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A policies platform for a better quality of life

Presentation of the AlpCity 2 Project Idea

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PROJECT IDEA ABSTRACT

Through a virtual and/or physical platform on services policies for mountain areas, the AlpCity 2 project idea proposes to be a place for matching, comparison and dialogue between the policy- and decision-making level and the local environment of the Alpine Space.

On the basis of the setting-out bestowed to the new programming period by the Alpine Convention and after taking the European services policies for people and enterprises into consideration, the AlpCity 2 platform is conceived as the convergence point of the policies on the subject, implemented by the project partner countries (indicatively regional authorities from all the countries eligible for the Alpine Space Programme under the overall direction of Piedmont Region as Project Lead Partner). Those policies will be compared and discussed by all the Regions project partners in cooperation with a Scientific Steering Committee. Competences in mountain issues at all levels, like Universities and Research Centres, Ministries, Chambers of Commerce, Unions of Mountain Communities (e.g. UNCEM), etc., will be involved Into this initiative. Moreover, the potential inclusion of the Alpine Space EuroRegions into the policy debate aims at representing the tool, through which the jointly reached conclusions can be more easily applied. Interesting inputs are also expected from potential partners or observers, who are outside the Alpine Space territorial cooperation area (e.g. UN Habitat, FAO) or have a legal identity different from a public authority (e.g. CIPRA International).

At the same time an interactive map will be laid out in order to systematize public and private services for people and enterprises delivered in the Alpine Space, which will be then conveniently classified and made available through the project website. This will enhance the dissemination of useful information dealing with performances and the mapping of density and peculiarities of such services (classified by country and service typology). Similarly, all the local selected stakeholders will be asked to express their needs in terms of services and to outline shortages in their territory. So decision-makers will be able to get a clear picture of services gaps and excellences in the different countries of the Alpine Arc.

Once established the state of the art for what concerns with policies and different territorial situations, the following step will be implemented in order to reprocess policies and to test and perform the selected pilot actions in the light of what dictated within the Alpine Convention Protocols and the stakeholders' requests.

AlpCity 2 aims at creating a mix of the top-down (guiding principles inspiring policies according to European policies, Alpine Convention, etc.) and bottom-up (listening at stakeholders' requests according to the participation methodology already tested within AlpCity) approaches.

The policy debate will be accompanied by a selection of pilot actions to be implemented during the project in three work areas; each of them is jointly coordinated by some project partners:

1. institutional strengthening,
2. public and private services for people,
3. public and private services for enterprises.

The selected pilot actions should necessarily belong to two (indicative) typologies:
- tutoring actions for the transfer of innovative pilot actions already implemented in each one of the work areas;
- jointly testing of innovative actions among different project partners in order to improve or modify services.

A range of activities have to be scheduled for each work area. The following list can be useful as example:

Institutional strengthening:
1. public servants' trans-national exchange and mobility;
2. improvement of skills for project-making, monitoring and evaluation of regional and local development policies according to the European guidance;
3. facilitation of abilities in negotiating, networking and setting up of local, regional, trans-national and international partnership forms;
4. development of territorial marketing projects;
5. …

Public and private services for people:
1. Education: e.g. facilitating processes of e-learning and distant learning addressed to disadvantaged groups (women, immigrants, youth);
2. Training and work: e.g. entrepreneurship promotion;
3. Health-care
4. Social issues
5. Culture
6. Sport
7. …

Public and private services for enterprises:
1. Tutoring and assistance to start-up enterprises;
2. Dissemination of information and financial special terms;
3. Technical assistance supporting the participation in regional, national, European and international calls for tenders;
4. Facilitation of clustering and contacts between SMEs and research centres;
5. Promotion of alpine trademarks at international levels;
6. ….

With the aim at maximising synergies with other initiatives, also the most relevant databases on services in mountain areas created and updated by AlpCity 2 project partners, beneficiaries and observers (e.g. CIPRA, MEDIAALP, etc.) should be included into the AlpCity 2 platform.

a. The added value produced by the AlpCity 2 project idea is ambivalent:
   a. On one hand it will provide policy-makers with a support to design joint policies and strategies for the improvement of life quality in the Alpine area. To this purpose the project aims at proposing itself as instrument of the initiative promoted by EUROMONTANA and UNCEM (already approved by the president of the European Commission Barroso) for the drafting of a Green Paper on European policy for mountain areas; particularly in Chapter 1 (Socio-economic factors) regarding services. First contacts have been started with UNCEM for a potential collaboration.
   b. On the other hand it will generate an effective and efficient impact on the territory, through a proper monitoring of pilot actions carried out and the quantitative and quality assessment (by means of appropriate indicators) of the improvement on life quality.