

# Euromountains.net Project

## Newsletter

### In this issue:

Euromountains.net Project	1
Description of the framework of the study on theme 2	2
Documents and outputs available	3
Results of the analysis of the case studies	3
Conclusions and main lessons learned from the Thematic seminar in Flaam, the 10 and 11 May 2006	5
The study visit in the Region of the Vallée d'Aoste, Italy, 11 - 13 October 2005	7
The study visit in Norway, 12 - 14 May 2006	9
Future events of Euromountains.net and the partners of the project	10

"The Role of Local and Regional Authorities in the Development and Promotion of Mountain Quality Products and Resources"  
*Second study theme of the project*

## Euromountains.net Project

The Interreg IIIc project Euromountains.net (2004-2007) led by the Province of Turin and in support of which Euromontana has the role of technical coordinator concerns "networking European mountain regions in order to promote sustainable territorial development". This co-operation programme includes 14 partner regions from six countries (Scotland, Spain, France, Italy, Norway and Portugal). Mountain regions faced with the economic handicaps linked to their geographic and environmental situations have all

across Europe had to innovate in developing various strategies in order to compensate for these difficulties. The territorial development has had to take into consideration, and adapt to, a specific local environment. Therefore, starting with the experiences of the project partners, the project aims to identify territorial management models in mountain areas as well as transferable success factors that can also be linked to public/private partnerships.

Three themes have in par-

ticular been studied: improving sustainable services in the mountain areas, where a thematic seminar took place in Palencia, Spain in June 2005; the defence and management of fragile rural areas, landscapes and natural resources in mountain areas, where a seminar will take place in Rhone-Alps region, France, at the end of 2006; and finally the topic treated in this newsletter. The final conference of the Euromountains.net project will take place in Turin (Italy) in March 2007.



## Editorial

The second thematic seminar of the Euromountains.net Interreg IIIc project was held in Flaam, a small scenic village in the heart of the Norwegian fjords. It marked the conclusion of the study on "The role of local and regional authorities in the development and promotion of the mountain quality products and resources" started one year ago. The seminar took place over two days in May 2006 and included presentations, working groups, round tables and discussions. For several participants it took almost as long as that to get to the venue, but 80 participants from six partner countries (Spain,

France, Italy, Portugal, Scotland, and Norway) found a way. Organisers, mainly the County of Sogn og Fjordane with the support of the County of Oppland organised for each evening a thematic visit (local product and culture development initiatives) or something more touristic, such as a cruise along the fjord. Moreover, some participants were able to continue with the three days of study visits in the Counties of Sogn og Fjordane and Oppland and discover landscapes, traditions and people passionate in their trade. A trip to Norway combining work and exploration that the

participants will not easily forget!

You will find in this newsletter a description of the main results (whose scientific coordination was provided by SUACI des Alpes du Nord) and the study visits on this theme of the project. Please do not hesitate to go to [www.euromountains.net](http://www.euromountains.net) to get to the overall information.

Good reading!

Cécile Levret.



## "The role of local and regional authorities in the development and promotion of quality mountain products and resources"

### Description of the study framework of theme 2

Local and regional authorities can play a decisive role in the local development and promotion initiatives of the products and resources in the mountain areas. The tendency towards reinforcement of the role of regions that is taking place in Europe gives more and more importance to the interventions of these partners in local development and land management projects. There are multiple forms of involvement, modalities of cooperation with the project

promoters in the field, also the results achieved vary. However, few tools are available to analyse these policies, measure their relevance and efficiency and reflect on their improvement. This is the realisation behind the local authorities wish to develop a cooperation project on this specific theme.

The objective of the second working theme of the Euromountains.net Interreg project on the role of territorial authorities was to

analyse their involvement in the development and promotion strategies of quality mountain resources and products. Beyond the exchanges, the aim of the programme was to disseminate good practices to be implemented by the authorities in order to improve the scope of their interventions and to identify common proposals to develop cross-sectoral cooperation.

## Documents and outputs available

Out of the 14 project partners, six were involved in the second theme, namely the Counties of Sogn og Fjordane and Oppland in Norway, the regions of Vallée d'Aoste and Trento in Italy, the region of Rhone-Alps in France and finally the Province of Cordoba in Spain. The partners decided to focus the study on three categories of products / resources that are the food products, artisan craft products, and finally tourism products based on the cultural or natural heritage.

In order to achieve the results, the partners conducted 25 field studies, two study tours (in the Region of Vallée d'Aoste and in the Counties of Sogn og Fjordane and Oppland) and finally a thematic and consultative seminar in Flaam in

Norway on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2006 that attracted a large participation.

Three kinds of documents and results are available from this component:

1/ methodology used: the methodological guide

2/ descriptive documents, namely:

- synthesis of the general information in the studies
- 6 regional study reports (presentation of 25 case studies and the study areas)
- 2 reports of study visits
- All the speeches and the compilation of the exchanges during the round table of the thematic seminar (Flaam)

3/ finally, the analysis and synthesis documents:

- results of the analysis of

the case studies

- conclusions and main lessons learned from the discussions during the consultative seminar in Flaam.

The recommendations for the entire project will be elaborated in the last phase of the project on the basis of the analysis done within each of the three themes. These will be presented in the final conference of the project in March 2007 in Turin.

All the documents of the theme 2 are available in French and/or English and sometimes in the partner language at the project website :

[www.euromountains.net/theme2DOC.html](http://www.euromountains.net/theme2DOC.html)

## Analysis and results of the case studies

The analysis of the study realised by SUACI Alpes du Nord (Jean-Michel Noury and Emmanuel Mingasson) was presented at the thematic seminar in Flaam.

The methodology chosen to analyse the role of the territorial authorities in accompanying the development of mountain prod-

ucts and resources started with the products and projects to describe and compare the interventions of public authorities. The objective was therefore not to evaluate local authority policies, but to analyse their involvement in the framework of a single project.

Out of the 25 case studies

described by the partners 21 were studied in detail. Out of these 9 were food products, 4 craft products and 8 tourism products. The project stakeholders were networks or groupings of enterprises, private businesses or territorial entities. The projects studied were of varying dimensions: two thirds of them had a total value of under

300,000€; only three projects surpassed one million euros. Three-quarter (17/21) of the projects had a duration of between one and four years.

Financial analysis shows that the support granted to the projects came primarily from the national authorities, then from the European Union and finally from the regional and local communities. The support of the European Union represents 33% of the contributions to 10 out of the 14 developed within the European Union. Funding from the national authorities represents 70% of the aid in the 16 projects out of 21 where the state is involved. The regions (NUTS II) were involved in less than half of the projects (9/21) and in these cases their contribution represented 47% of the subventions allocated. By contrast, the local levels (NUTS III or IV) had a limited funding role but their "non-funding" support to the projects, such as advice and help in seeking other sources of funding is significant.

The involvement of local and regional authorities is mainly immaterial (funding of specific quality actions, marketing, training etc.) or a combination of material and immaterial support. The local and regional authorities generally inter-

vene in several types of actions. In half of the cases the funding extends over several years allowing for more security and the duration of the support to correspond to the duration of the project. The intervention modalities vary in function of the types of products, types of project holders and the complexity of the projects. The food and craft projects are more supported immaterially, whereas the tourism products often benefit from financial aid and material investments (infrastructure, buildings...). The self-funding required tends to be higher for private project holders than for public holders, while the networks or enterprise groupings have a medium self-funding.

Finally, the study highlights that the intervention modalities (amount of aid, level of self-funding required, length of intervention, number of communities to intervene in the same project) differ mainly according to the region where the project is located. The intervention logic of the regions is also different in respect of what level of risk accepted by the communities and the guarantees of success that the project promoter has to present.

Last point, there are some

identifiable success factors:

- The capacity of the project manager to define a development strategy for a product
- The necessity for the local authority to fix priorities in the choice of projects to be supported
- The competency or available capacity of the territorial authorities to analyse and follow the projects and their evolution
- The close cooperation between the two parties, local authorities and project stakeholders, demonstrated by a funding plan that provides the project stakeholders with a good visibility for the duration of the project
- Level of self-funding required, adapted to the capacities of the project stakeholders but sufficient to guarantee real ownership.

The complete version of the results and case studies are available at: [www.euromountains.net/theme?DOC.html](http://www.euromountains.net/theme?DOC.html)

*Article drafted in collaboration with Emmanuel Mingasson and Jean-Michel Nauray from SUACI des Alpes du Nord*



## Conclusions and main lessons learned from the Thematic seminar in Flaam, the 10 and 11 May 2006

The thematic seminar in Flaam was the final step in the process of getting results and conclusions on the theme 2. This consultative seminar provided various opportunities to the 80 participants from various EU countries to discuss, exchange and express their views on the topic. The draft results of analysis of the project circulated in advance to all the participants and were also presented during the seminar, along with local experiences and case studies.

There is a need to recognise that all regions have specific features and strengths to be leveraged, as well as specific cultures whose uniqueness must also be encouraged. Therefore we have to avoid promoting across Europe uniformity in regional innovation and development. Territorial dynamism is crucial to project development and requires collaboration and cooperation among a variety of local economic sectors, the commitment of the population and

a variety of competences to bear on a single project were more likely to succeed in mountain areas than projects focusing on one single activity.

### 2/ Cooperation Between Territorial Authorities and Project Stakeholders: Mixed Experiences.

What is actually in discussion here is indeed cooperation among public services and project stakeholders. A relationship of trust between these two



Picture in the middle: Participants to the round table (from left to right): **C. Serre**, Councillor for the department of Puy de Dôme, member of ANEM, France; **M.T. Pelliconi**, Head of the press unit, LINCEN, Italy; **J.A. Gulloriz**, Head of analysis and study Unit, IKT, Vice president of Euromontana, Basque Country, Spain; **O.J. Trangsrud**, Manager, Organisation farm food producers and rural tourism, Norway; **P. Dingwall**, Senior Development Manager for Business and Transformation, Highland and Island Enterprise, Scotland; **A. Machado**, General Secretary, ADRAI, Portugal; **F. Glassier**, Vice-President of the mountain community Grand Combin, councillor of Oyace Commune and civil-servant to the Assessorat of agriculture, farmer, Val d'Aoste Region, Italy

This article summaries in 6 key ideas the exchanges made during the seminar. The comprehensive version is available at:

[www.euromountains.net/theme2DOC.html](http://www.euromountains.net/theme2DOC.html)

### 1/ A Specific Feature of Mountain Area Projects: Diversity. Public-Private Partnerships are Essential.

business community and the activation and maximisation of local competences. The bottom-up approach, which the EU Commission so vocally advocates, must find its place in Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) with the active involvement of the local population. Multidisciplinary and multisectoral approaches bringing together

players is essential to build a dynamic environment for regional development policies. It is also important for public authorities (elected representatives and technicians) to be able to interact with project stakeholders at their level to ease procedures that can be both tedious and off-putting. Also in evidence is that upstream of project

stakeholders, it is often concept developers who turn to local and regional authorities. It would be useful for local authorities to help field players during the essential stage of clarifying objectives.

### **3/ Knowledge and Knowledge Management as a Success Factor for Promoting Mountain Products.**

We live in a "knowledge society" and mountain areas are by some believed to be "low-knowledge-societies". Mountain areas have a specific knowledge resource base – "mountain knowledge" – that is a crucial input factor for producing genuine quality mountain products. This is a type of knowledge, "tacit" knowledge, which is different from the dominant "scientific" type of knowledge. Tacit knowledge, not codified but experience-based, acquired and passed on from generation to generation, is often put under pressure and challenged by systems and regulations based on the dominant type of knowledge. People in mountain areas need to be all-rounders and are often multi-occupied. Therefore, mountain people as well as the territorial authorities need a broad range of knowledge.

### **4/ Evaluating and Supporting Projects: The Holistic Approach Is Essential.**

Project evaluation cannot exclusively concern itself with project nature and

contents. There is also a need to consider the structure as a whole, its competences and potential for growth, management and organisation. Thanks to this holistic approach to evaluation, it is possible to identify the strengths and weaknesses of individual projects as a whole and therefore to devise a specific project support strategy tailored to the needs of the initiative. Public authorities must provide a range of appropriate tools – i.e. adjusted to the requirements of individual projects – over a suitable period of time including finance, networking, training, monitoring, advice, services, etc.

### **5/ The Mission of Territorial Authorities: Effectiveness in the Use of the Public Funding of course, but there is also a Need to Accept Risk taking.**

The role of territorial authorities cannot be considered to be limited to supporting solid proposals because public authorities also play their role fully when taking risks. This kind of intervention alone allows them to retain both the ability to modulate regional development and the ambition to influence outcomes. As several participants recalled, a general trend is evident within the EU and associated countries toward sizeable cuts in public spending on project support. One of the challenges of regional development in future will therefore relate to the importance assigned by public authorities to the

need to continue to take risks with the projects they support.

### **6/ Is There a Specific Mountain Dimension to the Role of Local and Regional Authorities?**

The most important role of regional and local authorities is to provide the best possible service for all citizens regardless of where they live. But if such imbalances are to be addressed, it is impossible to enforce strictly equal policies. The difficulties faced by mountain areas essentially relate to spatial planning issues. For this reason, coordination among the different authorities managing different aspects of individual territories is of the essence. However, care should be taken upon developing mountain policies to recognise that there are a wide variety of mountain environments facing radically different issues. It is also important to define mountain areas not by comparison to or in competition with other European regions, but rather according to their specific features and assets. It is hazardous to leverage the uniqueness of the mountain environment for the sole purpose of securing additional support. However, the very nature of mountain areas means that they should secure specific competences.

## The study visit in the Region of the Vallée d'Aoste, Italy, 11 - 13 October 2005

"Vallée d'Aoste is the smallest (3262km<sup>2</sup>) and least populated (114,000 inh.) region in Italy. It is a typically mountainous region with an average altitude of 2106m. The study area for this theme comprised a group of seven municipalities selected for representing the problems of small municipalities in the region. They included Chamois, La Magdeleine, Valgrisenche, Bionaz, Oyace, Champorcher and Pontboset. From 11 to 13 October 2005 a delegation of officials, producers and technicians from Norway (8 participants) and Italy

hemp weaving. Then we visited a traditional mill at Pontposet and walked along the "Il sentiero dei 7 ponti", a tourist route developed around the waterway of Ayasse, its rapids and several stone bridges. The day ended at Arnad "Maison Bertolin", a small enterprise that produces typical valdostaine meat products.

The second day we went to the municipality of Chamois and visited the picnic area on the side of the lake Lod and an artisan manufacturing unit of baskets and "Emilio's enterprise" that produces

The last day we participated in the production of the Fontina (PDO cheese) in "Les Cretes" enterprise of Oyace and visited the hydro-electric centre of the F.lli Ronc still in the same municipality. Then, in the municipality of Bionaz we visited a shop that prepares the "landzettes", a carnival costume in traditional velvet of the region, and the dam of the Place Moulin. The next stop took us to the Centre of Fontina in the municipality of Valpelline. To finish the study tour, we went to the municipality of Valgrisenche to see the dam of



(1 participant) came to Vallée d'Aoste. The programme included an in-depth visit to a "good practice" example in each of the seven municipalities.

Therefore the first day we went to the cooperative "Lo dzeut" of Champorcher to see typical

cheese. Then in the municipality of La Magdeleine we saw the route of the restored mills and the ovens and the "Douce Vallée" enterprise that produces raspberry vinegar and other traditional products. Finally we were at the "Valle del Cervino" cheese dairy of Val-tournanche.

Beauregard, used for the hydropower and for climbing. We also had a chance to watch the cloth weaving in "Les Tisserades" cooperative.

In each municipality we had the chance to exchange technical and strategic information with the local actors and pro-

ducers, but also on local policies either by meeting representatives of local authorities or through the visits themselves. During the visits the technicians from the Regional department of agriculture and natural resources and of the Centro Sviluppo Spa development agency were present to guide the

visits and reply to questions from project partners. The meals were composed of typical dishes of the region."

*Nathalie Betemps,  
Project partner from the  
Vallée d'Aoste Region,  
Italy*



## The study visit in Norway, 12-14 May 2006

Our study trip in Norway took us from west to east through the central mountain areas of the two counties Sogn og Fjordane and Oppland across 10-11 municipalities. The trip was planned to show a cross section of the natural features of the area as well as to give a view of local culture and how people used and are still using mountain resources for their livelihood. A common characteristic of these municipalities is the low population density: no more than 2-4 pers/km<sup>2</sup>.

In Western Norway, mountains are different from most the ones in Europe. They rise directly up from sea level without any lowland in between and narrow fjords cut deep inland forming a special landscape of fjords and mountains. Weather is also

instance in Lom, annual rainfall reaches 250 mm; the lowest rainfall in Norway. Thus, irrigation is necessary and has century long traditions. Farmers in Lom have an old saying: "If the Lord gives sun, we ourselves provide water".

Local building techniques reflect these specific weather conditions. Lom and Vågå municipalities have the highest concentration of protected old timber houses on the list of the Directorate for Cultural Heritage. The visited municipalities also represent the core area for the remaining stave churches, which are unique churches for Norway and date back to pre-reformation times.

A common feature of the whole area is that mountains

unique combination of natural features which attracts tourists from all over the world.

Agriculture is still of great importance, even though a dramatic reduction in number of farms has occurred in recent years. Agriculture provides employment and direct income for 10-15 percent of the population. Farms are generally small and most farmers need, and have side incomes of different sort. Multi-activity on the farm has been a tradition which has undergone a revival in recent years with active promotion from the authorities. Diversification of farms through tourism is common and increasing. Staying on a farm and combining adventurous mountain activities with a taste of locally produced food and



different from west to east. In the west, weather is influenced by a coastal climate, with mild winters and long summers, which favours horticulture and fruit growing in lower lying areas. On the eastern side, typical inland climate prevails, with cold winters, dry and relatively hot summers. Precipitation is low in most of the area and for

and mountain resources have been of great importance for peoples' survival and local development. In modern times quarrying, timber production and hydroelectric power have become important. Today tourism is a fast growing industry, still with unexploited possibilities. Fjords, glaciers and high mountains make up a

traditional culture is a mixture that meets well the modern market trends in tourism. More exotic farming activities like reindeer farming are also found, and have long traditions in these mountain areas.

*Egil Nøstande,  
Project partner from Sogn og  
Fjordane County, Norway.*

### Future events of the project:

**Thematic seminar on theme 3 of Euromountains.net** : " Defence and management of the fragile rural areas, landscapes and natural resources in mountains" - End 2006 in Rhône-Alpes Region, France

**Final conference of Euromountains.net project** : "networking European mountain regions in order to promote sustainable territorial development" - March 2007 in Turin, Italy



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## The 14 partners of Euromountains.net project

<p><b>Euromontana</b> Association Européenne pour les zones de montagne European Association for mountain areas</p>	<p><b>Diputación de Córdoba</b> Andalucía Spain</p>	<p><b>Conseil Régional Rhône-Alpes</b> Rhône-Alpes France</p>	<p><b>Région Autonome Vallée d'Aoste</b> Assessorat de l'Agriculture, des Ressources naturelles et de la Protection civile Vallée d'Aoste Italy</p>	<p><b>Istituto di ricerca per l'ecologia e l'economia applicate alle aree alpine</b> Lombardia Italy</p>	<p><b>Telemark Fylkeskommune</b> Telemark County Council Norway</p>	<p><b>Buskerud Fylkeskommune</b> Buskerud County Council Norway</p>
<p><b>ADRAT</b> Associação de Desenvolvimento da Região do Alto Tâmega Alto Tâmega Portugal</p>	<p><b>Diputación de Palencia</b> Castilla y León Spain</p>	<p><b>The Highland Council</b> Highlands UK</p>	<p><b>Provincia di Torino</b> Assessorato all'Agricoltura e Montagna Piemonte Italy</p>	<p><b>Provincia Autonoma di Trento</b> Assessorato alla programmazione ricerca ed innovazione Trentino Italy</p>	<p><b>Oppland fylkeskommune</b> Oppland County Council Norway</p>	<p><b>Sogn og Fjordane fylkeskommune</b> Sogn og Fjordane County Council Norway</p>

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