



**Renovation and optimum use  
of abandoned rural buildings  
once used  
for production purposes**



**AlpCity Partner  
Work Package  
WP Coordinator  
Subjects involved  
and their role**

Veneto Region (Italy)  
Urban environment (WP7)  
Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (Italy)  
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Developing his case studies, Veneto Region involved two local institutions, the Agordina Mountain Community and the Comelico Sappada one, which provided their political, administrative and technical support.

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**Spatial area**

Canale D'Agordo, Cencenighe Agordino, Falcade, S.Tommaso Agordino, Vallada



<b>involved</b>	Agordina for the Agordina Mountain Community Comelico Superiore for the Mountain Community of Comelico and Sappada
<b>Project budget</b>	€ 90.000,00
<b>Project purpose</b>	<p>The aim of the project was at identifying a method and/or practice to convert the architectural, historical and cultural heritage of the small alpine areas. The purpose consisted in safeguarding the unspoiled beauty of the countryside and handing it down over the generations, by arresting the current process of physical and socio-economic decline, which has affected these mountain territories for years. The actions were not ones related to hibernation or nostalgic attempts to recover an ancient sense of the mountains, but an effort to find a sustainable way for these areas, which is compatible with their natural resources.</p> <p>The implementation of the two case projects was intended to give an impulse to the socio-economic revitalization of the territories involved, because the activities proposed are closely linked with local development policies carried out by local authorities</p>
<b>Project methodology</b>	<p>The methodology includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Transfer the model through guidelines.</li><li>▪ Promotion of a bottom-up approach, which will be implemented through the participation process activated with workshops, seminars and meeting with the population.</li><li>▪ The financing model has to be seen as a practical tool to transfer to other alpine regions.</li></ul> <p>The implementation of the two case-projects will be based on a bottom up approach aimed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Involving local communities in order to express their needs and indicate the buildings to be restored</li><li>▪ Prepare a set of questions and collect local requests and needs concerning the restoration of rural buildings taking into account needs from the territory for the implementation of case-projects.</li></ul>
<b>Project activities</b>	<p>At the end of March 2005 Veneto Region assigned the case projects implementation to a group of external experts.</p> <p>The activities started on the 1<sup>th</sup> of April 2005 and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ a draft of a work plan on the implementation of the two case-projects;</li><li>▪ a coordination meeting with the two Mountain Communities involved;</li><li>▪ a collection of documents necessary to start up with the cases implementation.</li></ul> <p>During the implementation of the case studies Veneto Region realized three typology of activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The implementation of tools, solutions, methods and good practices in order to reconvert the construction legacy of the small alpine centres.</li></ul> <p>The activity begun with the definition of the working program and of the pragmatic contexts of the case studies, as well as the specific object: the case studies realized by Veneto Region have been specifically oriented to the re-utilization of <i>tabià</i>, considered buildings of a great symbolic value. This choice determined a first level of typological identification in the rural and productive construction universe realized in the small alpine villages. At this first stage the implementation experts of the case studies and their experience were identified. Through the involvement of the stakeholders (Mountain Communities) and with the evaluation cards of the local instances, the preliminary analysis was edited, by summarizing the territorial characteristics and showing the development potentials. In sight of this analysis, the <i>tabià</i> of the study areas were identified through the General Regulating Plans and through various inspections. Afterwards, the</p>



typological analysis of the catalogued *tabià* and their single elements started: it was based on the verification of the actual situation, through inspections, photographic relief, building trade practice, which can be traced in the Technical Offices. This analysis allowed to elaborate a cataloguing methodology of the existing *tabià* broken up into base elements, contained in the Manual for Best Practices and finalized to record the heritage in the perspective of his conservation. At the same time an analysis was developed at urban scale: it defined the conditions of environmental compatibility, the minimal requirements for the dwellings, the areas anyhow ruled out of the reconversion process of the *tabià*, through the evaluation of the location, accessibility, and environment: the results are contained in the Guidelines. The principles emerging from the Manual and from the Guidelines were applied for the first time through the drafting of the Feasibility Projects, which graphically experimented the scheduled procedures and can be considerate an example for the future applications. A particular importance was given to the cultural aspect of the recovery of *tabià*: some interviews were made in order to “recover” the ancient knowledge like manufacturing of wood, stone and other materials used in the traditional construction of *tabià*.

- Activity of involvement of the local stakeholders and diffusion of the results  
The implementation of the case studies followed a bottom-up approach and various activities involving local actors were scheduled in order to detect their instances and to spread their results. In particular there was a preliminary meeting for the development of the case studies with the representatives of the Mountain Communities in order to define the addresses of the case studies. Afterwards, workshops and seminars were organized in the concerned areas in order to detect the local instances and spread its results.
- The project trans-national activities  
Veneto Region supported the project initiatives through participation in the trans-national meetings.  
Moreover, Veneto Region organized together with Lombardy Region and Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region the international conference of Milan, during the two former meetings, in Venice and in Milan on October 28<sup>th</sup> 2004 and on February 1<sup>st</sup> 2005.

#### Achieved results

Good participation and cooperation of the interested Mountain Communities in implementing the project.

The implementation of the case studies reached its purposes to individuate solutions, methods and good practices in order to reconvert the construction patrimony of small villages and to predispose transferable models of recovery in different contexts of the alpine area.

The study showed the operative levels, which can conciliate the housing usage with the conservation of those specific characters (historical, architectonic, environmental) of *tabià*. The results traced in the Manual for Best Practices and in the Guidelines can be divided in two groups: a typological restoration and an environmental one. The “typological restoration” indicated the compatibility limits of transformation; how to recuperate “the ancient know-how”; how to define the new construction criteria and/or enlargements; how to incentive communication processes and experience diffusion, by contributing a formative teaching for the public and private technical operators and for the owners or users of the buildings. The “environmental restoration” defined the guidelines for the revision of the territorial and local urban planning instruments. Even for what regards the local actors’ involvement good results have been reached.

#### Discrepancies



**between planned results and results achieved**

No discrepancies were found.

**Instruments proposed/revised/ finalized**

A Preliminary Analysis Report, which describes socio-economic and cultural characteristics of background and structural characteristics of rural and productive buildings located in two study areas;

A Manual for best practices, which contains the catalogue of buildings typologies, their analysis and possible interventions for their recovery;

Some Guidelines containing the criteria for safeguard of rural buildings and their environment with some town planning indications;

Two Feasibility Projects representing examples for future recoveries indicating phases of design;

Four interviews to the skilled workers in order to recover old best practices concerning building techniques.

**Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders**

The impact on the stakeholders and their involvement has been particularly important during the implementation of the case studies. In particular, there was a preliminary meeting before the project start together with the persons in charge of the Mountain Communities in order to make them participate into the definition process of the objects of the case studies. Afterwards two workshops were organized within the study areas in order to involve the local actors and the population. On this occasion, questionnaires for the revelation of local instances were distributed in order to adapt the project activities to the territorial needs. Moreover, an intermediate and a final seminar were organized with the local actors, which were informed about the advancing of the activities. Also the persons in charge of the municipal technical offices and the technicians such as architects, engineers and surveyors took part in the event. The presence of the municipal technicians had the function to compare the criteria of the PRG with the ones scheduled for the recovery of *tabià* from the outputs of the project. The presence of these subjects was fundamental for divulging the tools designed within the activities because a diffused application of the practices is possible only if the professionals know about them. Even the representatives of the ULSS participated in the seminars in order to understand that the re-utilization of *tabià* implicates some waivers to the present regulation relative to the use of houses.

**Critical aspects**

The studies made on the mountain *tabià* evidenced some criticisms about the use to be assigned to the recovered buildings. The initial objective of the research, in fact, was to restore the buildings in order to preserve their historical aspect as much as possible. During the researches it emerged that, if we want to adapt a *tabià* for living we have to make some interventions that will change the original legacy. That is why the Manual for Best Practice has the purpose to provide the tools for evaluating how much the restoring intervention can engrave on the original manufacturing, keeping the designer and the buyer conscious, and advising them a better intervention for the preservation.

**Lessons learned**

In the Manual for Best Practices a cataloguing methodology of the buildings has been defined, based on an analysis of the different kinds of the study areas. That methodology could be useful for creating a census of the typologies existing even outside the study areas in order to quantify the legacy of the alpine zones. The feasibility projects, applying that kind of methodology, showed also the procedure to follow in order to record the historical components of the building. And last, the interviews made to the local workers permitted to recovery a series of historical handcraft activities, regarding the construction techniques of the rural buildings recovered and applied for the restoration of *tabià*.

**Transferability**

All instruments developed by Veneto Region case studies are drafted in accordance with the principle of transferability. In particular, within the Manual for Best Practices



### Case study follow-up

it was defined a card for the relief of the single elements composing the buildings. Such card can easily be applied to different typologies of buildings similar to *tabià* that present same constructive elements. Taking into account the common features marking many alpine villages, the town planning environmental prescription defined in the Guidelines can be applied also to contexts external to the areas study.

The follow up of the case studies of Veneto Region will be able to realize, in some recovery interventions, the restoration principles and methodologies described in the Manual for Best Practices and in the Guidelines, recovering also the ancient constructive techniques that have emerged from the interviews to the workers. The experimentation in the construction sites will allow even the quantification of the real costs for the interventions carried out respecting the Good Practices and a comparison with the more traditional techniques. The Guideline indications, moreover, can be the basis for the definition of the PRG and the Area Plans of the study areas, because they contain various prescriptions for the preservation of the historical rural handmade. That kind of indications could even be an integrating part of the PTRC and of the apposite regional law for the recovery of the mountain legacy.

### Common issues with other projects

A particular synergy has been developed with the other WP7 case studies. Common features, in fact, are shared with the activities of Friuli Venezia Giulia and Piedmont Regions: all case studies face the issue of revitalisation of small mountain village or alpine areas through their recovery and their change of use as dwellings, tourist houses and productive buildings. Particular importance is dedicated to the frame, where case studies took place: in fact the recovery of small villages doesn't preclude environment end territory protection.

In April 2006, a meeting took place among Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, Piedmont Region and Veneto Region in Venice. It was finalised to share and to exchange experiences carried out during the development of case studies. It outlined that the WP7 case studies originate from the same needs and lead to the same conclusion about the recovery of alpine village.

### SSC Experts' comments and recommendations

The project description, methodology and results were exhaustive. It is interesting the adoption of a modern approach not related to conservation, but aimed at revitalising the existing one through the re-use of the rural buildings. The project financing model and the definition of some guidelines are tools, which can be transferred to other regions and, at the same time, can provide a real input for follow up activities. The project answered precise requests coming from the territory (municipalities): in so doing it promoted a bottom up approach that was implemented through participatory processes (workshops, meetings with the population).

The project is in line with some Interreg recommendations such as: participatory approach, dissemination activities, transfer of models at trans-national level, best practices exchanges.