

Euromountains.net Project – Theme 3
INTERREG III C

Defence and management of the
fragile rural areas, landscapes, and natural
resources in mountains

*Construction, reconstruction and enlargement of
malga (alpine hut)*



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Final document



PROJECT PART FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

1- Area description form

Location map

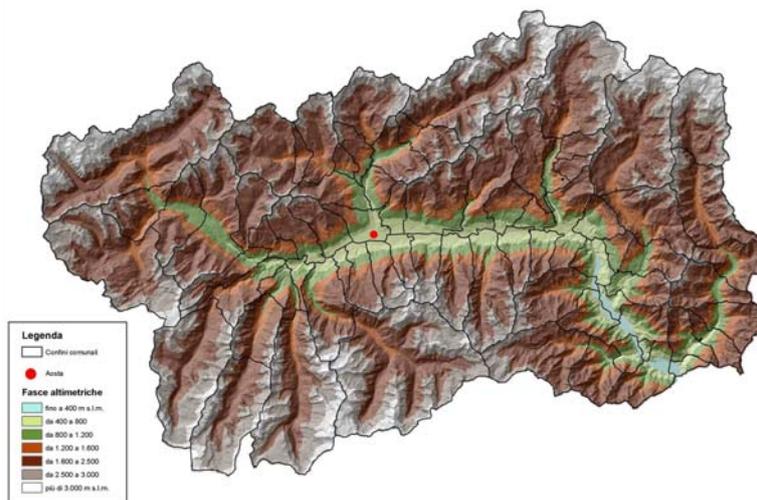


Figure 1 – Aosta Valley autonomous Region

1/ Geographical environment

Characteristic element: mountain

The Aosta Valley Region territory is 3.262 km², of which:

- 40% less than 2.000 m
- Altitude: minimum 310 m, maximum 4.800 m (average altitude 2.100 m)
- 50% of forests and pastures
- 8,7% of the territory inhabited all the year
- More than 1/5 of the territory is classify natural reserve in order to preserve the fauna and the flora
- 1.200 km of sky track
- Mountainous massif : Mont Blanc, Grand Combin, Mont Cervin et Mont Rose at north and Grand Paradis at south
- Alpine clime

2/ Socio-economics dynamisms

Population and employment¹

- 122.868 residents, of which 62.334 women et 60.534 men²
- 37,66 inhabitants / km²
- Activity rate (15-64 years): 68,5% (men 76,3%, women 60,5%)
- Employment rate (15-64 years): 66,3% (men 74,3%, women 57,9%)
- Unemployment rate: 3,2% (men 2,5%, women 4,3%)
- Positive demographic evolution (natural balance -145, migratory balance 1.255)³. The positive migratory balance is the index that the Region has a good attractiveness degree. Concerning the natural balance, it's possible to observe, in addition to the

¹ ISTAT

² Bilan démographique 2005

³ Bilan démographique 2005

negative value, that it is characterized by early old age and increasing of women in resident population.

- Occupation 54,8%
- Salaried 39,7%
- Non salaried (farmers, liberal profession...) 15,1%
- Agriculture 2,7%
- Industry 14,1%
- Services 38,0%

Adjoin value to the base price for economic sectors (year 2003) ⁴:

- Agriculture, sylviculture and fishing : 1,57%
- Industry, in the strict sense of the term: 14,22%
- Building : 4,48%
- Commerce, hotels and restaurants, transports and communications : 28,78%
- Broking, entrepreneurial activities : 23,51%
- Other types of services : 27,44%

Economic activities and trend⁵

Farmland is generally used for grazing (53.700 ha); mowing grassland ranks second in terms of extension among the types of farmland (15.700 ha). Vineyards (510 ha) and orchards (700 ha) are the most important sector of intensive farming activity. 79.365 ha of land are occupied by forests and 250 ha of land are occupied by chestnut groves.

Dairy cattle are raised, with an annual production of about 600,000 quintals of milk, for the production of dairy products, such as: cheese, butter and yoghurt.

The regional industrial policy is focused on the promotion of high-technology, environmentally-friendly, premium quality industry (sports items, resin materials, computer storage devices, magnetic supports, electronic devices, high precision equipment, liquid crystal displays) (7.000 employees).

The industrial building and public works sector is constantly growing (6,000 employees).

The tertiary sector encompasses the largest part of economic activities, with the largest number of employees.

Description of the main economic activities that are managing or having a negative affect on the land and resources (forestry, farming, tourism activities....)

Touristic development generate a appreciable fluctuation in atrophic charge intensity on natural system and environment in relation with the various year seasons (Christmas time, August, January, February, March and July week-end)

The high level of local traffic, because of the spread structure of houses and the concentration of installation along international communication ways, and the goods transports on France and Switzerland roads, determine pollutant presence especially in the central valley. In Aosta town, apart from traffic pollutant, there are also the heating system pollutants.

⁴ ISTAT, tirée du PreFin

⁵ A. V. Cerutti, *Le pays de la Doire et son peuple*, Musumeci, Quart, 1995

3/ Description of the specific features of the area in terms of landscape and natural resources

Description of existing local challenges (pressure of urbanization, climate changes, reduction of farming activities, pressure of mass tourism...)

Change in territory use methods, lead to the reduction of ordinary management of agricultural space and generate an increasing of hydro geological risks; the distribution in space and time of atrophic pressure on environment is changed too.

Abandonment of agriculture is related with abandonment of real estate that determines an economic and know-how loss in ground management.

4/ Description of policy organisation and zoning

- 1 Region
- 74 communes
- 8 Comunità Montane (Community of Mountain Communes)
- Aosta, the regional capital
- 1 national park
- 1 regional park
- 9 regional natural reserves
- 26 sites of community importance
- 5 special protection zones
- Leader+ program: the communes involved by the program are represented in following maps:

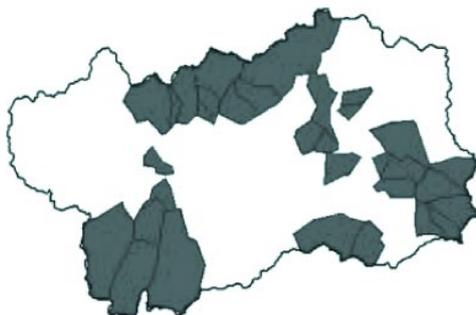


Figure 2 – Communes involved in the Leader+ program

- The Communes of the Aosta Valley covered by Objective 2 (blue) and by Phasing out (yellow) are displayed in the following map:

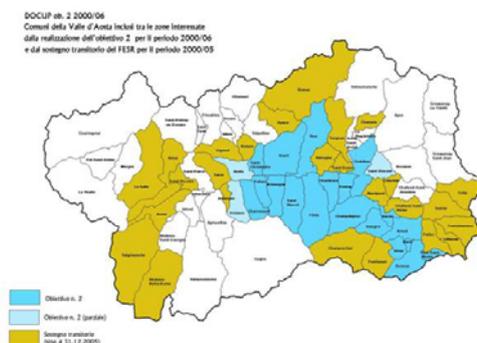


Figure 3 - The Aosta Valley communes included in the areas concerned by Objective 2 (blue) and by Phasing out (yellow)

Objective 3 covers the whole Aosta Valley autonomous Region.

2 –Resource description form

Presentation of the resource concerned by the project

Description of the resource(s)

✘ **Type of resource and its description; brief history of the resource and management prior to the start of the case study project**

Historically livestock during summer time use to be brought in high mountains, so the territory resulted naturally managed. In the course of year lots of breeders stopped the transhumance because of the hard life conditions in the mountains; consequently a part of high mountain territory was abandoned. Starting from 1984 until 2000 a regional law (LR 30) sustains farmers that want to recover *malga* (alpine hut). The studied measure is running from 2001, this measure allow on one side to program and manage in an integrated way interventions through a call (before there was a counter system) on the other to sustain the landscape conservation in a priority way (before the objective was just the rationalization of agricultural activity).

✘ **Main quality features of the resource**

The high mountain environment is characterized by:

- agricultural point of view: pasture with higher quality and consequently better milk and Fontina (PDO product and main production of Valdôtain agriculture)
- Ecological point of view: distance from inhabited and industrial centres do development of characteristic flora and fauna;
- Hydro geological point of view : natural risks in absence of a good territory and pasture management

✘ **Specificity, link to the territory:**

- **Area of observation/ development** : all territories without mechanization, fertirrigation... since there isn't an adapted road network so just pasture is possible. In high/medium valley is up to 1600 m, in the low valley up to 1300-1400 m
- **Can we find it elsewhere?** (How unique, rare, specific?): characteristic landscape of Alps n terms of morphology, flora and fauna

✘ **Is the resource protected by UE (Natura 2000...) or international law (world patrimony of UNESCO...), belong to any specific lists, or does it benefit from a private brand?** A part of Valdôtain high mountain territory is protected as a part of national, regional Park and natural reserves.

✘ **Ownership of the resource** Partly are private propriety and partly public.

Connections of the resource(s) with the local territory

✘ **Economics component: (related to tourism, to sport activities, to industry...).** Please describe and provide figures as far as possible

A good territory management allows the production of milk and Fontina with high quality; from a touristic point of view a well managed area is an attraction for tourists.

- ✘ **Social component: (indirect impact on employment, diversification of activities for the local population, improvement of the quality of life of the local population...).**

Maintain agriculture means maintains employments in agriculture sector ; studied intervention allows to improve employments in agricultural sector ; studied intervention allow in effect to improve life conditions of farmers in mountains during summer time so they are stimulated in follow their agricultural activities that indirectly guarantee territories management often abrupt that would be very difficult to manage in another way.

- ✘ **Environmental component (constitutes habitat for some species, prevent from natural risks, ...)**

Maintenance of mountain territories allow to maintain necessary conditions for survival of local species and reduce landslide risks too.

- ✘ **Cultural component: (belong to the collective imaginary, essential for the maintaining of the local identify of the population)**

Climb (inarpa) and descent (desarpa) of livestock to high altitude are, since always, part of valdôtain country tradition, even from a cultural point of view it is important not to lose specificities of this custom. Climb (inarpa) and descent (desarpa) of livestock are an party opportunity for farmers: a real ritual was developed around century, so it's very important to maintain this tradition from an historical-cultural point of view and not only for agricultural aspects.

3 – Project description form

Context (in brief): organisation of the Stake Holders, Partners and the environment of the project

✘ Please supply a scheme or diagram showing the management and control of the project

The studied project is the action I.A.1.2 (Construction, reconstruction and enlargement of *malga* (alpine hut)) of I.A.1. measure of state aids, axe I.

All the project activities are managed directly by the Assessorato agricoltura e risorse naturali.

Project beneficiaries have to respect the following steps:

Etape	Description
Gathering information and models to ask for a technical opinion on the foreword	The beneficiaries of the measure can ask for information and the models at the Fabbricati rurali office (rural building) of the Assessorato agricoltura e risorse naturali during the whole year (every day).
Presentation of the model about the technical opinion on the foreword	During the whole year, the beneficiaries can give the models and documents to the measure responsible office (Fabbricati rurali), in order to ask for a technical opinion on the foreword
Technical opinion on the foreword	A technical commission from the Assessorato agricoltura e risorse naturali will meet every month to evaluate the forewords and give a technical opinion
Construction license	After receiving a positive technical opinion on the foreword, the beneficiaries have to get all the other needed authorizations to get the construction license
Financing request	After getting the construction license, the beneficiary has to present a financing request, time to present this search is limited, normally it's in October, November and Decemb
Financing requests evaluation	A technical commission, which will meet once a year, will evaluate the requests following fixed priorities and will decide the applications to be financed. Technical commission is composed by members of Assessorato agricoltura e risorse naturali with different competences: an officer, an examining technician, three technicians and a agricultural engineer.
Works control and subvention	Technicians will control the work progress and they will pay, in several times, the realized works using an estimation made in the course of the realization of the projects as basis to pay
Controlling the financing limits respect	The beneficiary has to use the enterprise for activities foresaw in the financed project for 15 years. The Assessorato agricoltura e risorse naturali technicians will make controls to verify the financing limits respect, by drawing the beneficiaries
Controlling the respect of limitations foresaw in Management plans	After the limitations foresaw by the financial aid, buildings are submitted to limitations foresaw by Management plans (generally is impossible to change the use destination of these buildings)

- ✘ Description of the **Project**:
 - **Description of the activity/ service** : the action will have several activities; in the study we will make an analysis of the financing for the *malga* (alpine hut) construction, reconstruction, modernization and recuperation which are used during the summer for the livestock transhumance to high quota pastures, as it is a zoo-technical traditional Valdôtain practice
 - **Scope of the project (in terms of area and topic)**: the financing is addressed to all building owners of the Region (public or private); the enterprise owner can use this financing just for small works of inside arrangements
 - **Description of the method used and reasons for its selection by the land actors**: (see table of project management and control)

- ✘ Describe the project 'key actors':
 - **Name of the organisation** : Assessorato agricoltura e risorse naturali
 - **Who are the Stake Holders and Partners (farmers, land owners, associations, public bodies, other...)** Assessorato agricoltura e risorse naturali is the only stake holder, owners and enterprise holder are in the same time beneficiaries and partners because they contribute with an auto-financing in an action which aim is the territory maintenance and not the production increase
 - **Constitution of the organisation (association, company...)**. **Is it a commercial or a non-commercial organisation?** Local community, non-commercial
 - **Date of creation** 1948
 - **Purpose (mission, objectives of the organisation itself)**
 - Dipartimento agricoltura:
 - Coordinates the relationship with the Ministero delle politiche agricole and the European Union
 - Manages the system of the agricultural companies (including board notebook of the exploitations and the pedagogical cartography) and proceeds to the control and the follow-up of the community rules
 - It take care of administrative and accountant management of the personnel recruited within the collective agreement of the agricultural workers
 - Directs the periodical "L'informateur agricole"
 - Dipartimento risorse naturali e corpo forestale:
 - Ensures the administrative and countable management of the forest operators
 - Manages the special missions
 - Organizes and manages all the activities of the forest operators of Aosta Valley respecting national and regional rules in use
 - Diffuses information relating to its action and takes care of the information and the sensitizing of the public in several fields: forests, fires, flora, fauna, minerals, parks, protected natural spaces and alpine botanical gardens
 - Carries out the preliminary control of legality on the acts of the regional Consortium for the protection, the promotion and the practice of fishing; the regional Committee of the management of the hunting and the administrative establishment of the Natural reserve of the Mont-Avic

- Provides for preventive legality control on the acts of the regional Consortium for protection, the promotion and the practice of fishing and those of the regional Committee of the management of hunting
 - o **General annual budget of the organisation** 172.336.643,93 €
 - ✘ **Operational and strategic history** of the project development:
 - o **Factors at the origin of the project:** High mountain and mountain pasture life has become harder in comfort terms (above all lately), while comfort has increased in villages. Anyway only the farmer can manage the abrupt high mountain terrains. It'd be hard to imagine a public service for the management of these territories which are practically inaccessible and hard to work. It is in this context that the Assessorato agricoltura e risorse naturali wanted to improve the work conditions in high mountain so that farmers could stay and not abandoning the mountain. Moreover new demands in animal welfare, environment and landscape protection, encourage de development of this project.
 - o **Key milestones in the progress of the project**
 - Will and necessity from the farmers to go on with their activity.
 - Available financing for this measure
 - o **Any re-positioning or changes taken and the reason behind these**

There was a technical change, halfway through the project, prices were revised because the markets changed a lot, above all the iron market.
 - o **Has any enlargement or the inclusion of other land actors or communities taken place. How was this managed?**

No
 - ✘ **Which difficulties, linked to the context, are met by the holders?**
 - o **Conflict of interest with other beneficiaries** No
 - o **Lack of finances** No, administration believed very much in this project so lots of money was dedicated to this measure; until now all requests were financed
 - o **Lack of common involvement of the local stakeholders (population, SMEs, tourism business....)** No
 - o **External pressure from businesses or public sector** No
 - o **Other** Yes
 - Difficulty in evaluate request for financing project of new building in the case where the same owner in the same area has got an old building hat could be reconstructed
 - Difficulty in action on the case where there was coherence problems between laws: for example Urbanization Plan and Landscape Territorial Plan
 - Difficulty in founding enterprise available to work in high mountain
- Are some of these difficulties linked to mountainous location? Just the difficulty in founding enterprise available to work in high mountain**
- ✘ **Assets met linked to the context**
 - o **Other** this project was a necessity of the farmers, the *malga* (alpine hut) modernization was already in their minds since mountain pasture is vital for the Aosta Valley rural economy: the main product (Fontina PDO) needs milk produced in mountains. Moreover, without *malga* (alpine hut) we won't be able of exploiting the vastest

territories during the summer, that is to say, those over 1300 m. So, even during the summer the cows should eat the low mountain fodder and then, they will have no fodder for the winter. The process of parcelling the high mountain out hasn't started yet, making easy the implementation of the project.

Are some of these assets linked to mountainous location? Yes, all

Content of the project :

✘ **General objectives:**

Measure objective referred to the studied action are:

- **Operational:** intervention in structures and infrastructures, including hygienic and sanitary adaptation and animal welfare; mountain pasture management improvement and increasing the local fodder availability
- **Specific:** improving and rationalize companies structures, maintaining the mountain pastures
- **Global:** increasing the companies' competitiveness and farmers incomes

Are the objectives of the project clearly defined by the stake holders?
Objectives are defined in the measure description

✘ **Operational objectives : means implemented concerning:**

What are the concrete actions that the project holders have decided to implement? (in relation to the needs to make a success of their project) ?

- **Development of a multisectoral approach (integration of actors from many fields)** the measure is linked to other high mountain space management measures: particularly if there is no available pasture, the other contributions linked to irrigation, road, etc. are not given
- **Quality management or quality improvement of the resource:** in an indirect way: the studied measure let keep high mountain agriculture and the sustainable management of the territory
- **Legal protection** No
- **Communication, marketing improvement (including conscious awareness to tourists, local population...)** In 2001, there was a project presentation for all the technicians of the region, local administration so interested persons had their opportunity to know this instrument. Furthermore, calls are published in the local press and on the regional administration web site

4 – Policy background and public intervention

4.1 – Policy frameworks that affect the project

✘ European Union level:

- **1/ Name/ number of the regulation/ standard and the measures that affect the project**
- Art. 4.1.22 traditional landscapes conservation and management” from the communitarian guidelines for the State Aids in the agriculture sector (2000/C 28/02 from 01/01/2000)
- Community rule 1257/99 “support to rural development from European Agricultural Guarantee Fond (EAGF)” article 17 (Definition of disadvantaged areas)
- Community directive 629/1991 on animal welfare

✘ National and state level:

- **1/ Name/ number of the regulation/ standard and the measures that affect the project**
- « Galasso law » n° 431/1985 (Define that up to 1600 m every intervention need a superintendence notice).

✘ Regional and local level:

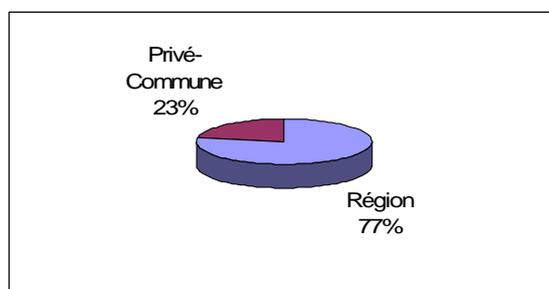
- **1/ Name/ number of the regulation/ standard and the measures that affect the project**
- Regional law n°11/1998 «Disposition on urbanism and territorial planning in Aosta Valley ».
- Rural Development Programming Document 2000-2006 (State aids)
- Landscape Territorial Plan.

4.2 – Financial information

Share of grants and self-financing (figures concerning several years as far as possible).

	Territorial authorities						Self-financing
	EU	Nuts 1	Nuts 2	Nuts 3	Nuts 4	Nuts 5	
Amount (€)			38.900.000				11.300.000
Share (%)							

Beneficiaries can chose between 2 options: 75 % of financing without security and 25% of auto-financing or 65% of financing without security and 35% of mutual financing



4.3 – Type of support

✘ **What are the concrete actions supported :**

Delivering information and models for the technical opinion on the foreword search, technical opinion on the foreword, financing requests evaluation, work control, subvention, controlling the financing limits respect.

✘ **What is the type of the intervention?**

Financing aid, the measure finances the interventions on the structures and infrastructures aiming at guarantying the mountain territory management through agriculture.

The intervention proposes two solutions: a financing without security and a loan.

Anyway the financing is an investment to let high mountain territories continue being managed and used.

✘ **Direct beneficiaries?**

The indirect beneficiaries are all the leading owners and/or someone with a mountain pasture company status in the region (public or private); a good part of interventions were done on Communal mountain pasture

5 –Innovative aspects

Is there an innovative aspect in the design of this land management governance? If so please describe it and identify where it differs from other methods and activities and why this new innovation was possible.

The innovative aspect is that through the structures and infrastructures, we have favoured mountain pasture, which is important but also necessary, for a region where most of the pastures are high mountain pastures and where the hay couldn't be enough for the whole year without this practice. Innovation is to consider the *malga* (alpine hut) as a landscape saving element and not only as part of an architectonic element. For this reason, the evaluation criteria are based on their link with the territory instead of architectural aspects.

6 – Evaluation of local results of activity

6.1 – Effectiveness of the project

✘ **Have the forecasted objectives of the project been achieved ?**

Objectives	Answer
Interventions on structures and infrastructures, including hygienic and sanitary adaptation and animal welfare; improving mountain pasture management and increasing local fodder available	Yes, there were 6 calls in 6 years and 180 financed interventions on a total building surface of about 40.000 m ²

✘ **Are there any non forecasted objectives that have been achieved ?** No

✘ **Environment of the project :**

- **Are there any environment factors that prevented the realization of the objectives?** Non

- **Are there any other policies or regulations (national policies...) that counteract with the development of the project?** Non

Effectiveness : GOOD

6.2 - Reasons for failure/ success

- ✘ **Policy reasons, why and proposals for improvement:**
 - **Policy adapted/ not adapted (to the resource management, to the mountains situations, at which level?)** They were adapted to all levels
 - **Grants sufficient/not sufficient** Sufficient
 - **Type of support adapted/ not adapted** In certain cases even excessive, because the realized works are too expensive for the only-several-months-used structures. That happen probably because of the high percentage of financing without security
 - **Type of intervention adapted/ not adapted** Yes, anyway an integration would be necessary, it means foresee the give value to old buildings in case in which beneficiaries choose to build a new building localized in a different position in relation with the new one.

- ✘ **Local governance reasons:**
 - **Organisation well adapted/ not adapted to local actors, politicians and dwellers expectations** Well adapted
 - **Organisation too light/ too heavy for relevant and quick decision and strategy making process** Appropriate
 - **Difficulties to manage the diverse interests** No
 - **Sharing of the founds available between the various activities of the project is not relevant to the objectives of each one** No

- ✘ **Local implementation and delivery reasons**
 - **Stake Holders and Partners – right or wrong mix** It'd be maybe necessary a higher auto-financing percentage in order to make the beneficiaries more responsible
 - **Time frame suitable/not suitable** Yes, thanks to the calling system we could program the interventions
 - **Scale of intervention/project – too large or small** Appropriate
 - **Scope and range of activity – too wide/too focussed** Appropriate
 - **Did the delivery do what it was intended** Yes

Annex

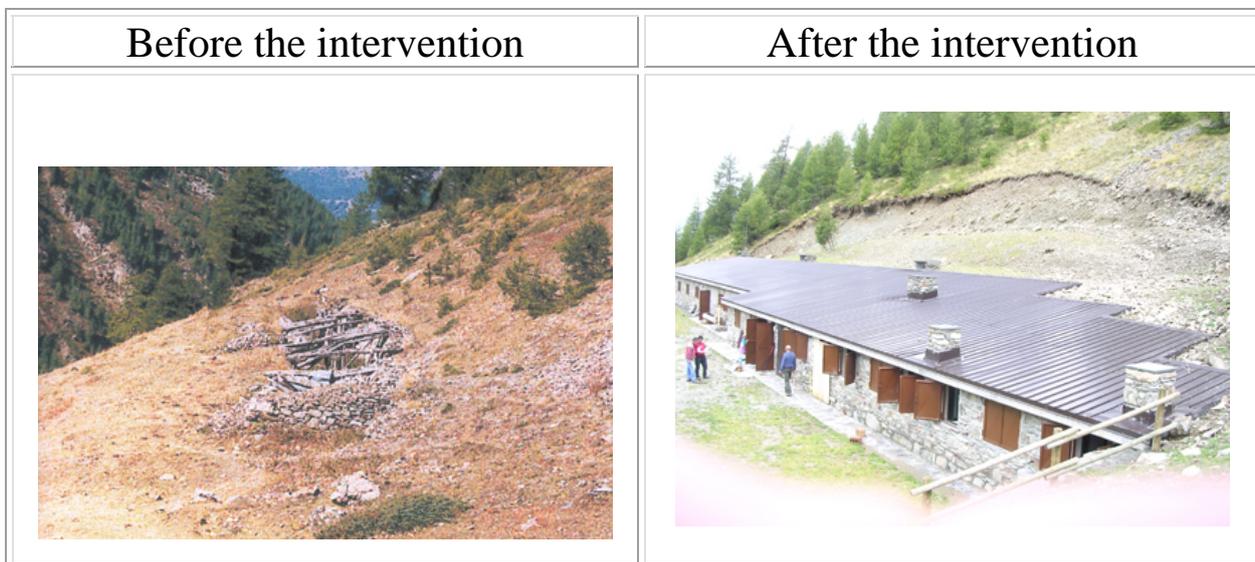
In annex 5 intervention examples.

Valcornière – Bionaz

Before the intervention	After the intervention
	

Beneficiary subject	Private
Agricultural characteristics	Livestock : 49 UAA + annex Useful surface : 70 ha
Intervention object	Reconstruction
Intervention localisation	Valcornière
Realisation year	2005
m² object of intervention	350 m ²
Loan	/
Financing without security	302.775 €
Auto-financing	100.925 €

Alpeysau – Oyace



Beneficiary subject	Commune
Agricultural characteristics	Livestock : 74 UAA + annex Useful surface : 73 ha pasturage 433 other surfaces No road
Intervention object	Reconstruction
Intervention localisation	Alpeysau
Realisation year	2005
m² object of intervention	622 m ²
Loan	/
Financing without security	554.925 €
Auto-financing	184.975 €

Retempio – Pontboset

Before the intervention	After the intervention
	

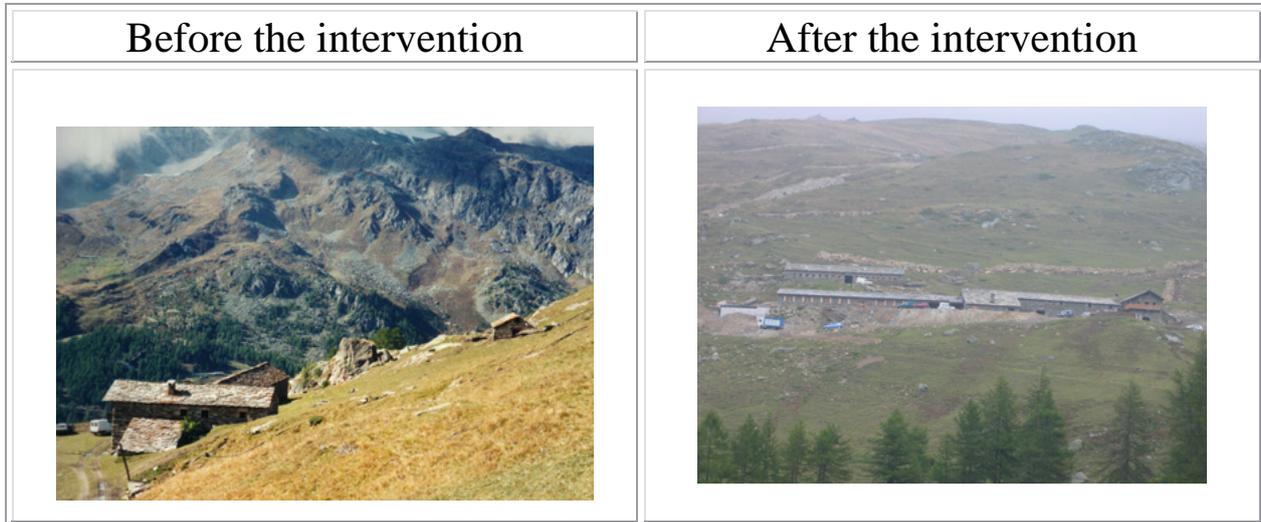
Beneficiary subject	Commune
Agricultural characteristics	Livestock : 30 UAA + annex Useful surface : 98 ha pasturage No road
Intervention object	Reconstruction
Intervention localisation	Retempio
Realisation year	2006
m² object of intervention	370 m ²
Loan	213.080 €
Financing without security	395.720 €
Auto-financing	/

Ourty – Champorcher

Before the intervention	After the intervention
	

Beneficiary subject	<p>Private (Simple society, company management at the family level with a employee)</p>
Agricultural characteristics	<p>Livestock : 40 UAA + annex Useful surface : 45 ha No road</p>
Intervention object	Reconstruction
Intervention localisation	Vallon Alleigne
Realisation year	2004
m² object of intervention	362 m ²
Loan	/
Financing without security	395.720 €
Auto-financing	139.550

Le Bois – Valgrisenche



Beneficiary subject	Private
Agricultural characteristics	Livestock : 160 UAA + annex Useful surface : 180 ha pasturage 320 other surfaces
Intervention object	½ Reconstruction + ½ New
Intervention localisation	Le Bois
Realisation year	2005
m² object of intervention	980 m ²
Loan	/
Financing without security	474.600 €
Auto-financing	158.200