals.

To get a broader spectrum of society, the topics are covered in special open workgroups like a workgroup for working and economy, traffic and technical infrastructure. These workgroups nominate a spokesman - or woman, who represents the group in the advisory council.

Once all the aims are harmonised and priorities set, the municipal council has to pass a resolution. After that, projects start and can be also financially supported.

In the course of project implementation, parts of the project development and sometimes even



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

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hands-on contribution, like the renovation activity, is carried out by volunteers.

Problems: In Lower Austria, every city has a city council that is elected every five years. This is the instrument that decides about local public projects in the city such as infrastructure (streets, sewer system etc.) and cooperates closely with the provincial administration (kindergartens, schools etc.).

The challenge in every participation process is complementing the work of this council with the work done in the work groups of volunteers.

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### 6f. Outputs and Results Achieved (200 words)

So far, about 49 cities have successfully taken part in the Urban Renewal Programme. They have implemented important keystones for their development.

Over the past 10 years, 494 projects have been financially supported.

To give an example: Cities in the regeneration programme were some of the first ones to establish service zones in the city hall as a one-stop-shop for citizens. This contributed to a more efficient administration and a better quality of services. They often even developed into a popular meeting point.

---

### 6g. Impacts (100 words)

The Urban Regeneration Programme supported almost 500 projects over the last ten years. Many of them were developed and implemented even without additional funding. The range of projects is very wide, also including projects for young people and even meeting points for mothers with babies and toddlers.

In most cities, some level of public participation was carried on also after the four years of the intensive phase.

The inner city was always a focal point in the work of the Urban Regeneration Programme. Also in Lower Austria, the city centres suffered from economic decline and declining population. Old buildings were often not attractive. The programme supported many projects to revitalize buildings in the city centre.

In 2005 a concentrated action plan was passed by the government of Lower Austria, which is concentrating on city centres by not only providing some funding, but also by encouraging the cooperation of various departments of the administration.

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### 6h. Sustainability (300 words)

The projects, developed during the four years of urban renewal in each city, only get financial support when:

1. A sustainable use of the structures, buildings, community centres etc. is guaranteed.
2. The project contributes to the achievement of the catalogue of goals that was developed by every city.
3. The project is approved by the local "Advisory Council for Urban Regeneration", where all work groups and the city council are represented.

In general there is a lot of voluntary work done to develop projects and also in cultural institutions such as museums, community centres or youth projects.

Given that, the local identification with the projects is very high.

The potentials of individuals are increased and supported.

Almost all participating cities are partners in the "Climate Alliance of European Cities with

Indigenous Rainforest peoples. Some of the projects that are supported by the Urban Regeneration Programme follow the goals and guidelines of the Climate Alliance and synergies are created.

In one of the participating towns, Langenlois, a pilot project was implemented, dealing with sustainable mobility in 1999. A concept of a "Traffic reduction community" was created and implemented. The project aimed at the voluntary reduction of car rides. Various well-coordinated measures propagated alternative forms of transportation (motto: "reducing traffic is fun"). The Langenlois population's mileage was 158.000 km per day in 1998; in 2002 it was only 152.000km.

In 2003 the project became regional, while 26 small and middle-sized towns are now taking part into it.

One main strategic goal of the Urban Regeneration Programme NÖ consists in establishing networks among the participating cities to encourage know-how transfer and personal networking.

At the moment, there are three networks developed:

- Network of Multimedia Libraries
- Network Youth
- Network of Walled Cities

*Describe how the integration of the social, economic, environmental and cultural elements of sustainability was achieved, particularly with regards to:*

- 6h1. Financial** The use and leveraging of resources, including cost recovery, indicating how loans, if any, are being paid back and their terms and conditions.
- 6h2. Social and Economic** Gender equity, equality and social inclusion, economic and social mobility.
- 6h3. Cultural** Respect for and consideration of attitudes, behaviour patterns and heritage.
- 6h4. Environmental** Reducing dependence on non-renewable resources (air, water, land, energy, etc.), and changing production and consumption patterns and technology.

## 7. INSTRUCTIONS FOR TRANSFER

### 7a. Lessons Learned (300 words)

Over the years, the external process coordinator proved to be crucial. The coordinated development of the participation process avoided still stand and often conflicts in the workgroups and the advisory council. The clear role of the coordinator as an independent institution makes it easier for all levels of society to take part into the regeneration process. Meanwhile, external coordinators are involved in many other projects.

It is also important to keep the whole process completely transparent to avoid "grey zones" that are open to speculation.

Another important factor of success is the cooperation between working groups, advisory council for urban regeneration, city council and administration is crucial for a successful project. Communication is a key factor in this case. Decision-making has to be transparent to keep the volunteers interested and motivated.

Once the advantages become clear and people become more open, cooperation is almost



## Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small alpine towns

always kept up after the four years of the intensive phase.

Furthermore the Urban Regeneration Programme is often the starting point for innovative projects, especially in the field of sustainability, youth or also innovative architectural projects. Very often, this project know-how is transferred to other towns or the projects are continued later on a regional level.

### 7b. Transferability (400 words)

No such programme was known before 1995 for small and middle-sized cities, but a participation process has already proved to be very useful on a village scale.

In bigger cities like Vienna there were also initiatives concerning urban regeneration, but their focal point was on improving housing and urban space like parks, etc.

The model of the Urban Regeneration Programme in Lower Austria is well documented and is easily transferable under the condition of professional guides. Know-how-transfer took place in Italy, France and Switzerland in the form of conferences and publications.

To transfer the model, it is necessary to adapt it to local conditions, like existing development concepts, legal restrictions, conflicts in the past or special problems in the town. Considering these factors, the focal points are set. The participation process is always similar and also the structure of advisory council and workgroups is always installed. Success depends on the motivation of all participants. If only one player is missing, the whole process is slower and less effective. Therefore, a transparent structure and a transparent decision process are the key factors. It is also important to be willing to convert ideas into projects and also implement them.

Transfer of the networking activities:

Upper Austria is participating in the walled Cities Project.

National transfer took place during the implementation of the participation process in the course of LA 21 processes, economic urban regeneration projects or even state-wide strategies. In 2004 almost 70 working groups came together to discuss and develop future strategies for Lower Austria. Inputs were also given by the government and administration of Lower Austria. This participation process was also coached by external coordinators and was a unique opportunity to get a wide range of views, ideas and opinions. This became only possible, because Lower Austria had a long tradition of participation and put a lot of trust into its citizens.

## 8. TRANSFERABILITY CONSULTANT

8a. Name: Hubert

8b. Surname: Trauner

8c. Telephone: +43 2732 82522

8d. Fax

8e. E-mail: hubert.trauner@noel.gv.at

## 9. PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR FILLING IN

9a. Name: Helga

9b. Surname: Zödl

9c. Telephone: +43 676 55 91 917

9d. Fax

9e. E-mail: helga.zödl@dorf-stadterneuerung.at

## f. An example of the AlpCity Best Practices Database Abstract Assessment Cards

### AlpCity Best Practices Database Project Assessment Card

<b>Urban Regeneration Programme in Niederösterreich</b>	<b>FORM</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>N.</b>
	English	AU	16
	<b>FINAL JUDGEMENT</b> ▼	<b>FINAL SCORE</b> ▶	9,07

The submitted programme of urban regeneration regards topics shared in all the alpine space, like depopulation and marginality, which were faced by networking the different actors (institutions and populations belonging to each municipality). The involvement and the matching among local actors has started up an almost established process (500 financed projects) of social and economic development, which has allowed the re-launch of competitiveness of these zone, with a view to social, economic and environmental sustainability.

### SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENTS AND JUDGEMENTS

<b>6a. Situation before the initiative began</b>	This practice faces problems, such as depopulation and social changes in the alpine space due to the difficulties in adapting to the technological progress, which have a social and economical relevance and are shared in all the alpine territories. Moreover, women's involvement and the promotion of their employment make it an exemplary case.
<b>6b. Establishment of Priorities</b>	The involvement of the local population is itself an aim of the initiative: for this reason since the very beginning local actors have taken part in it, included the priorities definition, with a particular attention to the role of young people and women (who played the role of coordinators of the participative processes in each town).
<b>6c. Formulation of Objectives and Strategies</b>	The initiative promoted the implementation of numerous (500) local projects formulated according to common goals, which were defined in relation to the shared problems of the different participating actors. The definition of these goals was followed by the identification, through a participative process, of the strategies necessary to their achievement, keeping in mind the attention towards the youth and women.



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<p><b>6d. Mobilisation of Resources</b></p>	<p>The project long life (10 years) shows the validity of the funding system, which comes from public institutions (such as the European Union, the Province and from the 49 municipalities actively participating into the project). Interested subjects' participation to the working groups is on a voluntary basis: funds are supplied just when the participative active process is implemented.</p> <p>In general a large amount of the work done for the project development is voluntary as well, also in cultural institutions such as museums, municipal councils, projects of young people.</p> <p>From the innovation point of view the success of the initiative is relevant because of the starting up of numerous networks (of young people, of multimedia libraries, etc.) among the different participating subjects, which allows and promotes the transfer of know-how and human resources among different local realities. Eventually, human resources, key actors and managing institutions have local origins.</p>
<p><b>6e. Process</b></p>	<p>The timing of the project implementation stages is defined according to clear and logical procedures easily replicable in case of transfer. Faced problems and difficulties are underlined in a specific way, so that a careful monitoring activity is evident since the very beginning. Local subjects have been involved with a participative procedure in the decision-making and in the implementation/management stage.</p>
<p><b>6f. Outputs and Results Achieved</b></p>	<p>The number of projects funded and supported, which figures up at 494, shows the initiative success in achieving its purposes and its validity both in terms of efficacy and of innovation.</p>
<p><b>6g. Impacts</b></p>	<p>The carrying out of different projects has produced positive impacts on the population by increasing the level of conditions and quality of life. The connection and the dialogue among the local authorities and the local population have been favoured by the participative processes, which are basic for the initiative. The creation of specific networks devoted to young people and to some projects addressed to women and mothers shows the attention paid to the disadvantages social groups. The interest towards the re-qualification of ancient cities centres, invested by economic decline and abandoned by part of the population, is considered as focus of the urban regeneration project and shows the good ability of exploiting existent resources and opportunities.</p>
<p><b>6h. Sustainability</b></p>	<p>The initiative is relevant in terms of sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the financial one: the turning to numerous financial funds and to voluntary participation has guaranteed during the years a solid base for the projects prosecution.</li> <li>- social and economic: attention is mainly paid to the women and to young categories; the network promotion among different subjects guarantees and increases social and economic mobility.</li> </ul>



<b>7a. Lessons Learned</b>	The project has reached a good level: problems and difficulties have been identified during all the stages and faced in a proper way.
<b>7b. Transferability</b>	The acquired competence to transfer the initiative is of high quality and is supported by the wide documentation collected during the implementation, as it is showed by the replication of the initiative in Italy, France and Switzerland.
<b>Total score</b>	<b>Final judgement</b>
9,07	The submitted programme of urban regeneration regards topics shared in all the alpine space, like depopulation and marginality, which were faced by networking the different actors (institutions and populations belonging to each municipality). The involvement and the matching among local actors has started up an almost established process (500 financed projects) of social and economic development, which has allowed the re-launch of competitiveness of these zone, with a view to social, economic and environmental sustainability.
<b>Date</b>	<b>Evaluator</b>
May 2006	OCS



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