Enhancing the image and promoting cultural historical sites for the reinforcement of the regional attractiveness of the "Petites Cités Comtoises de Caractère"

AlpCity Partner	Franche-Comté Region (France)
Work Package	Urban environment (WP7)
WP Coordinator	Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy)
Subjects involved and their role	Franche-Comté Region (Project Partner) Michel Fournier Project Manager Conseil régional de Franche-Comté Direction de l'Aménagement du Territoire 4 Square Castan, 25031 BESANÇON CEDEX France Tel.+33 03.81.61.61.98, Fax +33 03 81 83 12 92 E-mail: michel.fournier@cr-franche-comte.fr - 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 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.

Project methodology

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 (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.

Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved	The mission has been stopped since mid 2005 for internal reasons (because of the long-term absence of the only manager of the association).
Instruments proposed, revised and finalised	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
Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders	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

Critical aspects	Limits and barriers:
	  ➢ Random appropriateness of the objectives of the programme by local project managers
	  ➢ Transfer and sharing of information not always spontaneous from local project managers as well as from consultants in charge of the project
	Adopted strategies to overcome these limits:
	  ➢ Implementation of a genuine project pedagogy between project managers, consultants and partners
	  ➢ General approach: urban, environmental, heritage, approach, which takes the various uses in account
	  ➢ Progressive and adapted: implementation by successive stages
	Qualitative (obligation to select for the pre-operational study a multi-field team)

Lessons learned	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.
	  - so that local representatives really support this programme
	  - to implement a good practice in terms of discussion and partnership
	  - to promote the transfer and share of information
	The implementation of the "urban schemes of character" requires a good and strict framework for each partner, given the high number of key-actors.
	  - technical assistance has to be defined precisely to preserve the core objectives of the programme
	  - key actors have to be involved in the conception of the technical requirements
	  - respect of agreements of phases to facilitate the coherence and effectiveness of on-going partnerships

Transferability	methodology with technical requirements and a progressive dynamic of networking and in the long term

- evaluation criteria, based on the common requirements
- communication tools, with a common basis but adapted to local backgrounds and capacities

exchange meetings on site, in every city with the involved key actors and audience, in "test" cities to share their process.

Case study follow-up

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.

Arrangements should be pursued in the towns but with other systems.

Common issues with other projects

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.

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.

SSC Experts' recommandations

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.