

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**8-9 March 2012**  
**COMUNIS Final Conference**



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



Foto: Heinz Widmann

## Fifth Transnational Project Meeting

On the 27th and 28th of July, the Local Development Agency Langhe Monferrato Roero (LAMORO) hosted in Asti (Italy) the 5th Transnational Project Meeting. At the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Hand-craft and Agriculture, project partners were invited to listen to the progresses, first results and next steps of LAMORO's pilot project, as well as to exchange experiences about their own pilot actions.

The Asti University of Economy presented the analysis done in the industrial areas of Nizza Monferrato, Canelli, and Calamandrana (municipalities in Asti Province). Afterwards, experts from Moncalieri municipality (Turin Province) provided a presentation on their territorial experience and their strategy in developing a polycentric settlement in Vadò industrial area through the creation of a consortium of enterprises.



Conference Hall at the Asti Chamber of Commerce ©SL2011

Both days offered the occasion to sum up project outputs and activities and to carefully plan the next steps until the project's final conference in March 2012. The first half of day one was dedicated to presenting the status of pilot project

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implementation; the second half was dedicated to evaluating single aspects of inter-municipal commercial location development. The group intensively discussed the structure of the *Guidelines on Inter-Municipal Commercial Location Development* (CLD), trying to redefine and distribute the written contributions among partners.



Project partners at presentation session ©SL2011

The project team then focused on the implementation of the dissemination and knowledge management system, assessing the work accomplished so far and the planned strategies to ensure project sustainability. The first work day ended with the presentation of project promotion material, a discussion about the final conference and an exchange of view about the contents and technical aspects of two publications: the Project Synthesis Booklet and the Popular Scientific Fi-



Workshop session ©SL2011

nal Publication to be published in the first half of 2012.

On the second day, partners discussed project activities concerning the project evaluation and adaptation method, the main actions and deliverables, and financial issues with regard to the remaining months of the project. Next actions will be dedicated above all to finalize the COMUNIS publications with a view to the final conference that will be held in Bolzano/Bozen, and to begin the project evaluation, ensuring the capitalization and the transferability of results through the intensification of the use of the COMUNIS knowledge management platform (see article "Knowledge Management" by François Parvex).

Silvia Lodato  
Società Consortile Langhe  
Monferrato Roero (LAMORO)

## The Alpsee-Grünten region set to continue in changed composition

After Immenstadt's decision to leave the project, the City of Sonthofen and the municipalities of Blaichach, Burgberg and Rettenberg are willing to join forces and further push ahead the joint commercial location development (CLD) in the framework of the COMUNIS project.

The four mayors accept the decision of Immenstadt's City Council, which voted against the city's continued participation in the joint project. On the one hand, having Immenstadt aboard would have been a sensible move given the high level of interdependence of the economic region to which all municipalities belong. On the other hand, this ambitious project requires a high degree of conviction.



Mayors in Alpsee-Grünten region © KS2011

The principle underlying the regional approach to CLD is that areas should be developed demand-oriented and in a purposeful way, while development efforts and risks should be shared between the municipalities. Thus, the municipalities could avoid a long-time storing of developed land, high costs and waste of territorial resources. The

primary reason for Immenstadt's decision to discontinue its participation is an expected imbalance of costs and benefits between the municipalities according to the amount of area they bring in to the project. This concern is only partially understandable. Indeed, according to the jointly developed concept, Sonthofen and Immenstadt were expected to contribute very similar amounts of land during the first ten years of the cooperation.



Workshop in Alpsee-Grünten © KS2011

The four mayors are still convinced that a common CLD policy is the right answer to the current challenges. "Quality over quantity" is the recipe for future municipal CLD strategies: only through a common, coordinated approach can jobs be kept in the region in the long run. The parties involved aim to extend the CLD cooperation to the whole southern part of the Oberallgäu district. To that end, preliminary talks are currently under way with the local mayors.

*Sandra Feuerstein* (City of Sonthofen),  
*Stefan v. Andrian-Werburg* (Bosch & Partner GmbH), *Dr. Andreas Raab*  
(Regional and City Planning)

## COMUNIS Final Conference 8-9 March 2012

How can the inter-municipal cooperation for Commercial Location Development (CLD) be fostered? How can municipalities analyze their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with regard to inter-municipal CLD? How can municipalities maximize their strong points and minimize their weak spots and realize a more sustainable land use for commercial development? Which type of inter-municipal CLD approach is appropriate to achieve these goals?

The COMUNIS project partners have elaborated a methodology for analyzing inter-municipal locations and organizational structures, as well as intra-territorial framework conditions for joint commercial location development. They have been developing guidelines for devising and applying inter-municipal CLD strategies, adapted to the challenges, conditions, and potentials of mountain regions.

The achieved results of the project will be presented and disseminated at its Final Conference, held on **March 8-9, 2012, at the European Academy of Bolzano (Italy)**.

## COMUNIS at the Alpine Space Programme Mid-Term Conference

On June 16-17, the Alpine Space Programme (ASP) mid-term conference took place at the World Trade Center in Grenoble, France. The COMUNIS project was represented at this forum by the French partner Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Lyon – Délégation de Tarare. More than 250 partners exchanged experiences about the 25 running projects.

Day one focused on assessment/outcomes and perspectives of the programme and issues related to European policies in the Alpine region. The sec-

ond day was dedicated to three workshops (WS) open to all participants:

**WS 1: Themes and priorities for the next generation of projects:** Identify European and alpine challenges and turn them into parameters for actions. The distinction is made between deliverables and results/outcomes.

**WS 2: Management for supportive delivery conditions:** Key points were raised such as the harmonization and simplification of procedures within the Alpine Space Programme and greater synergy between projects.

**WS 3: Governance towards a macro regional strategy:** How to start a partnership approach bringing together all types of actors, states and regions, and prioritize specific issues from the field?

The COMUNIS project is featured in the soon to be published Alpine Space Programme event brochure. For further information see the programme website: <http://www.alpine-space.eu>

*Florine Goncet*  
Chamber of Commerce  
and Industry of Lyon



## Knowledge management

COMUNIS implements a sustainable system to manage knowledge developed within the project. In a first step, an inventory of available instruments was drawn up. These have been classified according to their specific contribution to the spreading of knowledge. A system has been subsequently

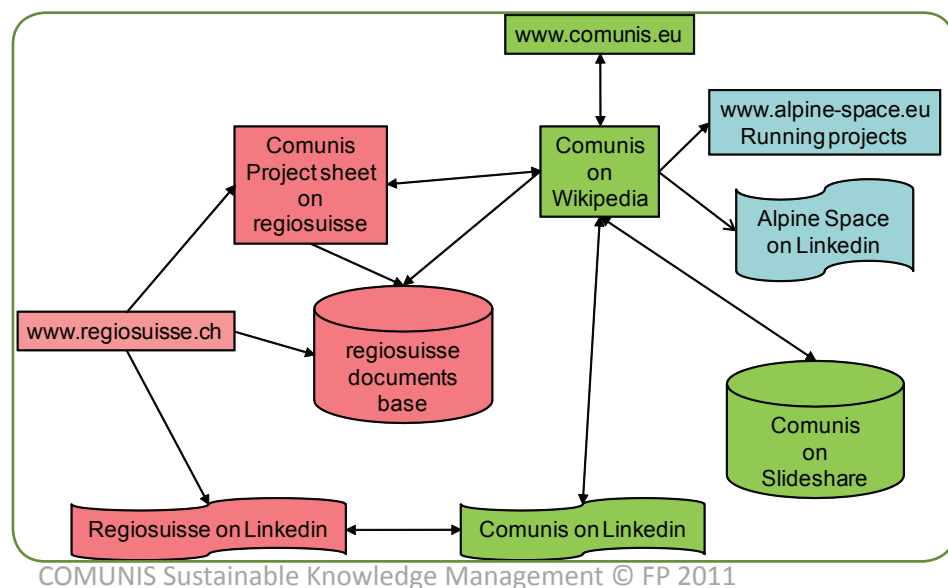
developed, implementing several instruments, as shown in the enclosed diagram. This system includes instruments implemented within the Alpine Space programme, the knowledge management platform of the Swiss regional policy *regiosuisse*, as well as three worldwide Web 2.0 sites. These

Web 2.0 sites are often visited and will therefore help attract a number of visitors to both the project and the Alpine Space Programme websites.

The system will lead COMUNIS to set up a dynamic process continuing well beyond the project duration. Each partner, therefore, needs to develop its own network of relations with experts in the relevant countries. This network, bringing together representatives from the public sector, associations, consultancy firms, as well as training and research institutes shall not only support the dissemination of the project results, but also provide further value to them. For this reason, special attention shall be paid to the network activity coordinated by knowledge managers and concerning inter-municipal cooperation and Commercial Location Development.

*François Parvex*

Swiss Association for Services to  
Regions and Communes



## Inter-municipal cooperation towards economic development in Bangladesh

Inter-municipal cooperation is an arrangement for coping with different issues that concern more than one municipality. Many developed countries like Germany, Austria or Italy engage in this approach having realized its benefits. This is not the case in every part of the world. For example in Bangladesh, a developing country in South Asia. Here, local urban government bodies (*Pourashavas*) and local rural development bodies (union *Parishad*) are entrusted with a large number of functions and responsibilities. Municipalities are involved in different inter-municipal activities aimed at community welfare, such as maintenance of roads, waste disposal, awareness raising for better primary health care, etc. However, municipalities do not have

an intervening or direct policy towards economic development issues except for a very basic provision of support. As a result, they try to keep in contact with other public or private organizations which are involved in economic related activities.

For instance, small- and micro-entrepreneurship is a frequently used business form, e.g. in the sectors of poultry, fishery, handicrafts, etc. After having fulfilled required training, local entrepreneurs receive a certain amount of conditional grants provided by diverse government or non-government organizations. Often, municipal responsible oversee such types of projects and collaborate with the afore-mentioned organizations as part of municipal development activities.

However, a local territory can progress better when its government bodies and other local public and private organizations work well together. In Bangladesh, they also maintain cooperation at different levels in various sectors. But it would be more effective if they continued this process through a defined policy or regulation including rules for accountability. In addition, more autonomous power, active involvement of local stakeholders, operative collaboration with different institutions at the inter-municipal level would help to take initiative towards cooperative economic development actions taking into account regional resources and potentials.

*Farha Zakaria*

Eurac-Research (Intern)

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. The COMUNIS project is part of the European Territorial Cooperation and co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the scope of the Alpine Space Programme. It runs from July 2009 to June 2012.

