



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



Currently, the first “Report on the State of the Alps” is prepared by an international expert team – it has to be submitted to the Conference of Contracting Parties in November 2006. The availability of Alpine wide harmonised data is one of the major problems and Enrico Borghi, president of UNCEM/I, finds fault that some countries did not yet ratify the protocols of the Alpine Convention. However, Ms Silvia Reppe, German contact for the Alpine Convention, believes that DIAMONT can make a methodological contribution to overcoming such problems. This may be realised for example by means of the revision of the existing indicator system (WP7) as well as through clustering Alpine regions with comparable development potentials and trends and the analysis of the differing perceptions of sustainability in the Alpine space (WP8). Additionally, Ms Reppe, interviewed by Stefan Marzelli, delivered insights in the development of other mountain regions which depends to a larger extend on cultural influences than, according to the results of WP5, this is the case in the Alps.

Indicators as instruments for monitoring (sustainable) development in the Alpine regions

Over the last few weeks, as part of a DIAMONT study (WP6, Cemagref) experts were conducting intense discussions on key questions of sustainable regional development within the Alpine area (see Newsletter No. 4). One major aim of DIAMONT for the remaining project period is the search for concrete data to map such developments (WP8, EURAC). In an attempt to link the thematic level with the data level, WP7, led by Bosch & Partner (Konstanze Schönthaler), is discussing indicators that would enable simplified imaging of sustainable regional development.

What is so special about the DIAMONT indicator system?

One can start with the justified question why another system is needed at all, given the wealth of existing indicator systems. In their preliminary work before the start of the DIAMONT project, Bosch & Partner carried out extensive research on national and international indicator systems in the course of other projects. What transpired was that

- the Alpine space is indeed covered by European indicator systems, but because of their focus on the European context, these systems are not always suited to map differentiation within the Alps;
- the national indicator systems of the individual Alpine states do not yield results that can be compared across the entire area covered by the Alpine Convention. Moreover many of these systems are not even implemented (yet).

New DIAMONT collaborator

Manfred Perlik joined the DIAMONT-team to work specifically on the issue of “**Urban centres and fringes between competition and cooperation**” which was identified as one of the main trends in Alpine regional development at the DIAMONT conference in Ljubljana in March 2006. Educated as a **physical geographer** at the universities of Francfort/M. and Berne, he turned to **economic geography** after his diploma in 1993.



Dr. Manfred Perlik

Since the early 1990ies he has undertaken broad **empiric research in many regions of the Alps and in Switzerland** treating urban topics as well as regional ones. His thesis in 2001 dealt with the **processes of urbanisation and metropolisation in the Alpine area with its peri-Alpine fringe**. He then collaborated at the Swiss national report of DG Regio’s “Analysis of mountain areas in the European Union” (Nordregio Report) and realised projects of urbanisation and regional development in Switzerland. Since 2005 he is a **member of the new founded research unit “Mountain Research: Man and Environment” of the Austrian Academy of Sciences at Innsbruck**.

Manfred Perlik is also involved in two other Alpine Space projects: he worked as an external expert for **MONITRAF** and is a member of the Scientific Steering Committee of **AlpCity**.

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The working group on “Environmental Objectives and Indicators” („Umweltziele und Indikatoren“), set up by the Alpine Convention, has suggested 95 indicators for a system that would be customised to the area covered by the Alpine Convention and has systematically checked the availability of data (see also Newsletter No. 3, Hain: Indicators for the Alpine space – much work has already been done). This system of indicators is the essential base line for the work on indicators in DIAMONT. A caveat is in order, however: this system of indicators has been developed solely for the objectives of the Alpine Convention. As is well-known, the Alpine Convention – still – leaves out some relevant aspects, such as climate, water, Alpine cities. This means that in terms of the indicators required for sustainable regional development this system is by definition incomplete.

The DIAMONT system of indicators aims to describe the relevant developments within the area covered by the Alpine Convention with sufficient spatial differentiation and in adequate thematic breadth. Starting point for all thinking on the subject is the concept of sustainability but it should not gain structural dominance as it has in many systems of sustainability indicators. This means that the DIAMONT system of indicators does not revolve around the pillars of sustainability (economy, ecology and society) but around the main trends for the Alpine region with the aim of making a statement about the following issues:

- the degree to which these trends are present in (which) individual parts of the Alps, be it communities or districts, and
- whether individual parts of the Alps can be characterised by symptomatic „trend images“.

Here WP 7 builds on the main trends identified in WP 6 and develops further some of them (see Fig. 1).

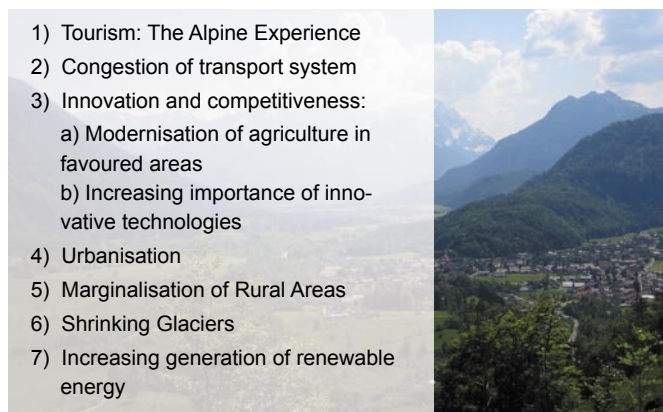


Fig. 1: WP7 – Identified and described “Main Trends” of regional development in the Alpine space.

The methodology of choosing indicators

A structured approach to choosing suitable indicators was taken through the model concept of main trends within the Alpine area. These trends can be described by characteristic phenomena that can be mapped with indicators. Following on from a sustainability approach, these phenomena are taken from the economic, the ecological and the social spheres (dimensions) and thus guarantee an integrated view of each main trend (Fig.2).

The phenomena were gathered from literature, particularly from research into political and planning documents on regional development and are thus not based on extensive and systematic analysis of academic literature. In addition, the results of the three rounds of the Delphi study (cf. WP6) were taken into account.

The weighting given to selected phenomena by the experts in the 3rd round of questioning and the assessment by DIAMONT partners of the relevance of individual phenomena to the respective main trend helped to develop foci for the choice of indicators. Currently they are being selected on the basis of an extensive database on national and international systems of indicators.

The limits and possibilities of aggregates

If compound information on the main trends is to be achieved, then items of information must of necessity

Main Trend “Urbanisation”		
	Dimensions of sustainability – examples:	Phenomena – examples:
Environment	Structures	Soil sealing in areas, where open spaces are already rare. Loss of typical natural biotopes of Alpine valleys due to high competition of nature protection and agriculture with urban uses. [...]
	Species	Loss of species adapted to extensive non-fragmented areas. [...]
	Matter exchange	Air pollution in agglomerations, especially in valleys and basins. [...]
	[...]	[...]
Economy	Economic performance and infrastructure	Usage of hazardous zones (like valley slopes, flood expansion fields, etc.) for construction.
	Public and private financing	High real estate prices due to high competitiveness of land use.
	Production and consumption	High quantity of waste water accumulation.
	Labour	Concentration of jobs in agglomerations.
Society and culture	Population	High density of population in urban areas.
	Social equity and family	Loss of social cohesion as a former rural quality in the suburb.
	Public services and security	Concentration of public and private service provision in agglomerations.

Fig. 2: Methodology of the selection of indicators.

be aggregated. Processes of aggregation are contested in principle and often seen as not transparent enough and not always substantively justified. Many pre-DIAMONT indicator projects, such as RAUMALP, MARS, experimented with different methods of aggregating indicators. In the areas of economics and social science there are also numerous examples of aggregations and development of indices. DIAMONT is taking advantage of this wealth of experience and works to the rule of „as little aggregation as possible, as much aggregation as necessary“.

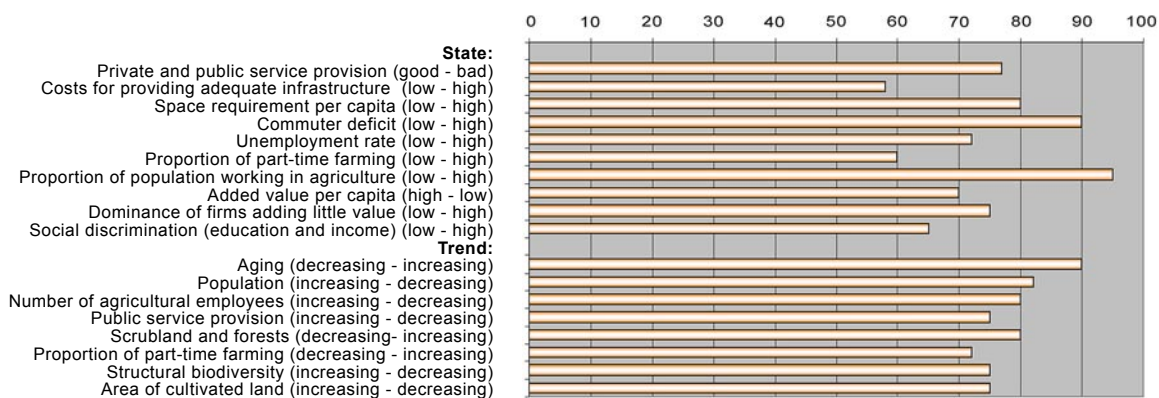
„Images of phenomena“ created from indicator values should permit comparisons between communities but also between bigger entities, such as districts, and allow pronouncements on the manifestation and extent of the individual trends in the relevant areas. Figure 3

(below) shows the fictive extent of the main trend of marginalisation for two communities. In the case of the community A the trend would be relatively strong and inexistent in the community B.

A necessary precondition for such mapping is the application of a unified scale on the indicator values. Here transformation methods, such as those developed in the FUNAlpin project (realised within the framework of Swiss NFP48: “Landschaften und Lebensräume der Alpen”) and elsewhere, can be used. They serve to ascribe dimensionless indicator numbers to the values.

The suggested system can only be tested and critically discussed if at least a selection of records is available. WP7 provides the methodological basis, testing is envisaged for WP8 subject to the availability of data.

Community A



Community B

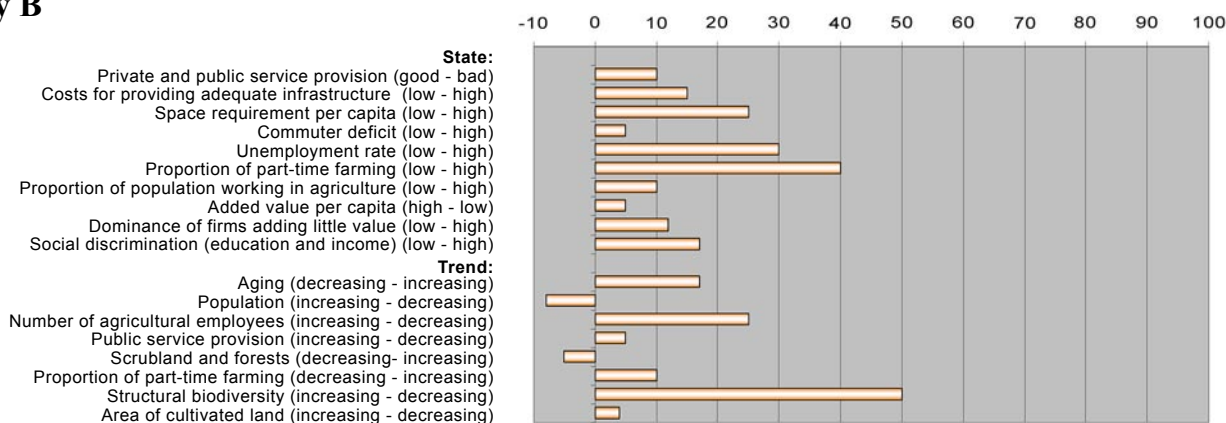


Fig. 3: Community-specific images of phenomena for the main trend „marginalisation“.

Identification of similar development regions in the Alpine space (WP8)

A study, implemented by the EURAC in Bolzano (WP8), is about to reveal Alpine regions with comparable development potentials and trends. Thus, objective data, like information from statistics or satellite images, is needed, but in this process the aspects of differing perceptions of sustainable development also play a crucial role. On the one hand, regional development is determined by the general local economic, social and ecological conditions which are reflected in objective measurable data. On the other hand, these general conditions are perceived in an individual manner which may influence the political decisions in the municipalities.

Hence, a survey will start in June addressing the mayors of all Alpine municipalities. The questionnaire is divided in three thematic sections: In section 1 the test person has to assess various aspects of his or her community with respect to the three pillars of sustainability, the economy, society and environment. Section 2 addresses the outside perception: the mayor is asked to rank his or her community in comparison to neighbouring municipalities and possibly nearby larger locations. Finally, section 3 is dedicated to the main focus of

regional planning in the municipalities and the instruments planned in the future. The results of the survey (subjective data) will be related and compared with objective data so that similar development regions can be determined (Fig. 4).

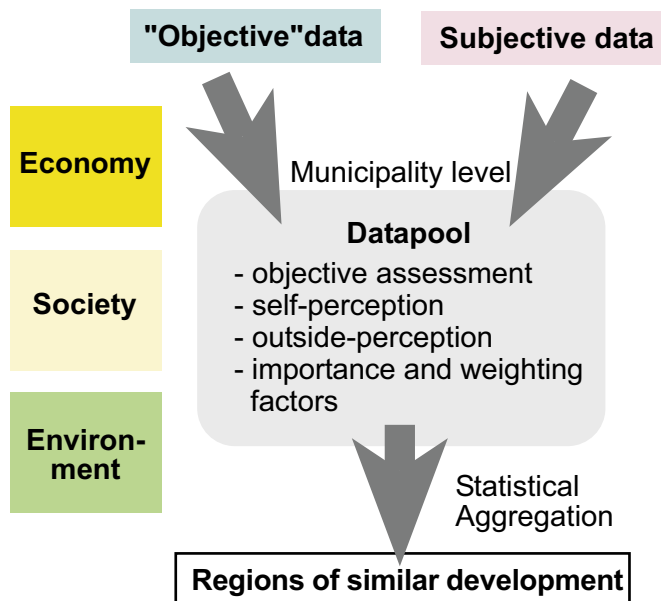
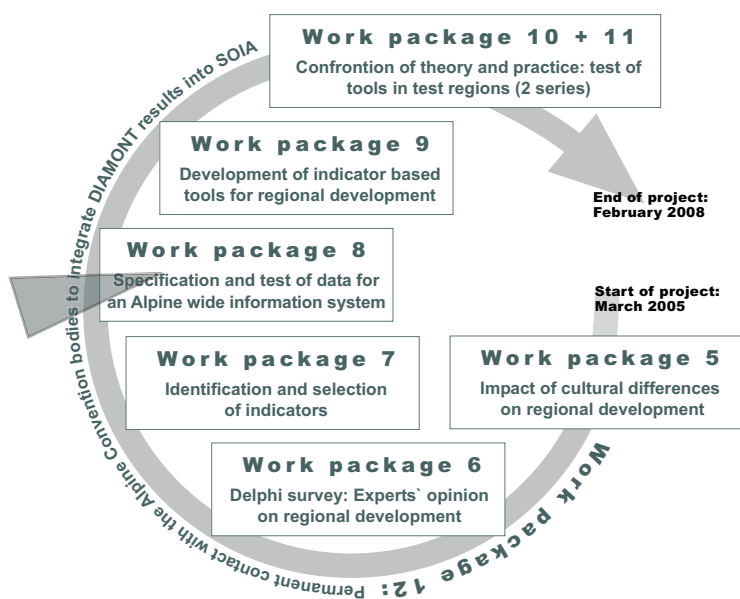


Fig 4: Survey of the Eurac (WP8) to determine comparable development regions in the Alpine space.



Time table of DIAMONT project

In May and beginning of June the work on an indicator system measuring sustainable regional development in the Alps will be finalised by Bosch & Partner (WP7, page 1). Meanwhile an Alpine wide questionnaire on the perception of sustainability was prepared by the Eurac team (WP8, page 4). It will be sent out to the mayors at the beginning of June. Ifuplan already started to draft a working structure for WP9 which is meant to result in instruments for sustainable regional development (this will be reported in the next newsletter). These instruments will be discussed in the test regions and can be used by the Alpine Convention to support regional development in the Alpine space.

The Alps – meeting place between different cultures

by Enrico Borghi, President of UNCEM



*Dr. Enrico Borghi
President of UNCEM*

I am pleased to accept the invitation to comment on the project received from my friends at DIAMONT, and not only because Uncem is an institutional, operating partner in the project but also because the concept of the inter-institutional dialogue inherent in the DIAMONT project goes much further, acquiring greater value over the main, technical-scientific aspects of the project activities.

In fact, DIAMONT set out to study the key variables in the sustainable development of the Alpine area in order to define and provide the local communities with the instruments, which can enhance development, and the indicators to measure it.

However the Alpine mountain area is a complex, highly differentiated region. The local co-existing contexts reflect the widest possible range of development, wealth, environmental integrity and culture. And this is not all. Both the Alpine area and the entire Apennine range are of strategic importance for logistics and connections. The problem of tunnels to Northern Europe and routes crossing Central Italy horizontally sees the mountain area as emblematic of Italian modernization. We think the problem is to consider, and get others to consider, the mountain territory not only as a „cross-thorough“ transit place (with the risk of only damaging the mountains) but also as an interactive space, a site of social-economic development, a place to install modern functional infrastructures so that the mountain territory will also reap the fruits of this effort. It applies the framework of “think globally and act locally”. Indeed, this is the key to the new mountain economy: it is imperative that we understand that in this age where one must produce to compete, in these times of a global economy, the mountain territory is the starting point from which to venture out into the world and then return to one’s own valley. A similar but inverse process of equal importance for the mountain economy is tourism. Here we find the global venturing into the local, guaranteeing the latter a means of generating an income. Governing this process within a philosophy of accommodation and accompaniment — maintaining and contaminating the local identity so that it can deal with the challenges

of this new context and prevent economic crises from bringing this at times fragile context to its knees — is the challenge of modernity.

With such instruments as the Alpine Convention or the Convention on the Protection of the Apennines, Uncem has taken up the challenge. For historic, geographic reasons that have made the Alps and its inhabitants the crossroads of European history — the meeting point between the Mediterranean culture and that of the great north — the Alpine Convention takes on particularly strategic importance, even for non-Alpine regions, since it blends the safeguarding of economic interests through cross-border cooperation with the need to preserve the Alpine ecosystem.

Despite the commitment during the collection of data relating to the Alpine area, coordinated and processed by SOIA, the System for observation and information on the Alps, non-ratification of the protocols has handcuffed the instrument, impairing its potential which was fully expressed during this initial phase of the DIAMONT project. This project was aimed at “listening” to the needs of the “technicians” of the Alpine environment and collecting their suggestions.

The participation of UNCEM in this project is quite significant, particularly in view of the stabilization of cooperation relations with many of the partners involved in this partnership experience. Among these, we would like to mention EURAC of Bolzano, excellence research centre for a province with self-government, and thus more fortunate, which opens up to dialog with a party that can provide a link to the rest of the Italian mountain area. Above and beyond its technical role within DIAMONT, UNCEM actually constitutes the institutional link with the territory and, in particular, with the mountain Communities, which have an important role in planning and development and are a key element of the project sharing process involving local communities.

The DIAMONT project vis-à-vis other mountain regions



Interview with Ms Silvia Reppe, German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU)

Ms Silvia Reppe is expert in the division KI (Climate Protection, Renewable Energies, International Cooperation) in the BMU. Concurrently, she is the national contact for Germany for the Alpine Convention and for mountain partnership activities within the framework of the Alpine Convention.

Interview by Stefan Marzelli, ifuplan – Institute for Environmental Planning, Landscape and Nature Conservation

SM: Ms Reppe, for many years you have been involved in the development of the Alpine area as well as in the development of the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Carpathians. Therefore we are interested in your assessment of the DIAMONT activities in the light of your experiences. The results of a DIAMONT study dealing with cultural influences on regional development (WP5), suggest a strong impact of a globally linked economy even on remote mountain regions. Have you observed this in other mountain regions as well?

Silvia Reppe: Of course globalisation has an impact on these mountain regions. In the case of Central Asia and the Caucasus, however, I believe that the extremely difficult economic situation of the former Soviet Union's successor states and cultural differences have a much greater impact on remote mountain areas. In Europe and in the Alps particularly the impact of globalisation might increasingly hide other tendencies. From my extra-Alpine perspective I often get the impression that many problems that are debated in the Alps, such as economic competition, the safeguarding of jobs, modern communication infrastructure, are identical to the issues that are seen as relevant outside the Alps.

I think that when DIAMONT has run its course, the project results should be reviewed in the light of the study on the impact of cultural differences on the Alps to determine how they could be adapted to other mountain areas, where cultural influences are still more pronounced.

SM: What other socio-cultural factors do you consider important for regional development in mountain areas?

Silvia Reppe: Apart from globalisation, I detect important influences in the increasing interchange between

Alpine and non-Alpine populations, modern forms of communication and information and the merging of Alpine cities with their surrounding rural areas. Here I see remarkable differences between European and non-European mountain areas. Outside Europe I observe an inverse tendency, a steady decline of global influences and a continuous increase of cultural influences from the Alps to the Carpathians and to the Caucasus.



SM: The pan-Alpine questionnaire put to experts in course of DIAMONT project (WP 6) has tried to identify important trends in the Alpine area. One of the most important trends is that of urbanisation in combination with the marginalisation of rural areas. Are you familiar with similar trends in other mountain areas or can such a trend not yet be found there?

Silvia Reppe: According to our experiences with mountain partnership projects in the Caucasus and Central Asia (Tienschan, Pamir) this trend is also evident in these regions. It becomes exacerbated by governments concentrating development in the main cities because of difficult economic conditions. Development concepts for mountain regions hardly exist. The emigration of people, in particular young people, is much more dra-

matic than that observed in the Alps.

SM: The project „Partnerships for a sustainable development of mountain villages in the Caucasus“ encourages sustainable development of mountain regions. In the light of your experience with this project: which aspects might be of particular relevance for DIAMONT?

Silvia Reppe: The fundamental approach of the mountain partnership project with the mountain villages in the Caucasus is to support local and regional processes in the mountain area. We found that even with a relatively small budget sustainable development could be encouraged and a real improvement of the living conditions achieved for the inhabitants of the mountain villages. The partnership project covers all three pillars of sustainability (ecology, economy, social aspects) and in addition some aspects of security and stability in the crisis-ridden Caucasus region. When it comes to sustainable regional development as envisaged by the DIAMONT project, we found that even in politically sensitive mountain regions cross-border cooperation and networking on local and regional level are possible and important, even at a time when the political situation does not allow this on a national level.

SM: Where do you perceive similarities and where differences between the Alps and other high-mountain areas in terms of regional development?

Silvia Reppe: Our experiences show that when it comes to sustainable development in mountain regions, local and regional activities are in principle preferable to global approaches. Basically this means responsible governments, the involvement of the communities and civil society, forming cross-border networks, plus a role for science and a commitment from the international community of states. Within the Alpine area governments have taken on responsibility for regional development, in the Caucasus and in Central Asia, however, governments have taken hardly any steps concerning regional and local sustainable development in mountain regions.

individual mountain region plus close cooperation with the local/regional population and administration. To achieve long-term and real improvements of the living conditions of the inhabitants of the underdeveloped mountain regions, particular attention must be paid to the regional economic situation, to sustainable resource management, mountain agriculture, water management, nature conservation, natural hazards and the potential for self-help.

SM: Which aspects of the DIAMONT project would in your opinion be transferable to other mountain areas?

Silvia Reppe: As I said before, in mountain areas regional action processes are preferable to global ones. Therefore it seems to me that the methodology of the DIAMONT project is in principle suited to being adapted for other mountain regions.

Personally I am particularly interested in WP 5, which deals with the influence of cultural differences on regional development. Even though the eight Alpine states belong to the same highly developed economic and cultural area in Europe, clearly measurable influences were found here. One can assume that the influence of cultural differences on regional development must be considerably stronger in mountain areas like the Carpathians, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

In addition, I can imagine that the selection of relevant data and indicators suitable for monitoring sustainable regional development in mountain areas could be of interest for other mountain areas.

SM: Within DIAMONT we also want to explore the question of suitable instruments – you have not mentioned this area...

Silvia Reppe: Within the four countries of the Mountain Partnership with the Caucasus regular information and involvement of various institutions has been very successful. The different national administration levels are brought together in a steering committee. There are no direct financial payments to national institutions, they are all made directly to the local/regional implementation groups. This is to avoid misuse of our support within the sometimes corrupt administrations. It is of course a delicate path to tread, encouraging developments without directly involving the government level.

Our approach has also been confirmed by the results of an evaluation of various partnership projects for the UN, which was carried out within the partnership initiative of the Johannesburg conference. Global Mountain Partnership (GMP) identified our Mountain Partnership projects as one of the few that did indeed lead to a real improvement in the living conditions of the local population. The GMP has therefore approached the Alpine Convention to pursue further cooperation.



Therefore the Mountain Partnership projects currently encouraged by us in the Caucasus and Central Asia aim particularly at starting up and supporting local and regional processes. The objective is sustainable development that takes into account the conditions of the



Development on a regional level is in my view the ideal way of cooperating. I can imagine that DIAMONT represents a success for the Alpine area, even if questions of finance always play a role.

SM: The Alpine Convention came about roughly at the same time as the Rio conference. Do you see the Alpine Convention as a suitable instrument for pushing sustainable development or do you consider the powers of such a convention too weak when compared with other political forces?

Silvia Reppe: The International Year of the Mountains in 2002 focused attention worldwide on the special role of mountain regions within the total ecosystem of the planet: their importance for water supply, for the preservation of biodiversity, and as living and economic areas for the people in the mountain regions. Moreover mountain regions often stretch across national borders and are particularly sensitive areas politically. Their sustainable development therefore requires international cooperation of the neighbouring states in all relevant areas.

I do see suitable instruments in the Alpine Convention and its protocols for furthering sustainable development within the Alpine area, taking into account the specifics of the most important European mountain region.

The actors know of course that the powers of the Alpine Convention as a legal instrument are limited and the implementation depends mainly on the political will of the convention parties. Particularly telling I find that more than ten years after the Alpine Convention came into force the application protocols of the convention have still not been ratified by all parties to the agreement.

SM: Can the Alpine Convention be an example to other mountain areas or what should be done differently in the light of the experiences with the Alpine Convention?

Silvia Reppe: Judging from the process within the Alpine region so far the question arises to what extent these experiences are transferable and applicable to other mountain areas around the world. Are the Alps as a mountain range within the highly developed economic area of Western Europe at all comparable to mountain ranges on other continents? Issues of high tension within the Alps such as cross-Alpine transport, do not

arise in the Caucasus yet or not with similar problems. On the other hand, this is an opportunity to steer economic development, spatial planning and infrastructural measures in the relevant direction early on. It must be stressed that one cannot simply use the Alpine Convention in another mountain region but that first a detailed analysis of the actual situation and problems of the individual region is required. On that basis a specific approach must be found for developing instruments for the mountain policies for the region.

The Alpine Convention and the process of its emergence do show, however, how sustainable development can be organised in mountain regions across several national borders. The integrative approach to cross-border Alpine cooperation in particular appears exemplary to me. It covers environmental and conservationist issues, regional, economic and social development as well as joint cultural activities. The involvement of the citizens and democracy, which are particularly visible in the cross-border networks (community network „Allianz in den Alpen“, network of Alpine protection areas, International Commission for the Protection of the Alps - CIPRA) are currently unimaginable in crisis-ridden Caucasus.

Even though we are all dissatisfied with the slow implementation of the Alpine Convention – when we compare it with other mountain regions worldwide it becomes clear that things we take for granted, such as cross-border cooperation of the states in all subject areas or functioning cross-border networks within the Alps, represent an achievement that should not be underestimated.

SM: The first Alpine status report is currently being drawn up by an international working group in which the BMU is also involved. It is based on the concept for an Alpine status report which was worked out under German leadership. Where do you think this work interfaces with the work of DIAMONT?

Silvia Reppe: The international working group „Environmental objectives and indicators“ of the Alpine Convention has worked hard for many years to develop a pan-Alpine indicator system that could serve as a basis for implementing the vision of sustainable development. In the long term the indicator system is to be integrated into the “System for Observation of and Information on the Alps” (SOIA/ABIS). It also forms one pillar of the Alpine status report the concept of which was developed by the WG „Environmental objectives and indicators“.

DIAMONT can build on these excellent foundations, which were worked out by the convention states together and accepted by the Alpine Conference.

The work on the first Alpine status report throws up the persistent problems with gathering harmonised data and indicators from across the Alpine area and with data exchange among the convention states. In my view DIAMONT can make a methodological contribution to overcoming such problems. DIAMONT will of course go one step further and suggest relevant data and indicators suitable for monitoring sustainable development within the Alpine region and for supporting regional development within the Alpine area.

SM: A long-term aim of the Alpine Convention is building up a central database of relevant Alpine data (SOIA /ABIS). After unsuccessful earlier attempts, the Alpine status report is a new start in this respect. How do you assess the relevance of such a database against the experiences from other countries?

Silvia Reppe: Against the background of the current work on the Alpine status report the importance of such a database becomes very clear. It also shows that the data must not be gathered as an end in itself, but must meet specific quality requirements (e.g. comparability, scientific justification, interpretability, spatial resolution, relation to the objectives of the Alpine Convention, availability, cross-national relevance), if they are to be suitable for a certain purpose, in this case the Alpine status report.

The convention states are currently showing great commitment to providing the necessary data for the first Alpine status report. I believe that the experience gathered here will deliver a concrete input for setting up ABIS in the branch office of the Permanent Secretariat in Bolzano. On this basis we should continue apace with developing ABIS after the first Alpine status report has been completed.

Cross-border databases, by the way, are a thing of the distant future in areas like the Caucasus. A member of the Russian academy of sciences just recently confirmed this to me. Available databases in these areas often just contain statistical data on a national level. Qualitative data and regional data are rarely available. Setting up such a data base would surely set an example and once adapted to the issues of their area, this could be a transferable result of DIAMONT and an important aid to these mountain regions.

SM: What results do you expect from DIAMONT?

Silvia Reppe: I believe that DIAMONT will make a concrete contribution to implementing the Alpine Convention on a regional level. In addition, I expect that the determination of a complete indicator system in WP7 and the check for data availability in WP8 will provide targeted support for setting up a pan-Alpine monitoring

and information system with expert knowledge. The first Alpine status report and future Alpine status reports will also benefit from this.

The results of the study on cultural impacts (WP5) might also refresh the slow-moving debate about the declaration „Population and culture“ that is currently being prepared.



More information on mountain partnerships can be found at these links:

www.mountainpartnership.org
www.carpathianconvention.org
www.camp.kg
www.rec-caucasus.org

A leaflet of the BMU on mountain partnership projects of the Alpine Convention is available in German and English and can be downloaded from the DIAMONT website:
<http://www.uibk.ac.at/diamont/service/documents.htm>

News relevant for the Alpine space

Impact of cultural traditions on biodiversity in the Alpine regions

Meadows and pastures form an important element of the cultural landscape in the Alpine space. They host triply as much plant species as forests, the primary vegetation of the area. However, the existing biodiversity is shaped by the impacts of different land use forms. A joined project between the Universities of Zurich/CH and Basel/CH examined the species diversity of about 220 meadow and pasture parcels in twelve Swiss municipalities with Romanic, Germanic and Walser traditions. The plots, situated in three different altitudinal belts (valley, lower and higher mountain pastures), are either mowed, grazed or lie idle. The biodiversity was measured on the landscape and species level; in addition, the genetic variation of the agriculturally important grass species "Poa alpina" was recorded. It could be shown that cultural divergences still shape the cultural landscape and affect grassland biodiversity. The parcels in the valleys of Germanic municipalities, for example, exhibited the biggest variety of land use forms and the greatest extension of fallow land. However, the results also displayed a clear conflict between productivity and biodiversity: Whereas the parcels with the highest biological diversity yielded only poorly, the fertilised grasslands with a good return host only few plant species. http://www.nfp48.ch/projekte/projects_detail.php?nfprojnum=10 (dt/eng)

AlpMedia dossier „Ecological corridors“

On 7 and 8 November 2005, the Alpine Network of Protected Areas (ALPARC) organised a seminar in Berchtesgaden, Germany, on the subject „Creation of ecological networks between Alpine protected areas.“ Participants at this seminar decided to compile an AlpMedia dossier (the information service of CIPRA) containing relevant information on the instruments that play an important role in the establishment of ecological corridors at global, pan-European, European, and national level. Although this dossier makes no claim to be exhaustive, it provides brief information on the most important instruments, such as conventions, legislation, regulations and programmes connected with ecological corridors in the Alpine space.

http://www.alpmedia.net/d/index3.asp?dossier_detail.asp?DossierID=13&Sprache=1|2|navi.asp?2|1 (dt/en/fr/it/sl)

Laureate for exemplary architecture in the Alpine space

In April, the initiative „Sexten Culture“/I and the "House of Architecture of Carinthia"/A awarded the prize "Innovative constructions in the Alps" for the fourth times. The first prizes were awarded to Rainer Köberl and Astrid Tschapeller from Innsbruck/A for their supermarket constructions "MPPreis" in Wenns/A and Gion/A as well as to Mr. Caminada from Vrin/CH for his residential women school in the monastery of Disentis/CH. Out of 419 presented projects, the jury visited 134 constructions and awarded 31 projects. The award ceremony will be held on September 22nd 2006 in Sexten/I. It will be incorporated in a symposium on the topic of "Constructions in the Alps".

<http://www.sextenkultur.org> (dt/it)

CIPRA „Resolution for Climate Protection“

CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, adopted a resolution on „Climate Protection and Climate Change Adaptation Strategies“ at its Assembly of Delegates in Bad Hindelang/D on 18th May. In it, CIPRA called upon the European Union, the bodies of the Alpine Convention, the Alpine states and all governmental and non-governmental authorities to intensify their climate protection efforts and to draw up sustainable strategies for dealing with the growing repercussions of climate change.

Download at: <http://www.cipra.org> (de/fr/it/sl)

Italy: First steps towards energy-efficient constructions

The importance of energy efficiency and saving is growing in Italy. After the province of Bolzano, leading the way of energy efficiency in whole Italy, other mountain regions started to implement the EU-regulation on energy-efficient constructions. The provincial committee of the Piedmont recently authorised a bill on energy saving construc-

tions which, amongst others, envisage a special certification in the energy sector. The region Aosta, too, adopted a statute to support renewable energy forms and energy saving technologies.

http://www.consiglio.regione.vda.it/banche_dati/leggi_regolamenti/dettaglio_i.asp?pk_lr=3401 (it)

(diamond) calendar

Beginning of June: Start of a mayors' survey on sustainable regional development by the Eurac (WP8, DIAMONT project.)

June 19th - 20th 2006: Presentation of DIAMONT results during the Alpine Space Summit in Stresa/I.

August 12th - 13th 2006: Event "Fire across the Alps" focussing on the topic "Fringes' stake in the future"

Summer and autumn 2006: Possible participation in the "Mountain forest project (Bergwaldprojekt)"; Information available at www.alpenverein.at or www.bergwaldprojekt.de

September 19th - 21st 2006: 33rd meeting of Standing Committee of the Alpine Convention in Innsbruck/A

4th accounting period in DIAMONT project:

March 1st 2006 until August 31st 2006

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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