



Partners' Internal Meeting

organized by



MINUTES

Piedmont Region Meeting Room
Via Lagrange 24, Turin





TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of participants	5
Agenda	7
Welcome by the hosting Partner Regione Piemonte and the day before's conclusions Maria Cavallo Perin Officer in Charge of the AlpCity Project, Piedmont Region.....	9
Introduction to the Meeting by the LP and A SWOT analysis for the AlpCity follow up Daniela Sena AlpCity Project Manager, Piedmont Region.....	11
AlpCity II: ideas and proposals from AlpCity Project Partners PP Lombardy Region (Italy) Maria Luisa Dagnino AlpCity Project Manager, Lombardy Region.....	15
AlpCity II: ideas and proposals from AlpCity Project Partners PP Provincial Government of Lower Austria Hubert Trauner AlpCity Project Manager, Provincial Government of Lower Austria.....	18
AlpCity II: ideas and proposals from AlpCity Project Partners PP Franche-Comté Region (France) Claudine Bordage AlpCity Project Assistant, Franche-Comté Region.....	21
Annex: Proposal from Veneto Regional Council to go on with the AlpCity Project	25
Conclusions	30

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

NAME	INSTITUTION	ROLE	CONTACTS
Michel Fournier	Franche Comté Region	AlpCity Project Manager	Conseil régional de Franche-Comté Direction de l'Aménagement du Territoire 4 Square Castan, 25031 BESANÇON CEDEX France Tel.: +33 038616423 Fax.: +33 0381831292 michel.fournier@cr-franche-comte.fr
Claudine Bordage	Franche Comté Region	AlpCity Project Assistant	Conseil régional de Franche-Comté Direction de l'Aménagement du Territoire 4 Square Castan, 25031 BESANÇON CEDEX France Tel.: +33 038616198 Fax.: + 33 0381831292 claudine.bordage @cr-franche-comte.fr
Hubert Trauner	Provincial Government of Lower Austria	AlpCity Project Manager	Landeskoordinierungsstelle für Stadterneuerung Gaswerksgasse 9 3500 Krems Austria Tel.: +43 2732 82522 45441 Fax.: +43 2732 82522 45455 hubert.trauner@noel.gv.at
Maria Luisa Dagnino	Lombardy Region	AlpCity Project Manager	Staff Politiche per il Commercio Direzione Commercio, fiere e mercati via Pola 14, 20124 Milano Italy Tel.: +39 02 6765 8461 Fax.: +39 02 6765 6218 marialuisa_dagnino @regione.lombardia.it

Alessandra Izzo	Lombardy Region	AlpCity Project Assistant	Staff Politiche per il Commercio Direzione Commercio, fiere e mercati via Pola 14, 20124 Milano Italy Tel.: +39 0267653653 Fax.: +39 02 6765 6218 alessandra_izzo@regione.lombardia.it
Magda Battistuzzi	Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region	AlpCity Project Assistant	Direzione centrale delle risorse agricole, naturali, forestali e della montagna Servizio per la montagna Viale Caccia, 17 33100 Udine Italy Tel.: +39 0432 555 086 Fax.: +39 0432 555 052 magda.battistuzzi@regione.fvg.it
Maria Cavallo Perin	Piedmont Region	Officer in charge of the AlpCity Project	Direzione Programmazione e Statistica Via Lagrange 24, 10123 Turin Italy Tel.: +39 011 432 4149 Fax.: +39 011 432 5560 mariaperin.cavallo@regione.piemonte.it
Daniela Sena	Piedmont Region	AlpCity Project Manager	Direzione Programmazione e Statistica Via Lagrange 24, 10123 Turin Italy Tel.: +39 011 432 4662 Fax.: +39 011 432 5560 pm.alpcity@regione.piemonte.it
Anna Maria Caputano	Piedmont Region	AlpCity Project Assistant	Direzione Programmazione e Statistica Via Lagrange 24, 10123 Turin Italy Tel.: +39 011 432 5915 Fax.: +39 011 432 5560 pa.alpcity@regione.piemonte.it
Antonella Convertino	Piedmont Region	AlpCity Project Reporting Assistant	Direzione Programmazione e Statistica Via Lagrange 24, 10123 Turin Italy Tel.: +39 011 432 5260 Fax.: +39 011 432 5560 pa.alpcity@regione.piemonte.it
Valentina Scioneri	Piedmont Region	AlpCity Project I&P Assistant	Direzione Programmazione e Statistica Via Lagrange 24, 10123 Turin Italy Tel.: +39 011 432 5350 Fax.: +39 011 432 5560 alpcity@regione.piemonte.it

AGENDA

AlpCity follow up internal meeting - OPENING SESSION

- 9.00 – 9.30 Registration to the meeting
- 9.30 – 9.45 **Welcome by the hosting Partner Regione Piemonte**
Maria Cavallo Perin (Officer in charge of the AlpCity Project)
- 9.45 – 10.00 **Introduction to the Meeting by the LP**
Daniela Sena (AlpCity Project Manager)

AlpCity follow up internal meeting - WORKING SESSION

- 10.00 – 10.15 **The day before's conclusions**
Maria Cavallo Perin
- 10.15 – 10.45 **A SWOT analysis for the AlpCity follow up**
Daniela Sena
- 10.45 – 11.15 **AlpCity II: ideas and proposals from AlpCity PPs**
PP Lombardia
PP Niederosterreich
PP Franche Comté
- 11.15 – 11.30 **AlpCity II: ideas and proposals by the AlpCity LP**
Maria Cavallo Perin and Daniela Sena

AlpCity follow up internal meeting - CLOSING SESSION

- 11.30 – 12.00 **Brainstorming**
- 12.00 – 12.15 **AlpCity II: Plan of work for the following months**
Daniela Sena
- 12.15 – 12.30 **Conclusions**
Maria Cavallo Perin

**Welcome
by the hosting Partner
Regione Piemonte
and
The day before's
conclusions**



Maria Cavallo Perin
Officer in charge of the AlpCity Project

Dear Partners good morning,

Here we are again after a long and intensive day of presentations and discussions with a special focus on the AlpCity follow up.

Later on I will summarise the main key issues raised yesterday, which could be useful also for the today discussion.

Actually the meeting of today is organised with the aim to discuss internally and more openly the potential scenarios we can foresee together after the close end of AlpCity (end of April).

I immediately take the opportunity to thank the partners' core team present today, the ones who already sent some contributions/proposals for this meeting including Regione Veneto unfortunately absent today.

It is understood that the commitment of the partnership is a key element for the project follow up especially now that the project will officially ends.

During this period of project extension (February – April 2007) we started to exploit the different programmes of the new programming period, which are mainly under approval by the EC, such as Alpine Space II, Interreg IV C, Urbact II, Interact II, as well as other new initiatives lunched by the EC such as Regions for Economic Change.

Dana participated into some events related to these programmes and could provide us with further information on them.

As you most probably are already experiencing we are in a crucial phase due to the definition of new strategies, priorities, programmes and procedures of the new programming period. Some questions and novelties are still unclear (e.g. regions for economic change).

This transition phase effects in a certain way the future of AlpCity in the sense that, normally, it is not easy to design the future of a project (even if successful), but this process becomes much more delicate and difficult if this design is in the framework of programmes and procedures under definition. However, in line with the conference of yesterday we are exploiting new



and strategic partnerships as well as new scenarios for the future of AlpCity which could be summarised as it follows:

1) We could imagine the design and submission of a new project proposal starting from the AlpCity Project results already presented in Pracatinat in October. The main idea was for a trans-national laboratory for the development of small alpine towns through strategic networks and transfer aimed at the formulation and sharing of innovative policies. This proposal is, for example, in line with the EC Regions for economic change initiative (Interregional level). In opposite the sharing and transfer of best initiatives could not be submitted to the Alpine Space anymore.

Before working at a new project proposal we have to reflect and decide the best level (trans-national, interregional) to focus on and, therefore, to choose a programme to submit the proposal to: Alpine Space II, Interreg IV C, Regions for Economic Change, etc.

2) We could imagine a sort of collaboration among some of the AlpCity existing Partners, and new ones, without the finalisation and submission of a new project proposal to a specific EC programme. This could be also considered as an intermediate

phase before the finalisation of any EC new project proposal finalised with a medium-long term perspective.

The areas of collaboration could be related to the new cohesion policy, and related key issues such as:

- The use of renewable energies;
- The setting up of a common market of public works and services;
- The promotion and implementation of strategic spatial and territorial planning.

A cross cutting area of collaboration is represented by the institutional strengthening and development of human resources involved in the process of implementation and integration of structural funds.

Today it is quite difficult to make a precise choice, or speak about the new project proposal without a strong project idea to work on, and without clear programmes and procedures.

However we have to benefit from this (last official partners' meeting) opportunity, and set up a fruitful brainstorming session in which we could openly communicate and listen to the different ideas, proposals, criticisms and discuss them in view of a potential future collaboration on the basis of the AlpCity Project relevant results, and the first steps forward discussed yesterday.



Introduction to the Meeting by the LP and A SWOT analysis for the AlpCity follow up



Daniela Sena

AlpCity Project Manager

After Maria Cavallo Perin's comprehensive introduction to this internal meeting I immediately focus on the clue of our debate.

For the AlpCity follow up I have developed a SWOT analysis, which can help us thinking about the state of the art of the project and its future potential developments.

As you know, a SWOT analysis is characterized by the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a certain situation.

Strengths.

As first important element of the AlpCity successful story I want to recall its partnership, which revealed to be effective in its embracing all the alpine arc, from the western side to the eastern one, at different level of European public authorities. We can consider very precious all the inputs provided by the project partners, who

have been able to set up a real and fruitful collaboration as showed through the project results and the will to go on together.

A very peculiar AlpCity asset is represented by its capacity to develop relationships beyond European borders. Following a natural path traced by the project themes, AlpCity started a meaningful collaboration with the UNITED NATIONS Habitat, an international agency dealing with human settlements topics and particularly within its 'Best Practices and Local Leadership' ten-year-old Programme. Through this collaboration AlpCity has had the chance to enter a network of international and competent actors.

Without any doubt AlpCity can be considered as a successful story thanks to its positive and innovative results, which took the form of actions and procedures. Through the development of 21 case studies coordinated by the different project partners a comprehensive and various range of innovative initiatives have been analysed and are now ready to be put in place and further developed and transferred in other environments. The AlpCity toolbox has been enriched of several instruments; first of all a successful bottom-up approach and then a rigorous methodology to select solutions quality according to scientific criteria. The AlpCity project value has been acknowledged at European Union,



national and international levels during many occasions in the last two years. Among the most important judgements I would like to remark the acknowledgement by the Alpine Space Joint Technical Secretariat as successful story during the Alpine Space Summit in Stresa (June 2006). At national level AlpCity was awarded as 'Best Practice within Public Authorities' on the occasion of the Public Authorities Forum 2006 in Rome (May 2006). Last but not least it received a certificate as international 'Best Practice' by UN Habitat during the Dubai Award 2006.

The effective engagement and efforts performed within the AlpCity Project have also aroused the interest and the curiosity of other Alpine Space active key-actors. In particular CIPRA International (International Commission for the Alps protection) expressed its affinity with our project in the framework of its 'Future in the Alps' project. Moreover we have been contacted also by another INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space Project, MEDIALP, which concluded some months ago and is interested in jointly carrying on its results with AlpCity in the view of the next programming period (2007-2013).

Thanks to its crosscutting approach to sustainable development in the Alps, AlpCity can look at the new programming period from different points of view. In other words the prosecution of the project can be supposed to be performed within

different channels. Apart from presenting its candidature to the ASP II call, we should take also other European initiatives into consideration. For example the new 'Regions for Economic Change' Initiative could be a chance, since it deals with interregional transfers of best and innovative solutions through flexible and effective networks aiming at reducing development gaps among European Regions. This initiative emerges from the interesting INTERREG IIIC Programme, which will be proposed again under the name IVC; it could represent an occasion to enlarge the AlpCity Partnership and results to the interregional cooperation dimension. Finally the AlpCity particular attention towards small-sized towns provides an atout to create synergies and interactions with the so-called URBACT Programme.

Weaknesses.

During this brainstorming for the new proposal the analyses of the weaknesses remarked within the AlpCity Project performance can result very useful.

For what concerns the AlpCity Partnership we can verify its absolutely public character. In fact the private element is absent, together with a range of different competences and nature among partners. As suggested in the first drafts of the new operational programme we should pay more attention to a differentiated



and more comprehensive partnership.

A very important missing factor in the AlpCity past is represented by the political support, which seems to be the key-element to achieve a real sharing of mountain policies among the project partners. Moreover, this more ambitious starting programming period requires an effective engagement and interest of regional policy-makers in order to properly allocate funds.

After listing all the acknowledgements addressed to AlpCity, we have to admit that there hasn't been an effective communication at local level. In spite of the local case studies and the bottom-up approach implemented, there is an evident lack of information among the local stakeholders. For many of them, AlpCity remains still unknown and consequently useless.

In spite of all the awards at national, European and international levels, AlpCity faces many difficulties in this follow up phase to be considered at strategic level as a tool to enhance mountain sustainable development.

The AlpCity Project has already tried to develop relationships and concretise actions with external actors (UN Habitat, Alpine Convention, etc.), but these efforts revealed to be tricky and knotty. The creation of effective synergies

appeared like a very complex task during the project implementation.

Even if the AlpCity Project developed successfully and concluded with short-listed clear benchmarks for the future, there is still not a unique strong idea in terms of new project proposals as well as new programmes. I hope this meeting will allow us to select some important starting points.

Opportunities.

One of the main reflections regards the new partnership. First of all we will take into great consideration interests and inputs from the existing partners. Moreover we want to take the opportunity to involve international partners in order to enlarge the project horizon.

Apart from the Alpine Space Programme, the AlpCity Project considers also other European initiatives as future perspectives. In relation to the project themes we think to deepen our interest and potential participation in the following initiatives: 'Regions for Economic Change', IVC, Urbact II, Interact.

In the meanwhile we wait for the first call of ASP II scheduled around October 2007. To this purpose I would like to recall you that this time the procedure to present the candidature will probably be divided into two steps: at the beginning just a description of the project idea will be expressed. Some interesting



information regards the European percentage of financial support: 75% instead of the previous 50%.

Threats.

We have to consider that the extension will be concluded in less than one month at the end of April. This means that all the following efforts will be organized without any European or national financial support.

We are entering a very delicate period regarding a hand-over phase to the new programming period: in this sense we need to be very sharp focussing on the new strategies designed according to the new programmes and procedures.

Another risk is represented by the inability to finalize a strategic partnership and project for several reasons due to time constraints or lack of common intents for a project proposal.

Organizing and strengthening a real collaboration with international organizations is a very difficult task as we realized in the most recent months: political and bureaucratic hurdles can easily undermine cooperative and constructive proposals.

AlpCity II: ideas and proposals from AlpCity Project Partners

PP Lombardy Region (Italy)



RegioneLombardia

Commercio, Fiere e Mercati

Maria Luisa Dagnino

AlpCity Project Manager
PP Lombardy Region

Lombardy Regional Administration's Directorate for Trade, Fairs and Markets keenly welcomed the proposal to continue the AlpCity project through the creation of an international workshop focussing on the collection, selection and improvement of best practices, principally because it was in line with activities already underway. In 2002, the Lombardy Regional Administration instituted the Regional Monitoring Unit for Trade. Its activities include "monitoring of the trade network in all its forms and typologies, in order to make available to the regional administration, the categories and all of the interested parties all the information about the network features, its interactions with the territory and the demand evolution,



innovation and application tools of regulations supporting trade activities". The decision to give this area a more international perspective, while focussing on the key and qualitative aspects of trade network planning, gives this initiative a major boost and opens up new horizons.

The Observatory for Trade undertakes carefully focussed research and survey work and disseminates the results. In recent years, a substantial amount of energy has been put into determining consistency, but so far there is nothing structural when it comes to best practices. AlpCity offers a good opportunity to begin work aimed at urban areas.

The AlpCity project brought to light what is needed for trade to develop in mountain areas and, especially, in small villages that are not on regular tourist routes:

- The courage to try new things is limited.
- Entrepreneurial flair or willingness is lacking.
- Levels of training tend to be insufficient.
- A lack of reference models that could be applied.
- The lack of people that entrepreneurs can ask for help in making decisions leads to the result that entrepreneurs feel they do not belong to a wider group or association (a positive example of this is the role

played by the Chamber of Commerce in France in trying out new models for multi-service shops – creating chains of multi-service shops).

- Local administrations lack the ability to group together to promote events that can improve the attractiveness of these territories (Town Centre Management for the mountains – as suggested in the final report on the projects in Valcamonica and Valvestino).
- An inability to bring together territorial resources and initiatives.
- The lack of cooperation among the various levels of retail (large and medium-scale retailers and village shops).

As such, the regional administration does not only need to study and identify the best options to implement, promote and disseminate, but also to identify intermediary subjects that can help expanding the efforts undertaken.

With these objectives in mind, we began various activities that started as early as the final phase of AlpCity and involved the active participation of Dana and Antonella.

- 1) An initial workshop was held on the 5th of October at Unioncamere Lombardia in Milan to explore if and how the "intermediary subjects" in the



relevant territories can support not only specific development initiatives, but also training and dissemination initiatives in the territory as well as becoming a reference point for small entrepreneurs.

The following were invited: Comunità Montane (mountain area authorities); nature park administrative authorities; chambers of commerce; and key members of large-scale retail. In the new regional plan, the latter group has been given the role of supporting and working with small-scale shops.

In particular, the councillor from the Comunità Montana Valcamonica explained what they had done to sustain trade in their territory. Their efforts included providing financial support for food shops located in municipalities over 400m above sea level and with populations of less than 1,000 people.

The Varese Chamber of Commerce presented a project aimed at creating multi-service shops in specific mountain areas that had been chosen on the basis of potential and necessity.

A key aspect highlighted was the need to start this type experimentation only if it involves a micro-network of three or more shops.

2) A conference entitled "Regional and European

Policies for Trade in Mountain Areas" was held in Milan on the 20th of November. At this event, proposals were presented where outcomes had been satisfactory.

Notably, we were able to attract the attention of large-scale retailers. A representative from IPERAL, operating in the provinces of Sondrio and Brescia, emphasised the need for large-scale retailers to cooperate with smaller retailers to ensure the socio-economic development of the territory. IPERAL has already backed a project entitled "Grandi". This involved the opening of a large-scale retail outlet being coupled with buying and refurbishing a village shop, in a municipality of 1,100 people, that was then handed over to be managed by an entrepreneur. The success of this project can be seen by the entrepreneur's desire to buy two further shops in small municipalities, one in a lake area and the other on mountain.

During this intermediary phase, we set up a simulation system that allows small entrepreneurs to check the economic feasibility of multi-service shops. The aim of this, in practical terms, is at creating a "macro-model" by using comparative analysis combined with geo-referencing a series of indicators about the local situation (accessibility and mobility), the demand for trade and related services and the presence of trade



and complementary services already provided. This macro-model will evaluate the economic feasibility of a multi-service store. The margin for error will be reduced through the use of detailed information in the experimentation phase of the model by the entrepreneurs or intermediary subjects (chambers of commerce) that will support the entrepreneurs during the implementation of the project.

Besides the mountain theme, there is the more general theme of the commercial attractiveness of urban centres through urban regeneration and Town Centre Management. This is also a theme that the Regional Observatory can examine and that could be developed as part of a new European project.

At present, "Educational Tours" are being planned. These are aimed at local entrepreneurs and administrators, and the objective is to study, "on the field", how town centre management has worked in other European countries (England, Spain,...).

Finally, we are working to involve associations. This is in line with the latest European directives that call for particular attention to be placed on building partnerships.

Therefore, we feel that the prosecution of the project could

involve a centralised "control room" located at the Piedmont Regional Administration. This would be linked to a network of "control rooms" in other regions (preferably being linked to the already existing Observatories – for trade as well as for the territory or statistical aspects – in other regions) that would, in turn, be linked to a series of intermediary bodies that are involved in disseminating the models in the territory.



AlpCity II: ideas and proposals from AlpCity Project Partners

PP Provincial Government of Lower Austria



Hubert Trauner

AlpCity Project Manager

PP Provincial Government of Lower Austria

The idea for cooperation from the Provincial Government of Lower Austria is focussed on ALPNET – Cooperation and technical assistance to small-medium alpine local authorities on sustainable urban regeneration activities.

The main objectives of this project are the followings:

- supporting the development of cooperation and networks of authorities and NGO's from a local to a provincial level;
- strengthening 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.

The main target groups are:

- local, regional and provincial decision-makers;
- local, regional and provincial authorities;
- economic actors;
- NGOs dealing with the themes of the cooperation networks.

The quality target of the project implies:

- participation of authorities, stakeholders, inhabitants, NGOs, etc;
- transparency of decisions;
- supporting the process of decision making with technical assistance;
- transferability of the experiences to other institutions.

The setting up of networks and tasks aims at:

- selection of local authorities during the project preparation phase;
- conception and programme for realisation;
- preparation of data concerning the fields of networks;
- research of best practice examples;
- implementing structure of organization between local

authorities, associations and appropriate authorities.

The programme started in 1992 and 52 towns are currently members of the Programme (75% of all towns in Lower Austria).

Since the beginning more than 620 projects have been fulfilled through €20 million sponsored by the government. Later on ERDF funds have been added with a total amount of investment of €83 million

The task of this programme is enabling the citizens and the local authorities to articulate their needs, organizing self-help and performing the planned projects. Therefore in each town an office with a consultant is installed in cooperation with the local authority.

The main focus of the government aid is laid on projects dealing with youth, arts and culture, data transmission and networking.

The organization of ALPNET is as follows: the Provincial Government of Lower Austria takes care of coordination, public relations and technical support. The following three kinds of cooperation are developed:

- city centre vitalisation;
- urban regeneration;
- youth.

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 programme which concentrates on grouping and effective using of available strengths.

Three focuses could be outlined:

- promotion of city centre mail
- promotion of trade
- aimed promotion of housing to stimulate city centres.

These programmes were tested in some communes and networking allows to exchange and to create common knowledge and strategies. International networking would increase the chance of grouping and effective using available strength and to exchange different knowledge and strategies. The towns can share their common resources to solve problems they face.

We can propose as example the cultural summer festival of Haag.

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 forms 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. As example we have the network of walled towns.

Youth in small-medium alpine towns: the aim is at integrating the youth in decision-making, forming the opinion



and designing process. The network should help to exchange experiences and topics. Another aim is to invent methods for a sustainable involvement of the youth in these processes. Acting 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. Cooperation between local authorities and associations could give new ideas, new impulse and new points of view. As example we have the old slaughter house in Hollabrunn.

AlpCity II: ideas and proposals from AlpCity Project Partners

PP Franche-Comté Region (France)



Claudine Bordage

AlpCity Project Assistant
PP Franche Comté Region

From 2004 to 2006, the AlpCity Project Partners have developed the habit of working together. They set up a network with a common aim: the mountain endogenous sustainable development through the sharing of know-how between partners from case studies.

The work is far from having produced all the expected results, notably as far as exchanges between partners and local managers as well as lessons learned are concerned. This is due to the fact that an action requires a certain time (around 2 to 5 years) in order to get results.

Unfortunately time to exchange information about projects carried out has been lacking.

Local actors have been not enough involved in the whole organization of the AlpCity Project.

In any case Franche-Comté Region intends to continue the work begun within AlpCity by following three main objectives:

- Enhancing the recognition of the importance of small alpine towns in the territorial dynamic of the alpine space,
- Contributing to reinforce the attractiveness of small alpine towns as far as economy, tourism, services, landscape and urban quality are concerned in view of a harmonious and sustainable development of the alpine space,
- Contributing to a European policy of territorial planning and sustainable development.

Organising an horizontal and vertical « AlpCity » network: the proposed organisation by Franche-Comté Region would rest on a more direct networking of the partners at different levels (project/regions/local actors) and between the different levels to dynamise the « network effect » and facilitate the dissemination of experiences by direct exchanges between local managers and/or between partners.

Two new dimensions could be integrated through:

- more direct exchanges between Project Partners Regions,

- exchanges at local level.

The pursuit of these objectives supposes to have the project organisation changed in order to integrate the dimension of local actors.

At a conceptual level, exchanges of practices and the support of university researchers would enable us to get a systemic analysis of the evolution of small towns according to the different issues and the interactions between those dynamics. A better knowledge of these evolutions would enable partners to better orientate their policies or even to adapt them.

On a more operational level and in link with the conceptual analysis, these exchanges would allow to continue selecting good practices, analysing them, finding transferable features.

Key actors managing directly the projects could be more directly involved by the Region level. Once discussion is structured, that partners know each other and that projects have been launched, this second level of exchange would become essential so that project managers could:

- benefit directly from good practices selected in other territories, being able to adapt these practices to their own projects,



- know examples from other territories to develop new projects adapted to their area and informing their « upper » administrative level of possible needs in terms of financial, technical assistance, etc.

This networking organisation could run by setting distinct objectives according to the involved levels:

Alpine space level: the level of project management: at this level, the lead partner would be responsible for the management of the project as well as of the coordination between all the partners; it would play its role (as during 2004-2006) of leadership for the group of regions partners by stirring the dynamic between partners and supporting spontaneous contributions; it will be in charge of linking the scientific level, the laboratory and the different partners. It could be interesting also if regions could support the LP role of stirring up the dynamic and interface between experts and local actors. In this view the new entity represented by the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation¹ could be an interesting tool.

¹ The rule of the European parliament (5th July 2006) gives this organisation a legal basis to facilitate and support the achievement of territorial cooperation actions with or without financial contribution from the EU. The participation of Non-EU members is possible under certain conditions. The setting-up of such an organisation would allow to share the

The partners level: first network: each partner would be the leader of its area (Region, Bundesland...). The partners would be the relay between the project level and the local level:

- They would inform local project actors about the themes discussed within the AlpCity Project, good practices, etc.
- They would be the relay in the bottom-up direction by indicating the good practices selected on their own territory to the « project » level in order to fill the database of good practices in and to debate on different issues.
- They would exchange information in a transversal way on certain specific issues.

All the exchanges would « feed » the discussions among partners and would contribute thus to force them to adapt their way of action according to the achievements, the improvements made, etc. By working together on a more regular basis, regions could thus be involved more deeply into the project life.

Eventually the interest of AlpCity II would rest on the stirring of local actors' networks around themes, issues, actions etc. The networking dynamic between local actors will be based on the PPs capacity to create and maintain it. See below for explanations.

responsibilities and financing between region partners instead of having them to be only the duty of the LP.

Network of local actors: exchanges and thematic networks. This level would be the one of territorial actions (case studies) within AlpCity. The idea is that local project managers also work in network, notably through exchanges and meetings: good practices of some actors could be useful for the projects of others, etc.

The network life could be organised differently: organisation of excursions, exchanges of literature, newsletters, seminars, organisation of videoconferences, integrated website or within the AlpCity website. These thematic networks (like for example sustainable tourism, housing and sustainable urban organisation, etc.) would be identified by the partner regions during the project implementation and debates among the local project managers.

The main benefit for the local actors would be not only to receive information brought by their Region or partner organisation but also to be key actor.

The scientific support to partners and local actors: the laboratory.

The scientific support would be pursued with the main objective of:

- taking part into the general structure of the whole project via knowledge of specific phenomena of the small alpine towns through the analysis of changes,

- providing a critic opinion on the results: analysis of transferable elements of local projects,
- contributing to the project releases.

This support could be organised within a laboratory, whose originality would consist in gathering partners and experts at key moments of the project in order to find innovations, impulse the thematic networks and make proposals for the project life. This laboratory would function also like a network.

The expected operational results are as follows:

- Finding good practices

These good practices come from the operations carried out locally, from the tools and methods, from the types of governance, institutional, contractual incentives and so on.

They represent different fields of action: economic, tourist or agricultural development, urban development, landscape integration, protection and enhancement of natural heritage and buildings, governance, institutions.

Partners would have the task to find these good practices and to identify possible obstacles encountered during the projects.

But partners, experts and the laboratory would also initiate themes, in which there is an interest in finding good practices, either because an experience is particularly interesting somewhere, or because a theme



appears as an incentive for the dynamic of small towns, etc.

- Transfer to local actors

The focus of AlpCity II would be on the dissemination of good practices among local project managers in order to create and impulse a dynamic of small alpine towns. In that sense:

- The scientific level, with the laboratory notably, would contribute to the analysis of the transferable features of good practices by emphasising their feasibility and success conditions.
- In the framework of the thematic networks gathering local actors, the organisation of field visits would be a good thing: in fact direct exchange between actors is the most efficient way to communicate and disseminate the good experiences. The direct exchange enables indeed to improve the understanding and thus the integration of new practices.

- Knowledge of small alpine towns

The various contributions of the PP regions and the laboratory would contribute to a better knowledge of small alpine towns' dynamics, on every study field of the project.

They would be structured at scientific level and could be completed by comparative studies, studies on the territorial dynamics, exchanges between researchers and civil servants of Regions and towns.

The dissemination of this knowledge at

local and regional levels could be done via releases, seminars excursions.

- Contribution to the improvement of planning policies

Beyond the specific themes related to small towns such as urban environment, economic development, services and quality of life and cooperation, the issue of policies supporting these territorial dynamics could be also one of the discussed subjects, finally resulting in proposals to the European Commission on territorial planning policies.



ANNEX Proposal from Veneto Regional Council to go on with the AlpCity Project



REGIONE DEL VENETO

This proposal gathers together some of the ideas on how to continue the AlpCity Project in the new 2007-2013 planning period.

These notes also take into consideration the proposals emerged from the partners' contributions in the AlpCity 2004-2006 Project, which they presented over the last few days.

The new planning season for the European Union will last seven years from 2007 to 2013, and provides a number of policies and actions concerning Veneto Region and which will have a significant territorial impact.

The Alpine Space Programme will continue to finance the projects as part of the territorial cooperation objective, which falls in the sphere of sustainable growth and cohesion. As we all know, future plans are strongly orientated towards the Lisbon objectives, the Gothenburg priorities and the EU cohesion policies.

The areas eligible for the trans-national Alpine Space Operational Programme are:

- Italy: Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Trentino Alto Adige, Lombardy, Piedmont, Liguria, Val d'Aosta Regions.
- Slovenia: the whole country.
- Austria: the whole country.
- Germany: districts of Oberbayern and Schwaben (in Bayern), Tübingen and Freiburg (in Baden-Württemberg).
- France: Rhône-Alpes, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Franche-Comté, Alsace Regions.
- Switzerland: the whole country.
- Liechtenstein: the whole country.



Eligible areas for the trans-national Alpine Space Programme.

Source: European Commission, DG Regio.

The continuation of the project requires **an integrated vision** with the EU policies and, in particular, the ability to adapt to special challenges and opportunities in the various territories, looking for the right balance between thematic and territorial priorities.



There are three thematic priorities in the "regional competitiveness and employment" objective and, in broad terms, in the "European territorial cooperation" objective:

- Innovation and economy of knowledge,
- Environment,
- Access to services (transport and telecommunications)

Alongside these thematic priorities there are the following territorial priorities:

- Sustainable urban development,
- Renewal in rural areas,
- Renewal in fishing areas,
- Areas that have geographic or natural disadvantages.

The "European territorial cooperation" objective aims at strengthening cross-border cooperation, trans-national cooperation and interregional cooperation, together with a good exchange of experience at territorial level.

STEPS AHEAD

Therefore, on the basis of the above, in order to continue the project we need **to reinforce the practical effects** of the work carried out in the previous period, emphasising the operational part. We feel safe in saying this since it seems to be a common opinion expressed by the partners in the recent meetings (PraCatinat, Venice).

However, it would be a good idea if the practical actions were preceded by a moment of reflection on the most significant outcomes of the first part of the project and their possible effects.

This reflection could be organised on two levels:

1) **Innovation:** selecting the most innovative features of the actions that have already been implemented, addressing future work towards the same objective.

2) **Theoretical and scientific analysis:** explaining the conceptual assumptions, themes can be based on and shared with. Then arranging the structure of the new contributions from the partners (like the contribution from Franche-Comté Region also seems to suggest).

In our opinion, cooperation between partners would help closer sharing of a transversal theme which involves the entire Alpine area and could be extremely important within the objectives fixed by the EU (Lisbon-Gothenburg).

Proposal for a transversal theme

Veneto Regional Council has always been very attentive to problems involving territorial planning, especially planning procedures duly considering European directives.

Territorial planning traditions and extensive preparation work, Veneto Regional Council is carrying forward for its new PTRC provide the chance to identify methods and best



practices for sustainable territorial planning. Moreover they allow us to gather and interiorise new ideas and experiences from Italy and abroad. In fact, "Regulations for territorial government" Regional Law 11/2004 expressly considers "coordination of regional situations with national and European development policies" as one of the fundamental aims to be pursued by urban and territorial planning instruments.

This is what Veneto Regional Council's reasoning and proposal is based on, being certain that a top-down/bottom-up approach can be established within the relationships between urban and regional territorial planning and European Union policies.

The Alpine areas with their various problems and specific development opportunities present fundamental questions to territorial planning. We feel it is important to grasp the opportunity of the Alpcity Project, which involves several Alpine regions, in order to try and offer new instruments to EU policies. The purpose consists in reviewing and specifying territorial policies, which are more and more precise and effective, especially for the Alpine areas.

Therefore the transversal objective of the proposal is to help reflecting on the possible meaning of **territorial planning** in the Alpine area.

Background

Certain experiences of Veneto Regional Council are behind these

reflections, which could be a good background to start from and also a good reason for analysis:

- POLY.DEV.Project – Interreg IIIB – CADSES – 2000-2006 planning
- Comelico East-Tyrol trans-national plan

The POLY.DEV. Project – which will end in October 2007 – relates to 'Sustainable polycentric development in the Cadses area' and aims at promoting trans-national exchange on matters related to territorial planning and polycentric development in the areas of Central Europe, Adriatic, Danube and Southeast.

The project includes studies of the relationship between rural and/or natural areas and urban areas, through coordinated territorial planning actions for their polycentric development. The main objective at trans-national level is to strengthen management skills of regional and local institutions in territorial planning, which will lead to a common and integrated strategy of polycentric sustainable development in old and new partner countries of the CADSES area.

The Comelico East-Tyrol trans-national plan was drawn up by the Territorial Planning Department of Veneto Regional Council, and is one of the few experiences in vast areas planning, implemented in cooperation with a bordering country. It involves the mountain areas of



Comelico (Italy) and East-Tyrol (Austria).

Each Region with its specific administrative, geographic and socio-economic features could provide an important contribution to this fundamental theme of the European Union, also in the view of the next ESDP as well.

We would like to pose the following questions:

- Does planning still make sense in the Alpine area, and how? Does planning in marginal areas or areas with unbalanced development make sense? With which tools?
- Which advantages could be gained from planning at trans-regional/trans-national level?
- What specific knowledge is required for planning in the Alpine area? (e.g. according to Franche Cômte Region we should know more about the small Alpine towns and their development trends).
- Which role can trans-national cooperation play (see GETC and EuroRegions)?
- How can best practices in mountain area planning be effectively exchanged?
- How is the urban-rural relationship declined in the various Alpine areas (central theme in EU policies)?

Proposal for organising the theme

Each PP could arrange its work in two parts: the first general part, organised according to a common structure; the second part tuned to the specific

interests and needs of each single partner or region involved, which should represent a specific analysis according to individual nature and needs.

1. General part

This part should be the link between the partners, a valid reason for exchange and the guarantee that the project outcomes can be compared. Implementing an organised method, as given below, could already be an interesting and common outcome, which could be proposed as study material for the continued development of effective and adequate EU policies. A common summary publication could be arranged as an intermediate outcome of the project.

- Identifying the planning methods in the Alpine area in each PP region (features and problems).
- Recognition of the regulations and government instruments in the area.
- Identifying any trans-national planning cases (best practices).
- Critical collection of data and literature on anthropical Alpine areas and their planning and management in each PP region.

2. Specific part

The specific analysis part should be proposed by each partner. Below

there are few examples Veneto Region could be interested in:

- Territorial planning role and instruments in the economic development of Alpine areas.
- The contribution of planning in maintaining services and quality of life in the mountain areas.
- Planning methods and instruments to preserve rural and urban building, traditional landscapes and new landscapes in the Alps.
- The role of planning in cooperation among mountain areas and small towns to grant sustainable development of the area (see planning instruments for vast areas).

Conclusions

The participants into the meeting agreed to go on with the debate around the new project proposal.

Franche Comté Region presented an idea: an expression of interest from the different project partners addressed to the Lead Partner President, in which they show their intention to prosecute with the AlpCity partnership and activities.

Moreover they agreed to organize monthly videoconferences in order to update and follow the evolution of the project proposal according to documents and decisions at regional, national and EU level.

Afterwards the written proposal sent by Veneto Region was read and exposed by Daniela Sena on the authors' behalf.