



Newsletter 1, September 2009

COMUNIS – Towards Sustainable Commercial Location Development

In many Alpine regions, adjacent municipalities strongly compete for commercial development. On the one hand, they individually pursue promising approaches to economic promotion and development in order to enhance their competitiveness and counteract the out-migration of the young and qualified. On the other hand, promising development strategies are often inadequate, resulting in the out-migration of companies.

An inter-municipally developed and agreed strategy, which takes into account the specific conditions of Alpine locations for a sustainable **commercial location development (CLD)**, is often missing in Alpine valleys. Certainly, this is not an Alps-specific issue. However,

the consequences are more serious due to the special framework conditions. Valley location, scarcity of land and competing land use interests intensify the situation.

It is thus the **aim of COMUNIS to develop a well-defined integrative and cooperative strategy for commercial location development**. It is intended to point out the advantages of inter-municipal cooperation and prevent municipalities from 'going solo'. Particular focus will be on the diversification and efficiency of economic activities, environmental concerns as well as aspects of social and cultural life.

COMUNIS runs from July 2009 to June 2012.

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Approach

The approach of COMUNIS is based on the idea of **structurally decomposing the multifaceted matter of commercial location development (CLD)**. To this end, a number of settings in the Alpine area will be examined. Project partners will look into the existing legal framework, strategies and systems to manage the location of companies. The pros and cons of existing systems will be considered. Measures derived thereof will later be tested in selected pilot areas (Fig. 1). *The method is specified below.*

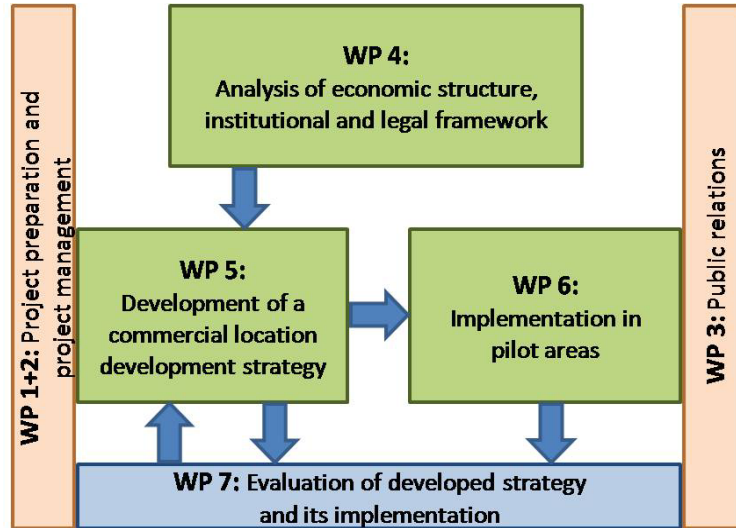


Fig. 1: The project is comprised of seven inter-related work packages (WP).

Work Package Objectives

WP 1+2: During WP 1, the preparatory work for launching the project was completed in a common effort. Managing the transnational partnership and financial aspects is on the agenda of WP 2.

WP 3: Effective external and internal communication are essential for a successful and sustainable implementation of the project. A project-specific communication strategy has

been developed to raise awareness about the project, foster transparency, and spread the idea of commercial location development. Project information and results are henceforth available on the project website www.comunis.eu as well as in other format such as project flyers, publications, regular press releases, etc.

WP 4: It is the aim of this WP to analyze the existing systems and framework conditions for commercial location development (CLD) in the pilot regions. This will allow for a transnational comparison best practice examples. On the basis of a comprehensive analysis of the economic structure and business location, it will be possible to derive strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats of the business location. The findings will provide the basis for the work of all subsequent WPs.

WP 5: In this WP, the project partners develop a concerted strategy for commercial location development, consisting of organizational and structural components. These elements will include: methods for the location study, analysis of value chains, instruments for marketing and image strategies, inter-territorial spatial management and the inter-municipal cooperation. It will be possible to assemble and modify the modules according to the needs and conditions of a region.

WP 6: In this phase, the strategy for CLD will be tested in the pilot areas (Fig. 3). Involving the regional stakeholders and decision-makers at this stage is decisive for the project progress. At the same time, the basics for a knowledge-management platform are developed. Like this, the

transnational exchange of experiences will be promoted and the cooperation fostered after the project ends.

WP 7: Finally, the achievements and results of WPs 5 and 6 will systematically be analyzed. The concerted strategy for CLD will be modified according to the evaluation, recommendations and experiences made. At the same time, framework conditions for the sustainable knowledge management will be finalized.



Fig. 2: Industrial zone in Bolzano/South Tyrol. © Flavio V. Ruffini

The Pilot Areas

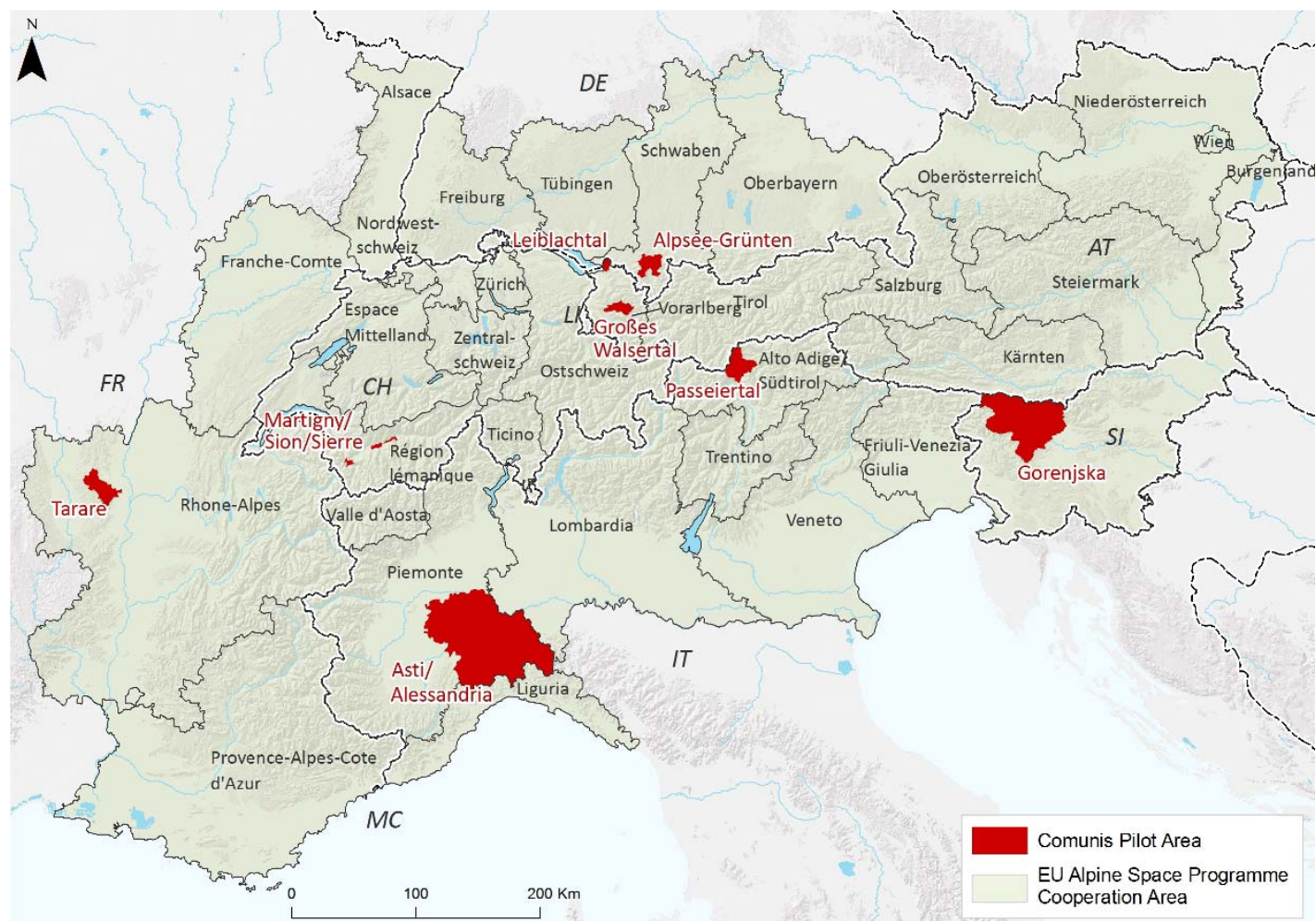


Fig. 3: Map of the Alpine Space cooperation area indicating the pilot areas (Eurac 2009).

Pilot area	Facts & Figures	Main challenges	Expected Outputs
Leiblachtal / Großes Walsertal <i>Vorarlberg</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50,45 / 192 km² 5 / 6 municipalities Ca. 13.900 / 3.500 inhabitants Valley located on lake Constance / steep and branched V-valley with little valley floor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of trans-municipal structures of land use Creation of sustainable structures for the business unit Repositioning of a region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing a business unit being a cooperation with municipalities Leiblachtal: Examine the strategy of land use management Großes Walsertal: Image strategy is tested
Alpsee-Grünten <i>Bavaria</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 254,46 km² 5 municipalities Ca. 48.400 inhabitants Valley of the river Iller and adjacent mountain ridges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land scarcity due to topography, risk of geological hazards, conflicting land(scape) requirements for flood protection + tourism Low availability of land ready for commercial development Conversion of former military area Low provision of high qualified jobs and declining number of work places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-municipal management of land resources for commercial development Installation of permanent management structures for CLD Inter-municipal business plans and regulations on CLD
Passeiertal <i>Autonomous Province of Bolzano / South Tyrol</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 376,39 km² 6 municipalities Ca. 12.800 inhabitants V-valley widening in the Northern part 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the coordination of available commercial zones Space shortage Traffic related strain due to transport infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational management of commercial zones Basic principles for the inter-municipal management of commuter and goods traffic Measures for effective location marketing by regional responsible bodies
Gorenjska <i>Slovenian Alps</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.137 km² 18 municipalities Ca. 201.779 inhabitants Valleys located at the bottom of Alps (Julian Alps, Karawanks, part of Savinjsko Kamniške Alps) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low availability of new landfills due to scarcity of land; valleys over-industrialized; many small business zones, Natura 2000, protected areas and farm land Brown fields changing nature (search for innovative solutions) Need for strategic rethinking of business zones, roles and support mechanisms Need for inter-municipal approach and strategic rethinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-municipal cooperation and analytic business plans in use, management of land resources for commercial development Synergies between the service and production business areas involved in the pilot project Raised attractiveness of region's commerce, knowledge and technology
Provinces of Asti and Alessandria <i>Piedmont</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.071 km² 3-6 municipalities Ca. 655.580 inhabitants In the South-East of Piedmont Region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considerable number of areas and industrial districts Lack of investors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced competitiveness of territory Synergies between the municipalities involved in the pilot project Implemented strategies for CLD
Martigny / Sion / Sierre <i>Valais</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25,6 / 24,97 / 19,23 km² 3 municipalities 29.950 / 15.035 / 15.023 inhabitants At elbow of Rhône river / located in middle of Rhône valley / at linguistic border of French/Ger-man part of Valais 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies in Valais are numerous (15.000) but also small 99 % of companies hire less than 50 employees Actors of the Valais' Economic Development Office require a complete and reliable database (regular update + monitoring) of the industrial land available for sale or rent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New approach for the understanding of industrial and commercial surfaces and for the optimization of their allowance
Territoire de la délégation Chambre de commerce & d'industrie de Lyon à Tarare <i>Région Rhône-Alpes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 380,79 km² 34 municipalities Ca. 58.335 inhabitants Valley extending from East to West, located to the West of Lyon agglomeration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative image of the territory A great deal of industrial wasteland Low provision of high qualified jobs and declining number of work places Construction of a motorway connecting the territory with Lyon Creation of a commercial area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-municipal strategy for the development and settlement of small and medium-sized enterprises Common marketing strategy for the territory

A Transnational Effort – The Project Partnership

Drawing on a wide range of theoretical knowledge and practical experience is essential for the success and acceptance of the project. Respective of this aim, private and public partners have come together to represent the local,

regional and national levels. They range from institutions of higher/post-graduate education and regional development agencies to economic development organizations and state institutions.



University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland, Institut Economie et Tourisme, CH
(Lead Partner, Leader of WP 1 and 2)



Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio

Ministero dell'Ambiente e delle Tutela del Territorio e del Mare, IT



Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Lyon, F
(ERDF-Lead Partner, Leader of WP 4)



Bosch & Partner GmbH, DE
(Leader of WP 5)



Stadt Sonthofen, DE



Regionalentwicklung Vorarlberg, AT
(Leader of WP 6)



Eurac-Research, Institute for Regional Development and Location Management, IT
(Leader of WP 3)



Società Consortile Langhe Monferrato, Roero, settore progetti europei, IT
(Leader of WP 7)



Canton du Valais Service du développement économique, CH



BSC Poslovno podporni center, d.o.o., Kranj, SI



Association Suisse pour le Service aux Régions et Communes, CH

Observer Network

- CH** Cantone Ticino Ufficio della promozione e della consulenza | Eidgenössische Volkswirtschaftsdepartment EVD, Staatssekretariat für Wirtschaft SECO | Regiosuisse – Netzwerkstelle Regionalentwicklung | Creapole, Delémont | Ville de Sierre | Ville de Sion | Ville de Martigny
- DE** Bayerisches Landesamt für Umwelt (LFU) | District Oberallgäu
- F** Communauté de communes du Pays des Ecrins | Sous-préfecture de Villefranche sur Soane
- IT** Bezirksgemeinschaft Burggrafenamt | Business Location Südtirol – Alto Adige AG (BLS)

European Territorial Cooperation

COMUNIS was launched within the **Alpine Space Programme** of the **European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)**. ETC is one of the European Union's regional policy objectives. It aims at strengthening the competitiveness and attractiveness of Europe's regions. Here, EU-member states, Switzerland and Liechten-

stein cooperate to balance differences within and between European regions and to foster economic and social cohesion. The Alpine Space Programme particularly enhances this cooperation in the Alpine area. Although the projects deal with Alps-specific issues in the first place, their methodology, instruments

and results can also serve as approach to problem-solving in other European regions.

The Alpine Space Programme is financed both by the European Union (through the European Regional Development Fund) and by the Partner States (EU-member states and non-member states) taking part in the activities.

Project Events

Workshop, Zürich (CH): October 12, 2009

Communication Training, Munich (DE): October 19-20, 2009

Workshop, Lyon (F): December 3-4, 2009

Imprint

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