Technical assistance for small towns

Les petites villes candidates dans "l'armature urbaine"
(grandes villes, villes centre, villes moyennes et autres villes fréquentées)

AlpCity Partner	Rhône-Alpes Region (France)
Work Package	Cooperation among towns (WP8)
WP Coordinator	Rhône-Alpes Region (France)
Subjects involved and their role	Conseil régional de Rhône-Alpes (Project Partner) 78 route de Paris BP 19 69751 Charbonnières Les Bains (France) Colette Gras-Plouvier (Project and Financial Manager) Tel. +33 04 72 59 42 31 Fax + 33 04 72 59 47 84 E-mail : Cgrasplouvier@rhonealpes.fr 6 consultants : • Groupe INDIGO – CEDDAET (Développement durable des entreprises et des territoires) • DMS Conseil (Développement médicine 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 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.

Project methodology	The methodology includes participation of civil society, networking, exchange of experiences.
Project activities	The main phases: analysis of small mountain towns, rollout of engineering at the local level, regional feedback workshop.
Achieved results	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.
Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved	No discrepancies were remarked.
Instruments proposed, revised and finalised	Development of equipment, services, activities: all tools of technical assistance.
Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders	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.
Critical aspects	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.
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 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.