

Newsletter 6 Summer 2012

Thinking beyond municipal borders – developing joint commercial locations Presentation of the project results in Bolzano

Which strategies can support the attractiveness of the Alpine Space municipalities in the long term, both for residents and enterprises? Over the past three years, COMUNIS has sought answers to this question. The results were presented at the European Academy in Bozen/Bolzano during the Final Conference on 8 March 2012.

The Conference started with reports introduced by experts. Christian Haberfellner (E²M Research Group, Innsbruck) outlined future challenges for municipalities against the backdrop of increasingly limited budget resources and ever higher demands from society and the economy. Several examples quoted by him, concerning the Alpine Space as well as the international context, clearly outlined the need for models and concepts to be implemented within a short time, capable of engaging citizens.



Christian Haberfellner © EURAC

Cooperation in the field of Commercial Location Development (CLD) has not become common practice yet, as highlighted by Martha Gärber. She quoted an example from South Tyrol, a region where land is, generally speaking, a limited resource. As President of

the “Business Location Südtirol–Alto Adige”, Mrs Gärber presented the location development project “STEP”. Indeed, STEP consists of a gradual process, with municipalities cooperating in small functional groups and holding workshops to discuss strategies on how the business location may be best positioned on the market and how to implement a shared land use policy.



Hubert Buhl, the Mayor of Sonthofen im Allgäu © EURAC

Pier Paolo Viazzo, President of the Working Group “Demography and Employment” of the Alpine Convention, delivered a speech in which he highlighted demographic sustainability and differences in the attractiveness of Alpine regions. Mr Viazzo referred to the added value of clusters in the regional economy, quoting easy accessibility as a decisive factor for CLD in the Alps.



Conference participants and project partners engaging in the discussion © EURAC

The COMUNIS project developed three inter-municipal CLD management models concerning land use, promotion and communication, and the supply of business support services. On behalf of the project partners, Stefan v. Andrian-Werburg and Peter Steurer presented the five steps of the CLD process, which allow municipalities to promote inter-municipal initiatives while saving on land surface use. Presentations and a poster exhibition summarized information on activities undertaken in eight pilot areas.



Panel discussion (f. l. t. r.): Christian Haberfellner, Andreas Raab, Miriam L. Weiß (moderator), Pier Paolo Viazzo, Marie-Françoise Perruchould-Massy © EURAC

In addition to the discussion on stage, the 50 participants (mayors, municipal and regional administrators, local development managers, economic advisors, etc.) had the opportunity to engage in networking activities during session breaks, enjoying the warm, summery atmosphere in EURAC’s garden in Bolzano.

*Miriam L. Weiß,
EURAC research*

The Project Consortium

“We would like to see more municipalities having the confidence to foster a sustainable use of their limited resources by closely working together.”

“We wish that COMUNIS can encourage several groups of municipalities to cooperate and to jointly manage their (commercial) land use in a sustainable way.”

The approach to evaluation in the COMUNIS Project

In COMUNIS project the evaluation methodology developed in Work Package 7 aims to understand if the adopted Commercial Location Development (CLD) management structure and initiatives were able to activate positive local economic dynamics. Furthermore, the evaluation aims to prove if the adopted strategy actually allows medium and long-term effects also for

aspects of social and environmental sustainability of the territories.

In order to generate recommendations for enhancing the CLD strategy, the evaluation method is strongly related to the methods used in Phase 2 Analysis. With view to providing a coherent approach transferable to different regional contexts, it picks up the structure of the BSC analysis and combines it with

the contents of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis (SWOT analysis). Each field of activity identified can be evaluated in terms of goal achievements, difficulties and limits, according to a scheme inspired by the SWOT analysis.

Sonia Abluton, Società Consortile Langhe Monferrato Roero

"We hope that - in the medium and long-term - COMUNIS can result in sustainable partnerships between local stakeholders and foster the work on location/territorial marketing." The Project Consortium

COMUNIS Publications

The following publications are available in print and in digital format (PDF) on the project homepage <http://www.comunis.eu>:

COMUNIS Final Publication and Guidelines for Inter-municipal CLD (on CD)

- Introduction: Challenges at stake
- Methodology and implementation strategy
- Pilot areas: commercial location development profile, analysis, implemented strategy, transfer, prospects
- Guidelines for inter-municipal CLD (abridged version)
- Assessment of information exchange in the pilot areas: facts – evaluation – acquired knowledge
- Final conference papers (links)
- On CD: Guidelines for inter-municipal CLD (full version) with practical examples concerning methodology, intervention, strategies and fact sheets on a few selected good practices.
- All in English

COMUNIS Synthesis Report

- Project goals
- Methodology
- Pilot areas
- Benefits and weaknesses of inter-municipal CLD
- Guidelines for inter-municipal CLD (abridged version)
- Final conclusions
- Available in five languages: English, German, Italian, French, Slovene

Copies of these documents can be provided by the project partners upon request.

*Miriam L. Weiß,
EURAC research*

A farewell word from the Lead Partner

The COMUNIS project is approaching the end of its Alpine Space funded period and has resulted in a joined elaboration of methods, tools and strategies for inter-municipal CLD.

In the pilot area Tarare focus was set on territorial/location marketing and on the establishment of a hosting policy concept for the settlement of enterprises and people in the region. In Pässeiertal approaches for optimizing inter-municipal cooperation structures are being devised and innovative solutions on how to confront commercial and industrial vacancy as well as transport/traffic flows have been discussed with local stakeholders. In the Southern Oberallgäu, the foundation of a special purpose association has been prepared. In Leiblachtal a regional association of five municipalities has been founded. In the French speaking Valais an international symposium on a new vision

of regional development taking into account the economic and environmental performance of companies has been held in Sion. In Piemonte, specific agreements aimed to support enterprises of the existing sites, with particular attention for energetic management have been elaborated.

The partners will continue the activities of consolidation of the regional partnership. In some cases the elaboration of the statute for the structures for CLD is pursued. If necessary, the steering instruments used in the context of the implementation will be adapted. Furthermore, the final documentation of the project with the editing of the popular scientific publication will nourish the development of a common knowledge on CLD management.

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The COMUNIS Project Consortium in the garden of EURAC research © EURAC