

The renewal of abandoned mountain hamlets



AlpCity Partner Work Package WP Coordinator Subjects involved and their role

Piedmont Region (Italy)
Urban environment (WP7)
Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy)
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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)

Spatial area involved Project budget Project purpose

The hamlet of Varda belonging to the municipality of Noasca (207 inhab.)

€ 40.000,00

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 in the winter season, so to encourage and promote the local community acting on the territory at a social-economic level.

Project methodology

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



Project activities

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

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 transformation. The problem of accessibility (AHP e Electre).
- The economic-financial feasibility: the potential tourist demand; the existing supply (hotels, hostels, refuges) and the users' target
- The dimensional hypothesis of the multi-building hotel
- The proposal to develop the milk industry

Economic analysis:

- The total cost of operation (a multi-building hotel, mountain pastures and the main street)
- Management
- The economic and financial plan
- The economic convenience (costs-benefits analysis)

Achieved results

Development of some ideas concerning the increasing of the value of the hamlet and the search of compatible new functions.

Analysis of accessibility.

Establishment of two steps:

- The renewal of the hamlet and its transformation into a multi-building hotel by using the existing path



Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Setting up of a new access (a street ending in the Fragno hamlet) No discrepancies were found
Instruments proposed/revised/finalised	Planning procedures with the participation of public and private actors involved. Economic and financial feasibility study for the reconversion of some buildings into a multi-building hotel
Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders	Development of a nature-oriented and sport tourism; increasing of the value of some agricultural and sheep farming traditions; enforcement of the territory identity.
Critical aspects	Distrustfulness of the local investors and owners. Difficulty in involving the key actors in the different steps of designing and developing the project.
Lessons learned	The main lesson consists in the important involvement (even if initially difficult) of the local actors in all the steps of the project.
Transferability	The most important elements, which can be transferred, are the concept of participation and a feasibility study.
Case study follow-up	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 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.
Common issues with other projects	A special synergy was promoted with the WP7 Veneto Region case study on the recovery of <i>tabià</i> . 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.
SSC Experts' comments and recommendations	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.