



Interreg IIIB-Project, Alpine Space Programme, co-financed by the EU



After nearly a year DIAMONT is able to present the results of the first two studies, the survey on the impact of cultural differences on regional development (WP5) and the experts' opinion on the key issues of Alpine development (WP6). The third and the last round of the Delphi study in WP6 is being analysed at the moment. Its results and the related decision on which specific development trend will be analysed in more detail in the course of the project.

### Cultural differences and regional development

The mission of DIAMONT work package five (WP5) was to enhance the understanding of the influence of cultural differences on regional development in the context of a sustainable future in the Alps. In times of increasing influence of globalisation processes on social, economic and also ecological matters there is a growing evidence of common development behaviour, whereas the original regional differences seem to diminish as decisive factors of regional development. Public and private investments, production and consumer behaviour (especially in tourism) are considered to be the main driving forces of regional development in general. Specific measures have to be implemented to meet the challenge of global competition. Regional policy can therefore be understood as a regional answer to globalisation.

The WP5 study revealed that in all Alpine countries there is a general and common endeavour (however different in the details) to reduce regional socio-economic disparities by improving economic competitiveness; general socio-economic factors such as innovation and productivity are increasingly relevant in regional policy. There is a common tendency to strengthen the focus on regional strengths and potentials, as well as a common pledge for a „sustainable development“ (whatever this means in a specific case), normally connected with efforts to increase the impact of participatory and integrative processes and to search for an optimal mix of bottom-up and top-down decision-making in regional policy. But then, looking closer at the institutional aspects of regional policy, we come across some major differences within the Alpine countries: although it is mainly government bodies or agencies that are in charge of implementing regional policy, there are quite marked differences in terms of the „territorial geometry“, i.e. which levels of government are responsible for such measures. Also, in spite of a general tendency for increasing involvement of civil society, there are

relevant differences in the degree of participation and the involvement of private partnerships.

Concluding, one can say that the traditional influences of several cultural factors on regional policy are decreasing. Thus for monitoring regional development we have to consider indicators measuring sustainable progress in a globalising world. However, this may well include information on regional identity, provided it means no mere leftover from times past or folklore, but a conscious profile and strategy for future challenges.



**Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ulrike Tappeiner**  
EURAC and Institute for Ecology, LFUI  
Scientific leader of DIAMONT project

### DIAMONT after nearly a year

**DIAMONT started in March 2005. Where are we after nearly a year of hard work and what will be our next steps?**

How do experts assess the development of the Alpine Space, which trends do they consider important and which ones are the key issues for future development? These are the questions which had to be answered by 50 pan-Alpine experts within the framework of work package six. Naturally, even the perception of experts is marked by their personal experiences and their cultural background. For such a complex issue like sustainable development it is especially true that “you only see what you know”. For a common vision of the development of the Alps it is crucial to understand which factors are considered important and which culturally motivated differences in weighting can be expected. This topic was taken up by work package five.

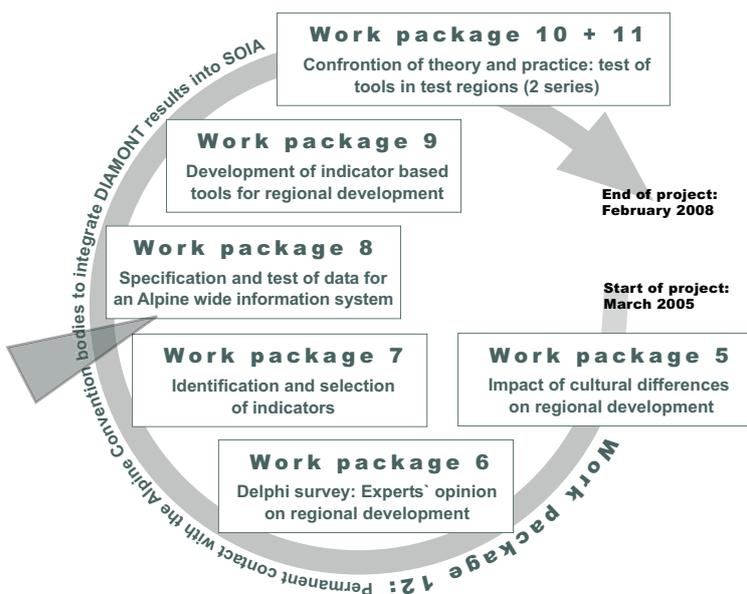
Currently we are searching for a set of indicators that covers all relevant aspects of sustainable development and is appropriate for reproducing its dynamics. There are libraries full of theories

about sustainable development and adequate quantifying indicators. But search for already implemented systems and developments measured at community level and you find that literature is thin on the ground. In work package seven (WP7) the available literature is screened, adjusted to the experts' opinion and tested for its applicability in the Alpine Space. This results in an ideal set of indicators for current development trends in the Alps.

Ideals are hard to realize and fairies granting three wishes belong to the endangered species. Thus, the team of work package eight (WP8) examines which portion of the ideal set of indicators is appropriate for real conditions. The project participants check the availability of data, assign groups of variables to the different aspects of sustainability and merge these to the three pillars of sustainability. In this manner viable indicators can be linked to the theoretical considerations of how to structure sustainable development issues. Due to the redundancy of the applied indicators, stable dimensions of sustainability can be developed even from data of different quality.

But we cannot settle for the solution of statistical problems. Many indicators are rotting in drawers because they are not accepted or understood by decision-makers. To avoid this we try to figure out in WP8 which information is important for the decision-makers to assess the current status of development and to determine future development strategies. Thus we are able to detect a lack or even distortion of information which allows us to be aware of the risk of wrong decisions or needless conflicts of interests.

It is important to understand if different positions in the very complex debate on development issues result from the discriminative weighting of the respective aspects for the total development or from divergent opinions on the effectiveness of development instruments. A lot of misunderstandings can be prevented by a participatory approach. On the basis of the previous work packages WP 8 will provide an instrument offering exactly this kind of structural support.



*After nearly a year the first two studies of WP 5 and 6 are being finalised. In the course of this year an ideal set of indicators will be drawn up and available data identified.*

## News relating to the Alpine Space

### Annual CIPRA meeting 2006 in Bad Hindelang

The annual CIPRA meeting will be held on May 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> in Bad Hindelang/Germany. This year's topic will be the growing danger of natural hazards and the consequences of global warming for touristic activities in Alpine regions. Good practice examples will be presented from the DYNALP project. (More information on: <http://www.cipra.org>)

### The 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee of the Alpine Convention will take place from April 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> 2006 in Bolzano/I. Exhibition on odours in the Alps ("Mit der Nase in die Berge") in the Alpine Museum of the German Club Arc Alpin (Munich)

Until February 12<sup>th</sup> 2006 you can still experience the variety of more than 50 Alpine odours – just follow your nose.

### EU signed three protocols of the Alpine Convention

On December 2, 2005, the Council of the Ministers for the Environment authorised the European Commission to sign three more protocols of the Alpine Convention, namely the protocols on tourism, energy and soil protection. This may be considered a positive signal for an increased awareness of Alpine concerns. But as the EU has not yet ratified any of the signed protocols, none of them is applicable law. (Source: *CIPRA International*)

### Expansion of European network of GMO-free-regions

During a conference on December 1, 2005, in Rennes/F, Tyrol/A, Lower Austria/A, and Piemont/I joined the network of GMO (genetically modified organisms)-free regions. This brings the network to a total of 38 European regions which voluntarily renounce the agricultural use of genetically modified organisms. (More information in German: <http://www.genfood.at>)

### New "Development Concept for the Alpine Rhine"

On December 1, 2005, the International Governmental Commission on the Alpine Rhine (IRKA) and the International Rhine Regulation (IRR) presented a new "Development Concept for the Alpine Rhine" which aims at a sustainable development of this important habitat and economic area. In future the flood protection will be improved, the quality of the ecosystem and the ground water improved and the sustainable use of renewable energy encouraged. (More information on: <http://www.alpenrhein.net>)

### "Municipality of the Future 2005": Tschlin (Engadin/Switzerland)

An international jury nominated Tschlin as "Municipality of the Future 2005". A prize of 4,000 euros was awarded to the Swiss village to honour the creation of a local eco-beer named "Biera Engiadinaisa". The initiative gives a vital impulse to agriculture and soft tourism and creates added value for the whole region. The competition was run by the "Alliance in the Alps". (More information on: <http://www.alpenallianz.org>)

### New EU research project: AWARE – Available Water Resources in Mountain Environments (July 2005–July 2008)

The project aims at providing tools for monitoring and forecasting water availability and distribution in those drainage basins where snowmelt is a major component of the annual water balance in Alpine catchments. (More information: <http://www.aware-eu.info/>)

### Schiestlhaus – the first zero-energy building in the Alps

In September 2005 the Austrian Tourist Club opened the Schiestlhaus at Mt. Hochschwab/A, which is based on an overall ecological concept that integrates aspects such as timber construction in zero-energy house standards, energy self-sufficiency using solar cells to provide hot water and photo-voltaic modules for electricity generation, biological waste-water treatment and rainwater utilisation. The initiative was launched by the Austrian Ministry of Transport. (More information on: <http://www.hausderzukunft.at>)

## Status Quo of work package six (WP 6): finishing line in sight

The Delphi survey comes to an end. Nearly 50 experts participated at the beginning of 2006 in the last round of the survey. Previous rounds resulted in a coherent grouping of identified topics into some main issues that are relevant for the future development of the Alpine regions. WP6 assumed that in spite of their complexity, these main issues could be handled by a limited number of phenomena, which are considered as related facts or trends. They help to give the main issues a concrete meaning and should be observed through data and indicators. Thus, the last round called upon the experts' sagacity in ranking the relevance of sets of phenomena to describe important characteristics and possible developments of main Alpine issues.

At the moment, we give only a brief summary on some important results of the third round. The final WP6 report will go much further into details. It will give a general overview of the present and future state of Alpine issues and reveal important aspects which should be taken into account to analyse the varying importance of these main issues for the respective Alpine regions.



*Vincent Briquel, responsible leader of the Delphi survey.*

The experts were invited to rank the relevance of the given 8 to 12 phenomena for each main issue. As the questionnaire focused only on phenomena whose relevance seemed worth being discussed, though leaving out best known phenomena, there were significant divergences in experts' appreciations.

For example, most experts considered the decreasing efficiency in public and private service provision and the increasing importance of second incomes in maintaining agricultural activities important to describe the main issue "marginalisation of rural peripheral areas" in the present state and for the future. However they gave less importance to the uncertainty in public funds provi-

sion to support rural development. For the maintenance of Alpine forests, new uses of the forests as an environment friendly resource (biomass, etc) are worth being considered in the future but not yet in the present. The rising interest on new wilderness areas as tourist attractions was rated congruently an anecdotic phenomenon, which besides is debatable in terms of sustainability. Concerning transport pressures, the experts asked for a limitation of traffic flows in sensitive areas, but in form of a wish for the future. Conversely, increase in pollution in steep-sided valleys on transit routes is not questioned. Last examples, for the main issue innovation and competitive economic activities: most experts stated that at the moment the Alps are not really engaged in high tech activities. However, in future these activities will be further developed, possibly in link with extra-Alpine firms. In this context, for the experts, lack of entrepreneurship spirit in the Alps is neither obvious, nor an important disadvantage.

### Problems will get worse in the future

In most cases, experts assumed that the importance of the phenomena will grow in the future. Furthermore, most phenomena related to the main issue climate change effects will be significant only in the long run, as for example difficulties in high quality water supply and energy use of water due to the lack of water. However, higher safety risks due to natural hazards (landslides, mudflows and floods) are already considered as a current problem which is not to be neglected.

The experts' answers often varied, as they often found it rather difficult to express opinions for the whole Alps and thus preferred to focus on their country or region. For example, divergences in opinions about the decrease in number of arrivals of tourists from distant areas mean that the Alpine regions have not the same opportunities to catch this market that some experts considered to be promising.

In conclusion of the questionnaire, the experts were invited to give their appreciations on the importance of the eight main issues identified in the survey. Though transport pressures or innovation and economic competitive activities were ranked higher than the maintenance of Alpine forests or even the marginalisation of rural peripheral areas, no issue comes in fact really to the fore or to the end. However, most ranked the importance of these issues in relation to regional development policy which can mean that they privileged short or mid-term issues. DIAMONT will have to consider these opinions, together with other considerations, to decide which main issue will be investigated in detail in the course of the project.



## **Agglomerations in valleys contra marginalisation of rural areas – problems of sustainable regional development in the Alpine Space**

### **Interview with Peter Haßbacher**

*Interview by Sigrun Lange, December 2005*

*Peter Haßbacher, head of the department „Spatial Planning and Nature Protection” in the Austrian Alpine Club (which is member of the Club Arc Alpine), is one of the most relevant contacts for Alpine development questions. As a member of DIAMONT’s advisory board he accompanies the project with his experience and knowledge.*

*SL: Which will be the key issues of Alpine development in the future?*

PH: Agglomeration processes in favourable areas on the one hand and further marginalisation of rural areas on the other hand will rank as a major problem in the near future. The crucial question will be how to close the gap politically between these two types of development regions. So far, communities, federal states, countries and the European Union interact only insufficiently. Many regions are left behind with doubts concerning their identity. How shall they position and present themselves publicly? What kind of brand do they represent?

*SL: Initiatives like INTERREG or the Alpine Convention are aiming at balancing these differences.*

PH: So far, neither INTERREG or LEADER projects nor the Alpine Convention have been able to solve these problems. A lot of papers have been produced but the implementation of the proposed concepts is still not guaranteed. The protocol of the Alpine Convention on transport issues, for example, has been negotiated for 17 years but the European Union has not signed it yet. Meanwhile, the issue as well as the content of the negotiations have changed. This demonstrates that the time-tag between the perception of a problem, its discussion in the public and the political reaction is far too long.

*SL: How relevant are the concerns of the Alpine Space for political decision-makers?*

PH: In the second half of the 1970s there was a remarkable political interest in the Alpine Space. Many experts campaigned honestly for the concerns of the Alpine regions, for example Walter Danz, then CIPRA president, or Klaus Töpfer, German minister for the environment (between 1987 and 1994). The pan-European commitment culminated 1978 in the conference “The future of the Alpine Space” which was organised by the Council of Europe in Lugano (Switzerland) and a seminar on the “Problems of the Spatial Planning in Mountainous Regions” in Grindelwald, also Switzerland. Today, there are still scientific or integrative projects, but the implementation of the concepts is not noticeable

in politics. Despite the agreements of the Alpine Convention, no comprehensive Alpine policies have been realised. Besides, there is a lack of committed experts who address the concerns of the Alpine regions.

*SL: How is the situation in Tyrol, a federal state characterised by the Alps?*

PH: Tyrol lacks a regional developing plan. Because of a lack of spatial planning, uncoordinated development activities happen over and over. For almost 40 years Tyrol has focused virtually exclusively on winter tourism. Only some villages, like Vent in the Ötztal valley, followed different route: in 1980, the Alpine cottage resisted the planned opening of the Hochjochferner glacier as a summer ski resort. Since then they have counted on hiking tourism. But currently the area is threatened by another development project: TIWAG, the Tyrolean hydraulic electricity provider, wants to construct a dam above the “Venter Rofenhöfe”. The traffic to and from the construction site would disrupt any soft tourism activities. It seems that not even protected areas are spared and excluded from unsustainable development projects.

*SL: Is an improvement of the situation conceivable?*

PH: Yes. Currently, Dr. Anna Hosp from the provincial government of Tyrol coordinates the drawing up of a vision for Tyrol (“Leitbild Zukunftsraum Tirol”) which should be available from mid-year 2006. It is meant to define the framework of the Tyrolean spatial development activities for a period of ten years.

*SL: Is the Alpine Convention an adequate instrument for promoting and strengthening sustainable development?*

PH: The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) of 1999 was not implemented on a regional level. The Alpine Convention could fill this gap, but the Permanent Secretary in Innsbruck is not powerful enough and not well established. Still, there are some innovative projects resulting from the discussion process within the framework of the Alpine Convention, such as the Alliance in the Alps, made up of some 160 local authorities, the Alpine Network of Protected Areas

and Via Alpina. But the Alpine Convention experiences the same problems as many other ideas: first, the discussions are fuelled by a euphoric atmosphere and the wish to make a difference. After a while, however, everybody gets back to the normal course of life. The wow, the great idea is still missing.

*SL: What do you think of the efforts of the Alpine Convention to create an Alpine-wide monitoring system (SOIA)?*

PH: These efforts are quite important as an Alpine wide monitoring system is still missing. At least in Germany, the spatial planning reports provide a comprehensive overview on the development processes but nothing

comparable exists for the entire Alpine Space. Thus, there is a demand, but the implementation of SOIA will prove quite a challenge. Projects like DIAMONT could help to promote the process.

*SL: Which results do you expect from DIAMONT?*

PH: I expect that DIAMONT will help to highlight the interdependence of regional planning in the Alps. I regard the project as successful if and only if the results are made available to political decision-makers and translated into current political activities like the formulation of the Tyrolean Vision or the Vision Rheintal. I would like to see DIAMONT applied to solve real problems.

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## New books on alpine issues

### “TirolCITY – New urbanity in the Alps” (de/en)

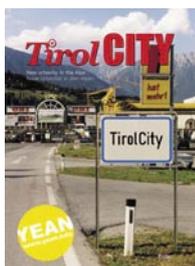
This publication gives a summary of the innovative concept of the “Young European Architects” (YEAN) who defined the entire area of Northern Tyrol as a large city: “TirolCITY” ([www.tirolcity.com](http://www.tirolcity.com)). Satellite images demonstrate the merging of the urban areas into one huge agglomeration. The Inn valley together with its tributary valleys is described as a single settlement area with distinct urban characteristics.

*YEAN (Hg.) (2005): TirolCITY. New Urbanity in the Alps / Neue Urbanität in den Alpen. Folio Verlag. Wien-Bozen. ISBN 3-85256-319-4.*

### “New life in the Alps - Initiatives, models and projects concerning organic agriculture” (de)

A new publication deals with the importance of organic agriculture in the Alpine Space and promising eco-tourism activities, such as eco-hotels or agrotourism. It also highlights the impact of regional development projects financed by the European Union. The author focuses on Austria but draws comparisons with several Alpine regions in France, Italy, Switzerland, Bavaria and Slovenia.

*Haid, Hans (2005): Neues Leben in den Alpen. Initiativen, Modelle und Projekte in der Bio-Landwirtschaft. ISBN 3-205-77251-2.*



## diamont calendar

10.-11.03.2006: Project meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

27th of January: submission of expert answers from the third round of the Delphi survey to Vincent Briquel

1st of September 2005 till 28th of February 2006:  
3rd accounting period for DIAMONT partners

17th of April: submission of 3rd activity report to Leadpartner  
28th of April: submission of 3rd financial report to LP

## web-site

The DIAMONT web-site provides information on the project structure, the partner organisations, the time schedule and the status of the respective work packages.

<http://diamont.uibk.ac.at>

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## Participating in DIAMONT Project – a useful tool for supporting research, information and cooperation in the framework of the Alpine Convention

by Paolo Angelini, Italian Ministry for the Environment and Territory

Participating in the DIAMONT project as an observer has been an interesting experience so far. One of the most significant aspects of DIAMONT (in addition to the valuable scientific method adopted to develop this project) is the identification and analysis of some of the main issues that Alpine countries have been facing in the recent past. DIAMONT has also shown the capacity to suggest strategies for improving the collaboration among involved institutions. Both features are very important for all who work for the implementation of the Alpine Convention and its protocols.

The Italian Ministry for the Environment and Territory has collaborated since long time with the European Academy of Bolzano, which has hosted the operative seat of the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention since 2003. We have already expressed our support to the previous planned project MONDIALP and had then the intention to be involved as an observer.

DIAMONT project answers to some informative needs particularly felt in the institutions involved in the implementation of the Alpine Convention. It represents a unique opportunity for gathering useful information on Alpine issues with a sound scientific method and for identifying the most urgent problems of this region, deserving of special attention. With a sound scientific methodology DIAMONT aims at finding the problems of sustainable regional development in the Alpine arc. In my opinion, this project will also be able to suggest concrete solutions for Alpine problems, answering a very popular question, that is: “Which are the most urgent needs in the Alpine regions? In which fields should the cooperation be strengthened and specific research activities promoted?”

To this extent, there is a strong politic will of the Alpine Conference to develop common projects in the near future, involving all the Contracting Parties, in some priority areas – with special reference to some issues analysed in the protocols. Some of these priority issues can be found in the Working Programme of the Alpine Conference for 2005-2010.

The strategy developed by the DIAMONT partners has been based on the gathering of the opinions both from people living daily in the Alps and experts having a professional experience in the Alpine area. This methodology takes into account both the needs of Alpine

populations and the observations of experts, professionals and officers involved in the specific problems of the Alps, who have been asked to give their opinion and expectations on the main problems and the development perspectives of the Alpine region. The issues emerging from such an inquiry have an additional value: they come from people having the opportunity to examine the Alpine milieu directly. Therefore, they possibly represent some of the most interesting issues of the Alpine region.

An international agreement with a regional scope such as the Alpine Convention aims at pursuing common goals and policies in a natural and morphological area, submitted to different national jurisdictions. The DIAMONT project is aware that the implementation of an international agreement depends not only on the internal choices of the national governments but it relies also on the cooperation among the Parties. Aiming at developing a common policy for the protection and sustainable development of the Alpine area, the Contracting Parties of the Alpine Convention should look for a common consent in order to promote common activities and a lasting cooperation, according to the provisions of the Convention itself.

In my opinion the additional value of such cooperation refers to the possibilities of:

- Identifying the development inequalities in the Alpine region, so to promote suitable policies,
- Supporting trans-boundary initiatives of sustainable development, in particular at the local level

It would be desirable, to this extent, to understand that mountain policies cannot be based only on activities that try to compensate the geo-morphological limits (like for agriculture) or on the exploitation of certain specific resources that often can be developed only seasonably. There are other factors, resources and even values, deserving to be further developed. For some of them great interest is growing recently, such as: healthcare and psycho-physical wellness deriving from a clean and healthy environment, landscape quality, cultural issues and product authenticity.

The subjects underlined by the project could be useful suggestions for future cooperation activities among the Alpine countries that, thanks to the DIAMONT partners as well, will have high-quality information at their disposal.