



Inter-municipal cooperation for strategic steering of SME-oriented location development in the Alps



The City of Sonthofen hosted the third COMUNIS-Meeting. Besides intensive project work, the project team was able to gain insights into the specific situation in the German COMUNIS pilot region Alpsee-Grünten.

From 7-9 June 2010, the German project partners City of Sonthofen and Bosch & Partner GmbH welcomed the COMUNIS-partnership in the upper Allgäu. The German Alpine Space Contact Point, Mr. Florian Ballnus, as well as Mr. Claus Hensold of the Bavarian Environment Agency (Landesamt für Umwelt, LfU) as project observer took part in the meeting. The three meeting days were filled with discussions and intensive exchange of information on current tasks among all project partners.

The meeting focused in particular on the debate about the different models of Commercial Location Development (CLD). On the basis of theoretical models and studied best practice examples, options for

implementing inter-municipal CLD were discussed with view to the situation and development objectives in the individual pilot regions of the project partners. For Alpsee-Grünten, a field trip to various regional commercial areas revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the pilot area. This analysis of the business location highlighted the major importance of an inter-municipal strategy on CLD with a focus on land use development and marketing for the Alpsee-Grünten region.

At Sonthofen, work package (WP) 6 was officially launched. WP 6 is based on the results of the Balance Score Card (BSC) and the general strategy development of the previous WPs 4 and 5 (Examination and Development). It aims at the implementation of suitable CLD joint actions and their testing in the pilot regions.

Sandra Feuerstein
Stadt Sonthofen

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Project partners in Sonthofen. © MW2010

Location analysis in the French pilot area Tarare

In spring 2010, the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) was implemented in all pilot regions. To gather relevant data about the current situation in the pilot region and its specific development perspective, the project partners interviewed local stakeholders.

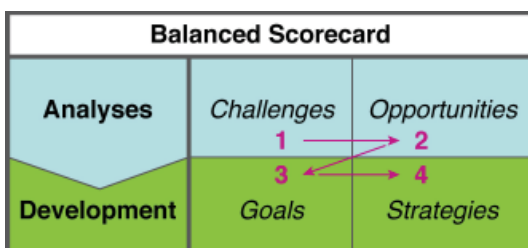


Fig. 1: Four steps to analyse and evaluate the Balanced Scorecard.

According to the partners feedbacks on their experiences with the implementation, this diagnosis tool has proven its value in highlighting common challenges and opportunities to be addressed in the upcoming strategy development (WP 5) and implementation phase (WP 6) (see fig. 1). The flexibility in the application of the method - that means the combination of quantitative and qualitative data - or the optional extension of the tool by additional fields of research, offered a further advantage in implementing the BSC. At large, the BSC appears to be a satisfying method to collect the different perceptions of stakeholders and to compare regions on the regional and transnational levels in terms of economic development.

However, due to differences in the administrative and legal framework conditions across borders, it seems difficult to gather comparable indicators that would allow a satisfying comparison at the international level.

The CCIL Délégation de Tarare implemented the BSC tool in three *Communautés de Communes* (Association of municipalities) which are in charge of the local economic development. The study revealed the need to focus on issues related to commercial land use development (fig. 2). It is recommended

- to install a unit (e.g. an agency) for economic development and
- to elaborate a tool to identify short-, medium-, and long-term availability of commercial sites (e.g. a commercial property database).

The above-mentioned instruments would allow the municipalities to monitor land availability, to pool resources, to highlight regional characteristics (i.e. its unique selling proposition) and to attract a specific kind of business and/or types of economic activities.

Promoting an entire region in need of revitalization and dynamism will be increasingly important. Joint approaches are required to handle common challenges such as the development of new business parks and incubators or the construction of a new highway (A89) in 2012, which will

impact the entire pilot region. Such action should include, amongst others, a common marketing strategy to enhance the partnership of the CCIL Délégation de Tarare, the three *communautés de communes*, and ADERLY, Lyon’s economic development agency.

Florine Goncet
Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Lyon

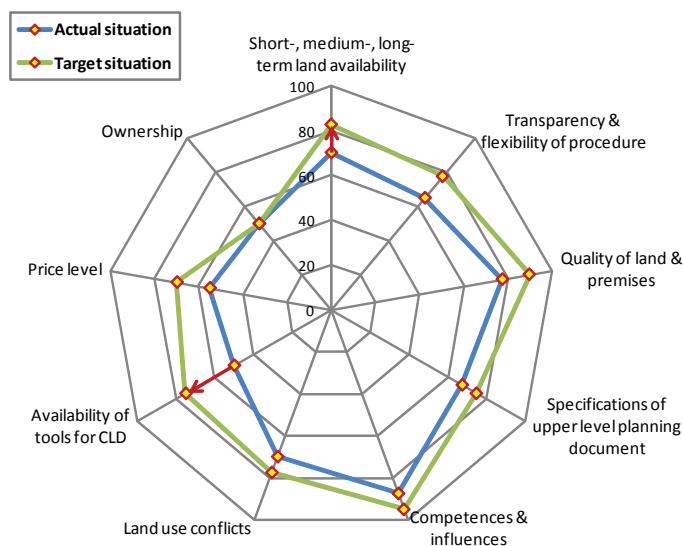


Fig. 2: The BSC for the Tarare area in the field of “Commercial land use development”.



Strategic approaches to inter-municipal commercial location development

COMUNIS was launched with the aim to offer Alpine communities guidelines and concrete tools that may help them design and implement an appropriate strategy for inter-municipal commercial location development (CLD). The diverse regional conditions and needs call for differentiated strategies focusing on different aspects.

Therefore, in a first step of work package (WP) 5 a number of possible strategic approaches were identified on the basis of best practices examples for CLD compiled in WP 4, complemented the results of a literature search concerning the specific fields of action of (inter-)municipal economic

location development. Three models of action (tab. 1) were identified:

- **Land Use Development:** Since land is an essential resource for any commercial site development, this model of action covers different approaches to make land available and re-develop it in a focused and coordinated way and manage the use of land for commercial purposes in an optimal way.
- **Promotion and Communication:** The focus is either on the joint marketing of individual commercial sites

Handlungsmodell	Land use development			Promotion & communication		Business development
Handlungskategorie	Inter-municipal business park	Commercial site policy	Comprehensive urban development	Commercial site marketing	Location marketing	Individual business support

Tab. 1: Overview of strategic approaches to inter-municipal CLD.

(Commercial Site Marketing) or on the development of a concerted profile for the site under consideration (Location Marketing).

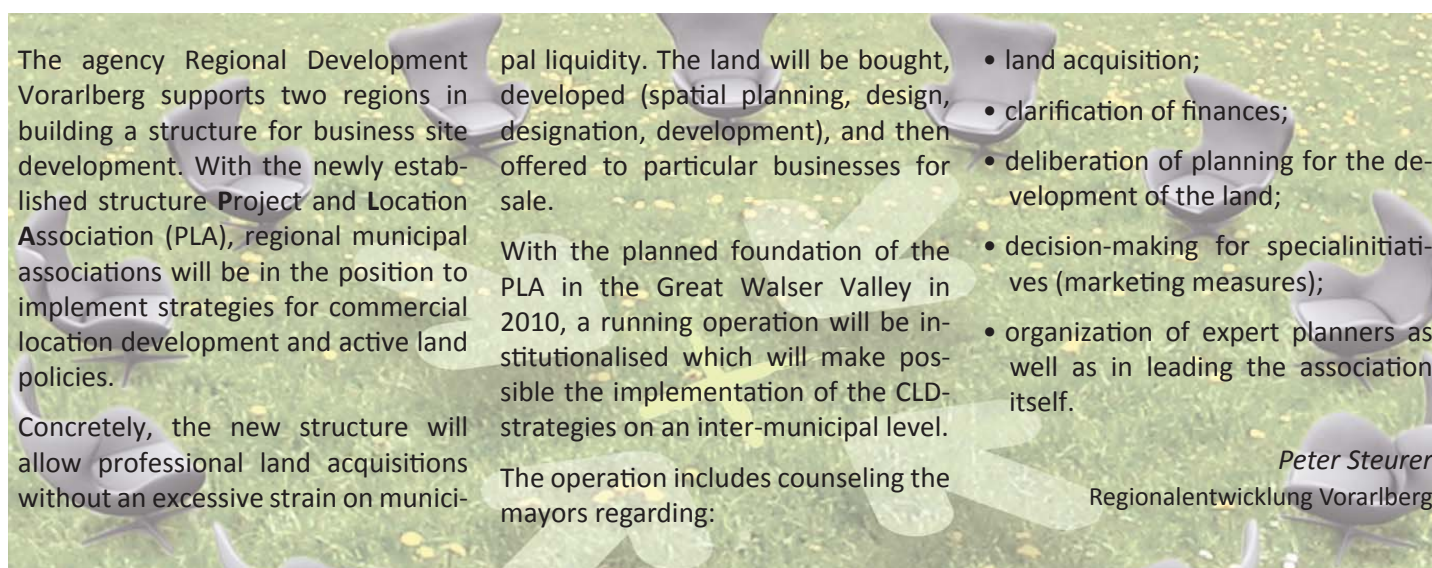
- **Business development:** Targeted, individual support is provided to businesses already present in the area or willing to settle. For example, assistance is provided to start up a business, select the site or deal with administrative obstacles. In this case the promotion of business networks plays an important role since it can help establish and strengthen regional flows and value chains.

For some areas a combination of different approaches could prove more appropriate than focusing on just one category of action.

Based on regional needs and objectives, the task for the pilot areas is now to define appropriate strategies, while considering the related organizational, financial, planning, and legal issues. Specific management structures can be discussed against this backdrop.

Stefan v. Andrian-Werburg
Bosch und Partner GmbH

The PLA-Model as Structure for Active Land Policy in Vorarlberg



The agency Regional Development Vorarlberg supports two regions in building a structure for business site development. With the newly established structure **Project and Location Association (PLA)**, regional municipal associations will be in the position to implement strategies for commercial location development and active land policies.

Concretely, the new structure will allow professional land acquisitions without an excessive strain on municipal liquidity. The land will be bought, developed (spatial planning, design, designation, development), and then offered to particular businesses for sale.

With the planned foundation of the PLA in the Great Walser Valley in 2010, a running operation will be institutionalised which will make possible the implementation of the CLD-strategies on an inter-municipal level.

The operation includes counseling the mayors regarding:

- land acquisition;
- clarification of finances;
- deliberation of planning for the development of the land;
- decision-making for special initiatives (marketing measures);
- organization of expert planners as well as in leading the association itself.

Peter Steurer
Regionalentwicklung Vorarlberg

Industrial Ecology in Sierre

Following an internal meeting with local partners and observers, the project partner University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland/Institute for Economy and Tourism decided to focus the project's next tasks on Sierre's main issue in the frame of a cooperation at an integrated development: "Agglo Sierre/Crans-Montana" – industrial ecology.

The motivation therefore is that only the city of Sierre with its concern of industrial ecology can reasonably enter in the issue of inter-municipality and fit to one of the developed strategies in work package 5.

The pilot region would be "Sierre in interrelation with municipalities in Central Valais" with the aim of an agreed administration of resources between municipalities by means of an eco-industrial symbiosis.

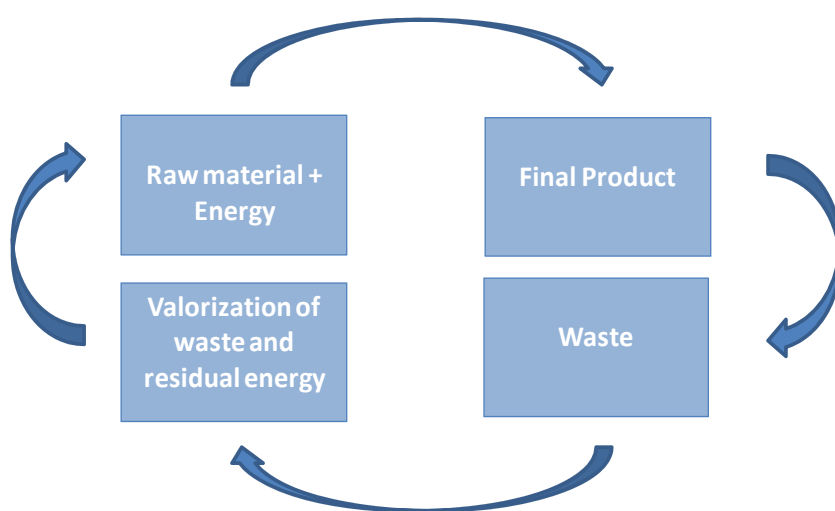


Fig. 3: The principle of industrial ecology.

Industrial ecology deals with the sharing of economic services between and among two or more industries or companies in order to prevent from disturbing effects on nature. The prin-

ciple is illustrated in figure 3. Taking as a starting point the natural ecosystems, the principle of industrial ecology is to regard flows of matter and energy as closed circuits. The waste of

one company becomes the raw materials of another; the after-heat produced by the activities of a company can be developed for the activities of another. Sierre's goal within this cooperation is to increase the environmental performance of the companies while consoli-

dating their economic competitiveness in order to set up an innovating management of flows of raw materials and energy.

Nathalie Stumm
University of Applied
Sciences Western Switzerland

INFO BOX:

The Constitution of the urban area Sierre/Crans-Montana is subordinated to the cantonal implementation strategy of the New Regional Policy (NRP). Through the NRP, the Confederation supports the mountain areas of Switzerland to help them control the structural change. The NRP must make it possible to improve the framework conditions for the economic activities, to promote innovations, to generate added value, and to encourage competitiveness in the eligible areas.

Launch of Work Package 7: Evaluation and Adaptation

In October 2010, by coordination of the Società Consortile Langhe Monferrato Roero, the activities of WP 7 "Evaluation & Adaptation" were launched.

WP 7 is the logical step after the development (WP 5) and implementation (WP 6) of the CLD-strategies that were identified by each partner in the pilot areas.

The activities in this framework aim at critically evaluating the project development and its implementation in the pilot areas, as well as the consecutive adaptation of the CLD-strategy and instruments based on the experiences made and lessons learnt on site.

Project partners are going to systematically analyse the experiences in the pilot regions, further define and adapt the steering instruments, and create conditions for transforming the knowledge management.

This WP, setting the basis for the capitalisation of project results and the added value produced by the project implementation, is an essential element for the viability and sustainability of the project results and instruments beyond the official project end in June 2012.

Maria Crea
S. C. Langhe Monferrato Roero

COMUNIS @ Forschungsmarkt regio-suisse 2010

The event "Forschungsmarkt regio-suisse & Tagung Regionalentwicklung 2010" was held on 1 September in Lucerne, CH. It offered opportunities to gain some insight into the interdisciplinary practice of the New Swiss Regional Policy (NRP) and its development.

Representatives from the research, academic and business communities delivered lectures and presented project posters on the topic of "Effective spatial policies: synergies and conflicts", interdisciplinary and practical approaches for dealing with socio-economic, economic and cultural challenges in

peripheral areas and mountain areas.

Eurac staff member Miriam Weiß reported on the topic of inter-municipal commercial site development in South Tyrol and on the preliminary research results of the COMUNIS-project.

In addition, participants were involved in 15 round tables devoted to issues relevant for regional development to identify research gaps from the perspective of the NRP implementation practice.

Miriam L. Weiß
Eurac-Research

UPCOMING EVENT

COMUNIS Project workshop,
13-15 December 2010,
in Vorarlberg (AT)

COMUNIS aims at developing cooperative strategies for inter-municipal **Commercial Location Development (CLD)**. By **fostering intra-territorial cooperation**, COMUNIS wants to overcome individualistic attempts of problem solution on the level of single municipalities. COMUNIS will provide broadly adaptable guidelines to apply such strategies and offer practical instruments for assessing local and regional demand for the steering of CLD. The project will result in a transnational knowledge management and establish sustainable structures for managing CLD in the COMUNIS pilot areas. COMUNIS runs from July 2009 to June 2012.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Lead partner:

University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland, Institut Economie et Tourisme (CH).

ERDF-Lead partner:

Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Lyon (F).

Other partners:

Stadt Sonthofen (DE), Eurac-Research, Institute for Regional Development and Location Management (IT), Canton du Valais Service du développement économique (CH), Ministero dell'Ambiente e delle Tutela del Territorio e del Mare (IT), Bosch Partner GmbH (DE), Regionalentwicklung Vorarlberg (AT), Società Consortile Langhe Monferrato Roero, settore progetti europei (IT), BSC Poslovno podporni center, d.o.o., Kranj (SI), Association Suisse pour le Service aux Régions et Communes (CH).