

Participation process in regional development: DIAMONT's Perspective

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1

Introduction

1 Introduction

This publication deals with an important section of DIAMONT activities, conceived as a substantial closing¹ and a test of the preceding expert work: the implementation of specific participatory processes in the involved countries. To put it in the same words as DIAMONT documentation uses, the idea is to establish a “Confrontation between Theory and Practice”, aiming to submit a number of identified instruments for sustainable development² to local stakeholders’ scrutiny in selected Alpine test regions, and hence develop suitable and shared resolution strategies to highlighted problems. Two workshops per test region have represented the basic tool used to host stakeholder discussion and gain practical feedback on theoretical analyses. Six test regions have been delimited following broad common criteria - basically functional - for grouping together a number of municipalities. Two of these are located in Germany (Immenstadt-Sonthofen and Traunstein-Traunreut) and one in each of the following countries: Austria (Waidhofen/Ybbs), France (Gap), Italy (Tolmezzo) and Slovenia (Idrija). The core centres are mentioned here.

Coming to the contents of this publication, Chapters 1. and 2. will concisely cover the general methodological aspects related to both the preparation phase (building suitable indicators, selecting the test regions, performing the Context and SWOT³ Analyses, identifying applicable instruments) and the participatory process itself. Chapters 3. and 4. will deal with practice, the former providing a concise overview of issues related to process implementation, the latter representing both the conceptual core and the substantial bulk of this publication, since it hosts the Workshop Reports (WR) prepared by the concerned DIAMONT partners. A minimum common structure has been followed in each Workshop Report while allowing enough freedom so as to reflect local peculiarities: first there is a concise description of the test region, bearing a justification of its choice; then a short comment on practical application of the foreseen discussion method and characterisation of participant stakeholders; finally a dense report is found on the established interaction between DIAMONT moderation teams and local stakeholders and on workshop results: discussed problems, strategies and instruments, and possibly some input for DIAMONT follow-ups.

¹ The concerned Project Work Packages (WP) are no. 10 and 11 out of a total of 12.

² The general topic of sustainability has actually been substantiated into the common thematic focus “Land Resource Management”.

³ SWOT is the acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

Each workshop Report in Chapter-4 closes with regional-level conclusions. To conclude, Chapters 5. and 6. contain a comprehensive critical overview of workshop results and the general conclusions, respectively: in order to properly cover a range of different perspectives, specific sections addressed to SOIA⁴ and the Alpine Convention highlight possible benefits for these institutions stemming from DIAMONT activities, approach and findings.



The test region “Gap”

⁴ System for Observation of and Information on the Alps



2

Methodology for the preparation phase

2 Methodology for the preparation phase

2.1 Data collection and selection of indicators⁵

An important part of the project was data collection and processing as well as selecting indicators (Work Packages 8 and 7), which also served as a basis for identifying the test regions. Bearing in mind the relevant driving forces and landscape factors, objective and subjective data at municipal level (LAU2) were combined.

The collection of subjective data took place through an Alpine-wide survey aimed to obtain mayors' personal attitudes toward sustainable regional development. The results highlighted economic problems, as well as the perceived importance of environmental issues (Newsletter 7, 2006, 5).

The aim of collecting objective data was to gather a comprehensive set of data characterizing relevant aspects of sustainability. The information mainly encompassed census data, several types of land-use GIS data, as well as GIS data regarding administrative boundaries. The data set had to be harmonized due to differences in national data collection methodologies and various underlying criteria in data creation as well as different base years among the countries. It was also necessary to test data applicability and design and realize a GIS database (Newsletter 8, 2007, 2).

The last part of the task focused on choosing the 'operational' set of indicators taking into account both the theory-driven set of indicators coming from WP7 and the data which was actually collected. This phase started with assigning groups of variables to various aspects of sustainability and merging these into three pillars of sustainability. An important point was to determine the indicators appropriate for real conditions and relevant for decision-makers when assessing the current status of development and determining future development strategies. Altogether, 60 indicators were calculated, including 32 economic, 14 social, and 14 environmental indicators. These convey a very heterogeneous pattern of Alpine space and enable the visual discovery of clusters of equally structured regions within the Alpine space (Newsletter 8, 2007, 3).

⁵ You may want to refer to previous DIAMONT - Volume 1 publication to get a more complete overview of DIAMONT Work Package organization.

2.2 Identification of test regions

The selection of suitable test regions is decisive for holding successful workshops and thus obtaining quality results. The selection procedure was therefore demanding, and at the same time it tied together all of the WPs content areas. Based on the expert assessments from WP6, the phenomena chosen to form the basis for the indicator selection in WP7 and the shift towards a data-oriented selection process stemming from WP8, further work in the project was dedicated to urbanization processes in the Alps, in particular to the relation between local centers and their fringes. We focused on land resource management, which is an issue that experts have raised repeatedly. The long-term and prudent development of towns in the Alps is of vital significance for future development of the entire region, and this task is not an easy one. Alpine urban centers must position themselves in competition with perialpine metropolises. Thus, it is essential that they seek fruitful cooperation - instead of competition - with their emerging fringes (Newsletter 6, 2006, 2).

Our work on test-area selection was based on an integrative issue titled "Urban Centers and Fringes between Competition and Cooperation: Steering towards Sustainability." Urban centers included small and medium-sized towns (SMESTO). These centers are surrounded by municipalities that are strongly linked to the center due to natural conditions, historical background, and modern economic and demographic trends. Together with the core towns, they form Urban Areas. In the subsequent steps, the aggregation was steered towards Labour Market Regions (LMR): at their center there is a Labour Market Center (LMC), which is a municipality or town featuring the following: more than 10,000 inhabitants or more than 5,000 employees, and a positive commuter balance.

The final criterion proved most problematic. Due to lack of data on real commuter flows, we can only assume that a large portion of commuters come from surrounding municipalities, and therefore only fringe municipalities exhibiting a negative commuter balance were assigned to a given LMR. In addition, we were only interested in LMRs completely inside the Alps. Altogether there have been identified 108 LMRs in the Alps (Fig. 1); most of these (28) are located in Austria, 24 in Italy, 20 in Switzerland, 17 in Germany, 16 in France, and 3 in Slovenia. There is no proper LMR in Liechtenstein, but the municipalities of Liechtenstein have been assigned to the LMR of Buchs (Switzerland).

On average, LMRs are formed by approximately 20 municipalities. French and Swiss LMRs combine somewhat more municipalities, whereas

in Germany and Slovenia significantly fewer municipalities are combined into one LMR. A similarly balanced picture also emerges from the area of LMRs, which averages approximately 550 km². German LMRs are a little smaller than average, while Slovenian LMRs are clearly larger.

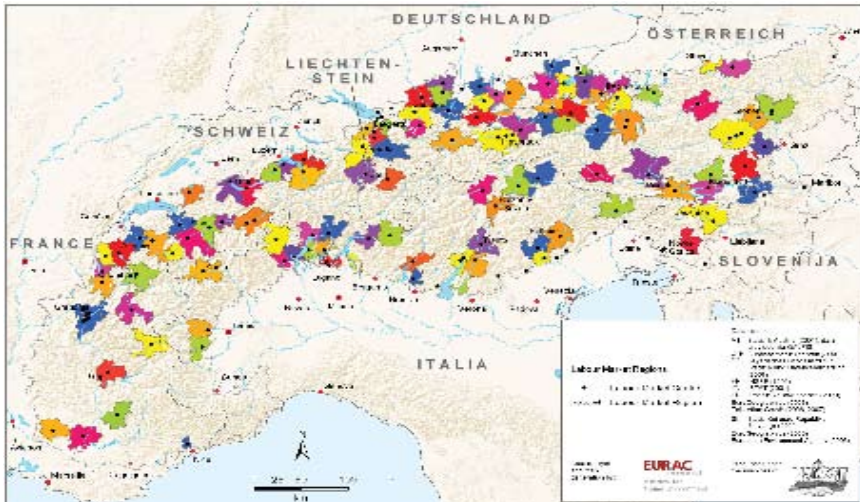


Fig. 2-1: The distribution of Labour Market Regions (LMRs) within the Alps. An additional criterion has been a maximum driving time of 17.2 minutes from surrounding municipalities to the LMC (Tappeiner et al., 2008).

The next step was to identify different development types of LMRs to help determine appropriate indicators and instruments for sustainable development. Indicator discussion ensuing from WP7 (Schönthaler & von Andrian-Werburg, 2006) and WP8 helped typify LMRs. A hierarchical cluster analysis made it possible to identify 3 LMR types. The high dynamic type is characterized by a very high growth rate in all the indicators analyzed between 1991 and 2000. The dynamic type has growth rate values of all analyzed indicators slightly above average. The moderate dynamic type exhibits growth rate values that are definitely below average with negative trends in youth quota and birth rate (Tappeiner et al., 2008).

Partners selected the appropriate test area based on the map and data provided by EURAC team. Although national analyses were carried out in some countries (e.g., Germany, Austria, and France), further interpretations of LMRs were made using data only accessible to the respective countries. The last step in choosing the test region was subjective; among several suitable possibilities that were fully in accordance with objective criteria, partners made the final choice according to the

willingness of stakeholders to participate, the previously established connections, personal contacts, and so on. Thus, in some cases the final delimitation of the test regions turned out not to be fully coincident with the delimitation of the LMRs. With reference to development types, Idrija (Slovenia), Tolmezzo (Italy), Waidhofen/Ybbs (Austria), and the Gap-Region (France) belong to the stagnating type, while Immenstadt and Traunstein (Germany) belong to the dynamic type; none belongs to the highly dynamic type.

2.3 Context and SWOT analyses

The next step encompasses a Context Analysis (CA) of the selected test region. One basic objective for it is to get a preliminary insight into the Region in order to address the workshop implementation phase more effectively.

To ease comparison between test regions, a common matrix structure has been prepared to contain the results of the Context Analysis. A wide set of common quantitative indicators⁶ dictates the entries to the matrix, which is split into three sections relating to the main branches of Productive Environment, Human Resources and Basic Infrastructure, respectively. Common sub-sections are foreseen as well: the first branch basically covers agriculture, enterprise, tourism, services and RTDI⁷ sector; the second branch refers to demography, labour market and education, while the third one includes environmental and other land planning indicators, in addition to transport, communication, energy, social and health infrastructure data.

Additional specific national data has been provided when deemed useful in order to gain fuller knowledge, or whenever indicators from the common set happened to be unavailable for a given country. When quantitative information was not available, and/or qualitative descriptions were judged to provide better insight, these were admitted as well. Special care has been devoted to provide each indicator value with comparisons at different territorial scales: national Alpine-wide and Alpine-wide; national or federal state/region; European (the above prioritized in descending order).

The Context Analysis provide data aggregated (whenever possible) at test region scale. Data at municipal level have usually been included as well, in order to highlight intra-regional differences.

⁶ This is why one can also refer to the Context Analysis in terms of Indicator Analysis.

⁷ Research, Technological Development and Innovation.

A SWOT Analysis supplements the Indicator Analysis by descriptively synthesizing and conceptualizing the latter's results. Its aim is to help DIAMONT workshop moderation teams to both provide impulses to local stakeholders and select appropriate instruments to submit to their scrutiny. Of course, SWOT Analyses results have in many cases been re-adjusted after the workshop(s), to accommodate stakeholders' feedback.

This Analysis was structured according to four SWOT tables, one per Indicator Analysis branch (Productive Environment, Human Resources and Basic Infrastructure) plus a summary one. The branch tables include a supplementary field labelled 'Priorities (proposed Solutions)', which aims to provide a first basis for development of a Problem/Conflict Resolution Strategy to be submitted to stakeholders' attention during the workshops. The summary table includes an additional field highlighting problems deemed to be particularly relevant with respect to the general pre-selected thematic focus 'Land Resource Management'.

To explain the basic concept of a SWOT Analysis, we could state that it represents a quick methodology useful to define the starting conditions of a given region. Strengths and Weaknesses are focused on the actual internal conditions, while Opportunities and Threats point to the future.

Therefore, the SWOT Analysis points out all crucial aspects for development: advantages of a region, obstacles that currently hinder development, challenges that could be met and risks that might impede further development. Accordingly, all action should be performed in compliance with the following objectives:

- *Build* on strengths;
- *Eliminate* weaknesses;
- *Exploit* opportunities;
- *Mitigate* the effect of threats.

Having its origin within Strategic Management, the main goal of the SWOT Analysis is to show the systematic call for action and ease the development of strategies. In Regional Development, the SWOT instrument is intended to highlight those dominant and determining factors, which are likely to influence the success of the projects/instruments in current and/or prospect use. It also plays an ancillary role in building an effective strategy aimed at maximizing strengths and opportunities and minimizing weaknesses and risks for a region.

Coming back to DIAMONT, we could add that the prepared SWOT Analyses derive from data and indicators not fully harmonized, since the available information in the involved countries often exhibits differences either in definition or in time of collection/evaluation.

The three fields of interest for DIAMONT SWOT Analyses⁸ have been selected so as to cover the main issues of Sustainable Regional Development; they show a high potential in connection with the key elements of resource efficiency and innovation, and are apt to highlight existing/prospect bottlenecks for sustainable growth.

The SWOT Analyses have proved useful for preliminary delineation of effective land use management objectives and strategies to propose to local stakeholders. Furthermore, they have provided substantial help for the instrument identification phase, insofar as suitable instruments have been selected by taking into due account the conditions, priorities and goal concretization opportunities as highlighted by the SWOT. These very particulars have also served as support for the identification of the most appropriate stakeholders to be invited to attend the workshops: as a matter of fact, they should represent all groups that can be crucial in order to address priorities and assess/apply instruments; at the same time they should be aware of - or could easily be sensitized on - the need to act within the general framework of sustainability.

In the end, the SWOT represented a concise tool, compatible with DIAMONT objectives and suitable to productively interact with stakeholders.

Basically, the preparation of the SWOT Analysis is included in the following process:

1. Definition of a relevant indicator set (this is crucial in order to avoid excessive and time-consuming data analysis and elaboration)
2. Data collection on regional/municipal level from existing sources (statistical books, internet, etc.);
3. Definition - basically by inference - of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats;
4. Definition of summary priorities for each SWOT thematic branch;
5. Performing workshop 1;
6. Indicator revision and harmonization: identification of a concise common set;

⁸ Productive Environment, Human Resources and Basic Infrastructure.

7. SWOT revision;
8. Performing workshop 2;
9. Compilation of the final SWOT to be inserted into Work Package 10 and 11 Report.

2.4 The DIAMONT instrument database

The establishment of the DIAMONT database is directly connected to the cooperation between SOIA and the DIAMONT project. The Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention has stipulated an agreement with the Bavarian State Ministry of the Environment, Public Health, and Consumer Protection to operate an xml-database for SOIA to store available data. This database structure was offered to host the DIAMONT database. The database serves as an information platform ensuring exchange and cooperation between the various Work Packages and the respective documentation produced (esp. the Final Reports). In addition to information on indicators (WP7) and available Alpine-wide data (WP8), a separate Instrument database was developed. It includes, among others, planning instruments at all levels, economic incentives, and legal and voluntary instruments. The selection of instruments was based on the sustainability concept and particularly on the commonly pre-identified thematic focus Land Resource Management (these were part of WP9 activities).

DIAMONT partners were responsible for the compilation of the most promising instruments for their respective countries. The database form contains four descriptive sections (general data, metadata, implementation, and characteristics) containing altogether 45 fields for each instrument entry. At the beginning of December 2007, the database contained 111 instruments: 14 Austrian, 3 Swiss, 32 German, 25 French, 23 Italian, and 14 Slovenian. With regard to the spatial level, 16 instruments are intended for the national level, 18 for the federal state level, 16 for the regional level, and 60 for the local level. Table 1 shows the instrument distribution according to type and subtype.

The intention is to continue further updating of the database till the end of the project, drawing from the experience and findings from all WPs. It will also be available after project completion. In addition to the standard data fields, there are some uploaded documents, which typically contain more detailed information on the respective instruments.

Table 2-1: Types and subtypes of instruments

Type of instrument	No.	Subtype of instrument	No.
Economic	29	Access fees / supply fees	4
		Consumption fees	5
		Creation of markets / regional marketing	2
		Steering taxes	6
		Subsidies and local business development	11
		Voluntary but binding contracts	1
Information, research	5	Formal planning	1
		Public relations / awareness campaigns / information campaigns	2
		Unknown	2
Laws and regulations	21	Formal planning	1
		Informal planning	1
		Laws	11
		Legal codes	7
		Unknown	1
Spatial planning	36	Formal planning	34
		Informal planning	2
Voluntary approaches and agreements / cooperation	20	Conflict prevention and resolution	2
		Regional management	3
		Voluntary cooperation and commitments, not legally binding	7
		Voluntary but binding contracts	8

In order to allow search for single instruments or groups of instruments, a search mask has been created. This makes it possible to search for items according to country, type or subtype, spatial levels (national, regional, local, etc.) and it even includes a full text search. The database is accessible from the Internet and all DIAMONT partners have been provided with an individual login, which allows several users to work on the database at the same time. To ease inter-partner exchange during the implementation process, both an assessment section (to be used by the partner responsible for the database- ifuplan) and a commentary section (to be used by any partners wishing to leave feedback) have been provided for each entry.

Instrument entries can be printed and saved as pdf files. Below the output layout for a sample entry is shown.

 Documentation Regional development instruments	
Name of instrument:	Municipal land policy resolution (= Bodenpolitischer Grundsatzbeschluss)
Country / region:	DE
Spatial level:	local
Type:	Voluntary approaches and agreements / cooperation
Subtype:	Voluntary cooperation and commitments, not legally binding
Description:	Municipal council adopts a general land policy resolution, declaring to give priority to inner-urban development over greenfield development.
General objectives:	Activating inner-urban housing and brownfield potentials. Setting up municipal land policy principles.
General Objectives keywords:	brownfield development ; inner-urban potentials ; building land ; planning principles ;
Responsible:	Local authority/Municipal council
Stakeholder Involved:	others
Reference:	BBR/DIFU: Aktive Baulandpolitik für Stadt und Umland - vom kommunalen zum regionalen Bodenmanagement, online at http://www.difu.de/index.shtml?seminare/dokumente/aktivebaulandpolitik/ergebnisbericht.shtml (loaded 18.12.2006); BMVWB (2001): Baulandbereitstellung - Bodenpolitische Grundsatzbeschlüsse
General assessment of strength and weakness:	As the instrument is of declarative, non-binding character, municipal stakeholders are less reluctant to support it than binding regulations. Nonetheless, if adopted, a general land policy resolution with the goal of strengthening inner-urban development expresses political support and determination to combat urban sprawl. The weaknesses arise from these advantages, as compared to a land use plan, this general land policy resolution does not provide a legally binding framework.
Metadata:	- Author of entries: Lintzmeyer - Date of entry: 29.01.2007 - Author of analysis: fuplan - Date of analysis: 04.05.07
Legal status:	not-mandatory
Extension:	rarely (< 25%)
Comment:	Declarative and generalised character of this instrument is its biggest advantage, therefore there is no need to give it a more binding character. However, consequent binding instruments should strictly follow up on these statements.
Type of monitoring:	none
Preconditions for implementation:	none
Best practise example (1):	Municipality of Jengen "Municipal management of land resources", Gemeinde Jengen "Kommunales Flächenressourcenmanagement"
Example Abstract (1):	The municipal land policy resolution, giving priority to inner-urban development over greenfield development, has - combined with a cadastre on inner-urban development potentials - resulted in the use of 15 inner-urban plots for residential and commercial uses, thus reducing greenfield land demand.

Fig. 2-2: Sample instrument database entry



3

**The participation process
in regional planning**

3 The participation process in regional planning

3.1 Evolving context and factors for regional development

The development of a region depends on its structural characteristics, economic growth factors, and policy measures based on the government's wish to ensure coherent development of all regions. The reasons for the backwardness of weaker regions were initially explained by a lack of capital and qualified workforce, as well as poor infrastructure. The elimination of structural deficiencies therefore relied on the establishment of traditional locational and production factors, promotion of economic growth on national and regional levels, reduction of differences between centre and periphery, and modernization and industrialization of developmentally weak rural areas (Gerhardtter & Gruber, 2001).

Because the production factors that traditional regional policy is based on are not mobile, these kinds of measures were unable to achieve the set goals. On the contrary, the large size of less-developed regions drew more funds from the national budget and poorly developed regions were pushed into depending on subsidies and transfers.

The global economic crisis of the 1970s and the concurrent breakthrough in new information technologies created new changes in the structure of regions and production, as well as social, cultural and political changes. New forms of organization developed that made it possible to spatially disperse the production system and to design networked organizational structures. The significance of weak locational factors increased: the image of an area, its environment, the role of human and social capital, innovation, and so on. Complex knowledge and skills started to be appreciated (Liberda, 1996; Cramer von Laue, 1997).

The response to these changes was a new regional policy that highlighted the economic, cultural, and political significance of regional development, which can be seen in the shaping of regional economic systems, strengthened regional identity, and strong regionalism.

The starting point for endogenous development is regional potential, which represents sustainable performance and usability of space, or the linking of actual and potential living conditions/relations in space. Endogenous potential encompasses regional opportunities for develop-

ment arising from regional dynamics, which imply developmental ability. This is composed of partial potentials, including potential for capital, workforce, technology, infrastructure, area (land), environment, market and decision-making, as well as socio-cultural potential (Schmid, 2001; Cramer von Laue, 1997; Coplák, 2002). Institutional and “fictitious” potential, such as a region’s image, must also be included in regional potential.

3.2 Networking and cooperation in regional development

New regional policy seeks to establish an environment in which businesses, organizations, and public institutions will be able to find common ground, solve shared issues and make use of joint opportunities. It therefore supports economic cooperation on a local level, strengthens information and innovation structures, promotes the use of local resources, inclines toward the development of attractive services and infrastructure, and supports tourism which does not demand great investment in infrastructure and enables the greatest possible inclusion of the local population. It supports organizations that raise the self-organization of local communities and strengthen their autonomy (Gerhardter & Gruber, 2001, 16).

The goal of endogenous regional policy is to adapt economic development to the region’s environmental, cultural, political and social factors. The most important potential is represented by the activity of people from the region; therefore it is important to establish the broadest possible connections between the population and existing local initiatives, through which the population takes a significant role in helping shape regional policy (Liberda, 1996).

An important condition for endogenous development is the economic base, which counts on an established network of closely connected projects and businesses. This creates a self-supporting structure in the sense of local production (i.e., work) for local population through the use of local resources. This leads to closer connection of interregional economic circulation and possibly less dependency on the supra-regional market. The organization of political and administrative structures in a decentralized and subsidiary way is also a condition for the existence of endogenous regional development (Witzel, 1995).

It is exceptionally important to form network connections between developmental actors that enable the rapid flow of information, transfer of new technological solutions, and development of structures, thereby

strengthening regional economy and increasing its competitiveness. The connection between the population's living space and the economy is important because this also determines lifestyle, culture, leisure time and infrastructure. Economic impulses are therefore of decisive significance in shaping regional awareness (Ravbar, 1999).

3.3 Society, culture and participation

Socio-cultural goals are primarily oriented toward supporting regional culture, traditions and identity. A broad variety of cultural and sports events makes it possible to spend leisure time in a quality manner and, indirectly, enhances the quality of life. A series of new lifestyles are created, increasing the flow of ideas and contributing to continual development of new activities. Varied options increase the inclusion of the population and, hence, their interest in events in the region. This leads to greater developmental efforts on the part of towns, local and regional authorities and individuals. Supporting socio-cultural goals strengthens weak locational factors for the settlement of companies and qualified workforce, and this also supports the development of the region as a place to live in (Cramer von Laue, 1997).

Because regional autonomy depends not only on economic factors, but also on the preservation of the social and cultural autonomy of lifestyles, it is necessary to encourage residents' self-assertion and enable them to establish connections. Development strategies are reasonable and effective only with the participation of the population involved. Therefore the revival of regional self-confidence also requires the democratization of decision-making regarding further development (Maier, 1988).

New conditions are reflected in various versions of endogenous regional policy, among which cooperative regional policy is the most important from the standpoint of people participation in decision-making.

This seeks to transcend the sectoral interests of individual regional actors and tends toward partnership and joint management. With the help of information, communication, and coordination, partnership ought to offer potential solutions to development issues. The principle of cooperation applied to social management can be connected with post-Fordist principles of flexibility and decentralization (Cramer von Laue, 1997), governance, the devolution of authority and the continually increasing need for developmental actors in shaping close networks of interpersonal relations. From this perspective, new development policies must focus on social capital and comprehensive inclusion of social institutions and cultural elements in everyday life. The greatest possible

participation of the population is necessary in the development process. There must also be a close connection between the activities which are planned and the wishes and orientations of the population. An important role is also played by development coalitions comprised of businessmen, politicians, and researchers.

3.4 Creative milieus and bottom-up governance

Creative milieus are increasingly cited as a form of cooperative regional development (Fromhold-Eisebith, 1999; Rösch, 2000; Maier, 1999). They are based on interpersonal acquaintances and ties through which a network of players is established. The players later develop their interpersonal relations into business relations. Such milieus are not only a sum of interpersonal connections, but numerous synergy effects are engendered in them. A creative milieu shows the ability of a region to flexibly respond to new environmental conditions and changes, which is necessary for creative and sustainable regional development.

The basic idea of partnership is to unite various actors in a new constellation with the goal of shared solutions to problems, innovation and policy-making (Svenson & Östhol, 2001). The traditional “top-down” approach is giving way to the multi-actor model of management and the network model: here, local actors enter the starting points of all development issues and they are considered equal in relation to other actors (Arnkil & Spanga, 2003). Establishing networks blurs the boundaries between public and private, shaping a new form of policy making, namely governance, which is characterized by close connection of regional actors and division of tasks and responsibilities between them (Svenson & Östhol, 2001). Since the relations between actors are no longer hierarchical, they become based on trust, reputation, customs and habits, reciprocity, reliability and openness to learning (Schobben, 2000).

Initiation of bottom-up processes with the involvement of various stakeholders, building up networks, cooperation, and communication are crucial factors for successful sustainable development. Sustainable development can be attained through participation processes and bottom-up network structures. This approach is considered a normative process based on people participating in decision-making from the very beginning. The main advantage of adopting a bottom-up approach is participant identification with decisions that concern their own environment (Alfarè & Ruoss, 2007).

3.5 Participation process and participatory planning: a panacea?

The essential components of the participation process are communication, cooperation, and consensus (Geißendörfer et al., 2003, 52). Successful management of the participation process makes it possible to achieve many goals: smoothing out differences between perspectives, shaping solutions acceptable to all social groups, preventing unproductive competition, ensuring participation of local actors and strengthening their creativity and awareness. It enables the expression of various interests and makes it possible to take them into account during decision-making and action. It includes local knowledge that is necessary to effectively carry out all sorts of activities in a specific local environment, and with the help of an interactive learning process, it builds upon it and enriches it. The participation process contributes to better recognition of a region, what it is like and what it should be like, which is of key importance for setting goals. It is therefore necessary to take people's opinions into account and thus emphasize the specific features of the region to position it properly in the overall structure of regions. The participation process strengthens regional identity and suggests an image that regional representatives (i.e., mayors, businessmen, department heads, etc.) should represent. It promotes comparative advantages based on local knowledge and learning as well as the establishment of connections at the local level: between businesses, institutions (research institutions, service and education centres, chambers of commerce and industry), and public and private organizations (manufacturers' unions and other participants). All opportunities must be sought to overcome the obstacles faced by the region (Meyer, 1999; Garofoli & Musyck, 2001). Doing so requires special attention to avoid increasing the socioeconomic gaps between social groups, but rather to reduce and eliminate them (Rauch, et al., 2001).

In regional planning, participation often primarily occurs in seeking original solutions (regional visioning), solving social and economic difficulties, and highlighting shared values among the population. This requires the actual participation of all stakeholders because it is only in this way that all of their expectations and aspirations can be included in the whole. The participation process must therefore be continually open to all forms of desired participation, and it is necessary to eliminate all obstacles that might impede this type of cooperation right from the beginning. It is especially important to be attentive to groups that are often neglected: the young, the poor, and minorities. Because well-organized and wealthier groups of participants have easier access to in-

formation, disseminating information is of exceptional importance also in order to ensure the participation of other (marginalized) social groups (Lurcott, 2005; Rauch et al., 2001).

Although participation also has its disadvantages, especially time-consumption and financial demands, the moderators' skill must not be neglected. The moderator should attempt to limit these drawbacks of participation. Individual groups are often excluded if they do not have the knowledge and skills to participate in this demanding and lengthy process. Additional weaknesses become manifest if the participation process is informal (e.g., in a workshop or forum); such groups do not have legal status and are unable to take measures, their proposals are nonbinding and the opportunities to carry out the decisions they have adopted are also limited. However, due to this very informality, openness, networking, high level of motivation and creativity, such activity also has many advantages. It is therefore reasonable to establish connections with administrative structures, which can increase the influence of informal groups over actual decisions. The question therefore arises how to shape the participation process so that it is democratic and enables the inclusion of all actors in decision-making and in the production of regional plans (Geißendörfer et al., 2003, 17 and 18; Rauch et al., 2001).

The role of participatory planning is exceptionally important because local cultures, geographical conditions, economic structures, local management styles and local governance conditions are site-specific and have a significant influence on planning decisions. In addition, the participation process has also been endorsed through the European structural funds; in 1988 the European Commission included partnership among the principles for structural funds, and this has been maintained until today. Planning can thereby be accorded higher quality, legitimacy, affiliation and support from the population, which is a precondition for successful implementation.

Regional actors can be included in the planning process in a number of different ways (Lurcott, 2005; Rauch et al., 2001; Geißendörfer et al., 2003): personal interviews, structured interviews, workshops, brainstorming sessions, interest group forums, leadership conferences, mapping workshops, random telephone surveys, on-line interactive websites with voting, newspaper inserts for voting, roundtables, regional congresses and conferences, and so on.

However, it is not enough to simply invite regional actors to participate. It is necessary to take their opinions into account and put them into practice to the greatest possible extent, thereby creating a friendly and stimulating environment for everyone.



4

Putting theory into practice

4 Putting theory into practice

4.1 Workshops

As anticipated in the Introduction (Section 0), it had been decided that workshops should represent the suitable framework to ground theory-driven considerations and evaluations (stemming from previous DIAMONT Work Packages) on judgment from local Alpine actors and stakeholders, with special reference to gaining their feedback on both proposed instruments to steer regional development - and particularly, land resource management - towards sustainability, and suitable strategies to tackle potential conflicts and problems affecting the test regions.

The method applied in the workshops is a simplification of the World Café Conversations, which is a creative process for leading collaborative dialogue, sharing knowledge and creating possibilities for action in groups of all sizes. This flexible method can be organized and facilitated by one or two persons. The role of the facilitator is to maintain a pleasant environment, keep the discussion focused on the selected topics and mix the people at the tables in order to get a multisectoral contribution; he/she can freely organise the meeting according to the topic, the type of stakeholders and the available time.

The World Café is structured as follows: the environment is set up like a café, with tables for four-five, tablecloths covered by flipchart paper, some coloured pens and refreshments. People sit four-five to a table and have a series of conversational rounds lasting from 20 to 40 minutes about one or more questions. At the end of each round, one person remains at each table as the host, while the other three-four move to different tables. The hosts of the tables welcome newcomers and share the essence of that table's conversation so far. The newcomers relate any conversational threads which they are carrying and then the conversation continues, deepening as the round progresses. At the end of the second round, participants return to their original table or move on to other tables for one or more additional rounds, depending on the design of the Café. In subsequent rounds they may explore a new question or go deeper into the original one. After three or more rounds, the whole group gathers to share and explore emerging themes, insights and learning, which are captured on flipcharts or other means for making the collective intel-

ligence of the whole group visible to everyone so that they can reflect on what is emerging in the room. At this point the Café may end or further rounds may begin of conversational exploration and inquiry.

In DIAMONT workshops the basic structure of the method has been maintained. In some cases instead of changing tables after each round, it was decided that people should move after two rounds; instead of presenting results after 2-3 rounds, it was decided that a reporter should present results after each round and ask the other tables if they had recorded something different or if they wanted to add something: this helped save time and avoid repetition. Some other minor deviations consisted of having spontaneous plenary discussion on certain topics (this was the case with the first workshop in Tolmezzo) in some rounds, due to stakeholders' common opinion and high sensitivity on the topics, or to the urge to pass offhand comments on the questions, before settling down to concentrate on the answers. Another deviation from the original method was to use a second person who supported the facilitator in summarising the round results and presenting them at the end of the workshop during the plenary session; this procedure has the advantage of getting the participants' final approval on what was discussed during the meeting by checking the correctness of the summary.

No particular problems arose in managing the workshops. In most cases the facilitator was a member of DIAMONT expert team; in one case only (Immenstadt-Sonthofen in Germany) an external facilitator was involved. At the end or during the workshops, coffee-breaks or aperitifs were organised so that stakeholders could better get to know each other and interact with DIAMONT team.

Workshops 1

After the selection of the test regions, the following step was to identify the key stakeholders. Each partner proceeded according to their contacts in the area to identify potentially interested people among representatives of the municipalities and other local authorities, land management and spatial planning experts, NGOs, Associations, Research Institutions and Universities, private citizens etc.

Prior to the workshop each DIAMONT partner prepared a set of documents to be displayed during the event and in some cases forwarded in advance to previously identified stakeholders; in particular, these consisted of project description, Context and SWOT Analyses, explanation of the World Café method.

The main focus of the 1st workshop was to identify the most important problems concerning land resource management within the test regions with the preliminary help of the Context and SWOT Analyses results, and to start getting stakeholders' validation of the proposed instruments, drawn from DIAMONT database as developed in the framework of Work Package 9 activities.

It was decided that question-rounds should be as straightforward as possible and cover the following strategic thematic fields:

1. Economy and society;
2. Land use;
3. Quality of services;
4. Institutions and cooperation;
5. Conflicts in the region.

The answers obtained can be found in each test region's workshop Reports (see Chapter 5).

Workshops 2

Soon after the closure of the first workshop each partner filled in a matrix containing the following fields:

Table 4-2: Header of workshop matrix

Test region	Main problems (from WS1)	Instruments (from WS1)	Conflicts	Conflict resolution strategies	Possible best practices	Actions needed
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In this way, it became easier to identify the common problems that emerged during the workshops; these can be summarized into the following: Lack of Inter-municipal Cooperation (refer to workshop reports in Section 4 to obtain more information on how this problem substantiates in each test region). The second workshop was focused on problem (and the frequently ensuing conflict) resolution in the general perspective of enhancing sustainable regional development and through the application of identified instruments and best practice examples and the received impulses from stakeholders.

A moderation plan served as guideline for workshop organisers. It includes a *starting impulse*; the *objectives* of the workshop (e.g., ‘Intra-regional cooperation as a strategy to promote sustainable development and overcome conflicts’); the applied *method*: (e.g., approx 20 participants - 4 groups of 5 persons each; all groups work on the same topic; the workshop is divided into 3 rounds and a plenary discussion); the proposed *strategies*; the *questions* for each round; the final plenary phase (presentation of *results* and discussion on possible *follow-up*).

During the second workshop a key stakeholder was interviewed in each Region by DIAMONT staff; the interview was video-recorded to be inserted into the foreseen project DVD.

4.2 Participating stakeholders

DIAMONT team agreed to involve stakeholders who represent local communities including mayors or decision makers as well as representatives of interest groups or citizens in general. As shown in Table 3 below, the participation turned out to be quite different between one test region and another; at any rate, the number of participants was higher than expected (in the Application Form we had planned to count on 10 stakeholders per workshop). In spite of the wide number of invitations sent, only few decision makers attended the workshops, with the exception of Immenstadt-Sonthofen and Gap test regions. Nonetheless, the discussion remained interesting and fruitful, and participants provided DIAMONT moderation teams with useful feedback on the most appropriate instruments and best practices. Participation decreased in the second workshop in almost all test regions and in some cases a high turnover was recorded; the reasons for that are different: in Gap, representatives of Authorities were invited separately, but those from the Département and the Région were absent, to the prejudice of the scope of the exchanges; in Tolmezzo, the newcomers came mostly from the Region and Mountain Communities, due to their interest in the topic of inter-municipal cooperation and spatial planning; in Waidhofen, the low number of participants was due to over saturation of events since a similar initiative on supra-regional cooperation had been organized not long before. In all, 55 stakeholders attended both workshops; the average workshop participation amounted to 16 persons, while 36% new participants were recorded in the second workshop (much less - 22% - without considering the data from Gap).

The World Café method proved to be an excellent instrument to stimulate discussion, bring stakeholders together, implement participatory work and encourage intra-regional cooperation. Stakeholders, who were not entitled to make concrete decisions on adoption of strategies or possible follow-up, took the opportunity to express their wishes to improve inter-municipal cooperation (in Gap, they suggested: possible creation of a real estate observatory and elaboration of a charter on land policy, constitution of a mobility centre to experiment on car sharing and other transport options). In the regions where high participation of decision makers was recorded, concrete results appear to be within reach (in Immenstadt-Sonthofen, establishment of a dedicated inter-municipal working group on commercial development).

Table 4-3: Statistics on workshop participation

Test region	Workshop 1 No. of participants	No. of decision makers at workshop 1	Workshop 2 No. of participants	No. of decision makers at workshop 2	No. of new participants in workshop 2
Gap (Fr)	21	6	22	6	14
Idrija (Si)	13	1	13	1	8
Immenstadt- Sonthofen (De)	16	15	13	12	1
Traunstein- Traunreut (De)	18	8	18	2	3
Tolmezzo (It)	19	2	17	4	6
Waidhofen (At)	21	8	8	5	5
Total	108	40	91	30	36



5

Test regions workshop reports

5 Test regions workshop reports

5.1 Gap (France)

5.1.1 The selected test region and DIAMONT participatory approach

General description

The Gap test region is the largest DIAMONT test region. Its size is 1816 km², with 74 municipalities and 64741 inhabitants in 1999. The core city, namely Gap, is located at 743 m asl and counts for more than half the population of the region. Compared to Gap, most communes have a small number of inhabitants: their average population was 390 inhabitants in 1999, with less than 5 inhabitants per km² in 13 communes.



Fig. 5-3: Map of Gap test region

The test region extends far over the limits of Gap Labour Market Region as delineated in DIAMONT, based on commuter flows. It has been tailored to group various territorial entities into a single entity:

- Current service catchment areas: relations with Gap take different forms. Even when services polarize in Gap, very distant communes are served by the core city.
- The *Pays Gapençais*, which is an integrative regional development structure meant to make up a development pool where Gap and neighbouring rural areas mutually support one another.
- More local inter-municipal cooperation structures, which are very common in France.

Table 5-4: Geographical features

The Region is located in the *département des Hautes-Alpes*, in the *Région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur*. Gap is presently the only city playing the role of main local centre in the area. The *Pays Gapençais* groups various areas, delineated according to physiographic characteristics, each one having a clear identity but sharing common issues, linked by their remoteness and strong dependence on the core city. The following geographical areas can be distinguished, which correspond roughly to the existing inter-municipal cooperation structures:

- The *Dévoluy*, the *Valgaudemar* and the *Champsaur*: In these mountainous and low populated areas of the northern section of the Region, the economy rests primarily on agriculture and tourism, with two tourist seasons (summer and winter). Nature tourism represents the main resource of *Valgaudemar*, which is located in the *Parc National des Ecrins* area.
- The *Gap area*: the city of Gap is located at the crossroads of main communication axes, and is connected to surrounding valleys. Communes close to Gap belong to its employment basin; they are developing, due to the arrival of new inhabitants, although they maintain agricultural activities.
- The *Avance* and *Serre-Ponçon* areas, the *Buëch valleys* and the *Veynes* basin: located in the southern section of the Region, these hilly zones are less subject to urban pressure emanating from Gap and include small secondary centres, like *Veynes*, *Tallard* or *Chorges*. Agriculture (orchards) and summer tourism (gliding and sailing) represent important activities.

The choice of the test region with reference to the participatory approach

DIAMONT set up guidelines to select test regions in Alpine countries and proposed to base selection on Labour Market Regions delineated through Work Package 8 results. Since it was a question of making a choice among the 13 possible French LMRs, a supplementary statistical analysis was performed, based on national data concerning land use, demography, employment, central or supra-regional functions of core centres, traditional

and modern activities. Even when the possible test regions can be ranked according to main categories like 'developing' versus 'stagnating', they are still very different regarding economic activities, land use or spatial development. Reasons for choosing the Gap Region were the following:

- Central position in French southern Alps and long distance to the next main urban centre;
- Residential expansion due to steady demographic growth; importance of households and administration services and of land based activities (agriculture, tourism);
- Clear spatial structure, with a single core city and small local sub-centres linked to the core, which structure settlement basins.

In fact, one decisive factor was that contacts with local authorities had proved more promising than in other possible test regions, with regard to topics to address in the workshops. We turned to the Pays Gapençais (<http://www.pays-gapençais.com>), since this common development structure follows the objective of setting up a shared vision for sustainable development in a region where synergy between the core city, its immediate surroundings and the rural hinterlands must be enhanced. People from this structure became convinced it could benefit from the participatory approach and all steps of the proposed method, from the indicator-based diagnosis up to the strategies to alleviate tensions or conflicts that hamper sustainable development. The Pays took care of contacts with local stakeholders to arouse their interest in DIAMONT workshops and invite them to participate. Conversely, the delineation of the test region had to be adapted to this regional institutional and administrative structure.

5.1.2 *The workshops*

Workshop methodology: putting into practice

DIAMONT experts had invited to apply the so-called 'World Café' method, which aims at creating a good atmosphere among participants, making it possible to exchange opinions and giving as much fuel as possible for discussion.

- In the workshops, the French DIAMONT Partner acted as a facilitator, while participants were divided into four (1st workshop) or three (2nd workshop) groups of 5-6 persons each. They were invited to join discussion rounds lasting 30 to 40 minutes organised in separate ta-

bles. After each discussion round, the groups moved to another table, chaired by a moderator in charge of exposing main results of previous discussion rounds. The moderators were members, in most cases, of Cemagref staff.

- Both workshops were structured in the same way. They were introduced by the facilitator, with short presentations of DIAMONT activities, workshop aims and expectations. Discussion tables were dedicated to sectoral or cross-thematic topics that structured the territorial diagnosis (1st workshop), or to issues addressed through instruments (2nd workshop). Time was kept, at the end of workshop 2, to express ideas to give wider audience to the results as well as possible follow-up actions.

Participants appreciated the fact that they felt free to vent ideas which possibly they would not have exposed in debates chaired by authorities. Discussion rounds allowed working out essential issues, even if they did not permit going deep into details. However, active participation of all persons was difficult to maintain up to the end of the successive discussion rounds, which dealt with inter-related questions. Another difficulty was to summarize the main results of thorough discussion and ask participants to check their relevance and completeness before leaving at the closure of the workshops.

The main conclusions were in fact released in documents sent to participants after the workshops. Conclusions of the first workshop were above all in form of critical analysis of crucial issues. For the second workshop, they took the form of suggestions to handle more efficiently these issues by means of active intra-regional cooperation. Discussion in the second workshop resulted in identifying key elements to be incorporated in strategies aiming at alleviating tensions or conflicts in the Region. However, no decision was taken to implement these strategies. Even when the World Café method proved efficient in stimulating discussion, other methods have to be used for decision-making processes, ie. when after having confronted their opinions groups of people have to negotiate in order to reach agreements.

Characterization of participating stakeholders

According to DIAMONT stipulations, participants should represent the local society, and include mayors or decision makers as well as representatives of interest groups or even single citizens.

Table 5-5: Participants in the workshops

Category	Name	Institution	Workshop	
			1 st	2 nd
Local self-government: elected representatives	Claude d'Amato	Deputy mayors - Gap	X	X
	Robert Gillio-Tos			X
Public sector: other decision makers	Jean-Pierre Eyraud	First mayor - Saint-Jean-Saint-Nicolas	X	
	Jean-Pierre Dusserre	First mayor - Chabottes, President of Pays Gapençais	X	X
	Hervé Moreau	Gap - Director of municipal services		X
	Frank Morel	Gap - Head of economic development department	X	X
	Virginie Bonneau	Communauté de Communes du Dévoluy	X	
	François Ricou	Communauté de Communes du Haut-Champsaur	X	
	Fabienne Bonet	Communauté de Communes du Champsaur		X
	Bernadette Maltese	Communauté de Communes des Deux-Buëch		X
Public sector: other representatives	Julien Saint-Aman	Director of the Pays Gapençais	X	X
	Marie-Laure Reynaud	Municipality of Gap	X	
	Véronique Paul-Lesbros			X
	Martine Marlois-Halbout			X
	Bruno Gauthier	State offices and agencies	X	
	Alain Blanc			X
	Eric Thibault			X
	Catherine Garin		X	
	Henri Cortot		X	

Continuation Table 5-5: Participants in the workshops

Category	Name	Institution	Workshop	
			1 st	2 nd
Public sector: other representatives	Sandrine Gardet	State offices and agencies	X	
	Jean Horgues-Débat	Local agencies	X	X
	Nadège Manhes		X	
	Viviane Lefeuivre			X
	Daniel Chiappino	Pays Gapençais		X
	Yves Fournier			X
	Christelle Caizergues			X
Local and regional economy, associations	David Marchello	Economic groups		X
	Jézabel Roulée		X	
	Cecile Valette		X	
	Gérard Quiblier	Chamber of agriculture	X	X
	Jacques Chaume		X	
	Yves Gimbert	Tourism	X	X
	Jean-Denis Rispaud		X	
	Marc Lourdaux		X	
	Alain Girodon	Urban transport company - Gap		X

Most participants were members of the Pays Gapeçais. This structure groups, on a voluntary basis, mayors and other elected representatives, socio-professionals and associations of the Region and is made up of two committees. On the one hand, the Executive Committee is composed of 21 elected officials and is in charge of working out a development charter. Members are mayors, who are representatives of their own municipality or of the inter-municipal cooperation structures. On the other hand, the Advisory Committee, composed of officers and technicians working in public services and representatives of the civil society.

The table below lists the participants. In total, more than 20 people attended the first or the second workshop. Even when only few mayors joined the meeting, other decision-makers participated, such as directors of cooperation structures, together with officers of local administrations who are direct counterparts of elected officials since they are in charge of preparing their decisions. However, only 8 people attended both workshops. This important turnover comes from the fact that since the first workshop identified important issues addressing cooperation within the region, some participants felt it necessary to hand over, in the second workshop, to persons directly in charge of the implementation of instruments addressing detected problems.

However, even when a diversified set of actors participated in the workshops, they still could not represent the whole variety of stakeholders who play a role in the governance system. Representatives of the State were invited separately, but those of the *Département* or the *Région* were absent, due to the prejudice of the scope of the exchanges.

5.1.3 Moderation team activities and stakeholder feedback

The main activities in the first workshop consisted of discussion on the results of the detailed Context Analysis carried out by Cemagref and analysis of some most problematic issues with regard to sustainable development in the Region. The second workshop was especially dedicated to problems that call for more effective cooperation within the Region and to strategies aiming at alleviating related tensions. Instruments were discussed in both workshops, with regard to actions needed: in the first workshop, their suitability to address problems detected in the Region was analysed; the second workshop focused on ways to develop efficient cooperation in their implementation in order to make it possible to alleviate tensions within the Region.

First workshop: existing/potential problems and conflicts

The Context Analysis prepared by Cemagref was seen as an input for discussion on existing and potential problems in the region. Data and indicators were gathered and mapped to analyse main factors which can result in further land take and unbalance in spatial development in the region. This indicator-based territorial diagnosis addressed four main topics:

- *Impact of demographic changes* on the allocation and spatial distribution of housing and current services provision;
- *Employment generation* opportunities and change in economic activities;
- *Pressures on land use* in relation with social and economic development;
- Status quo in *cooperation between municipalities* and locking factors hampering more effective cooperation within the region.

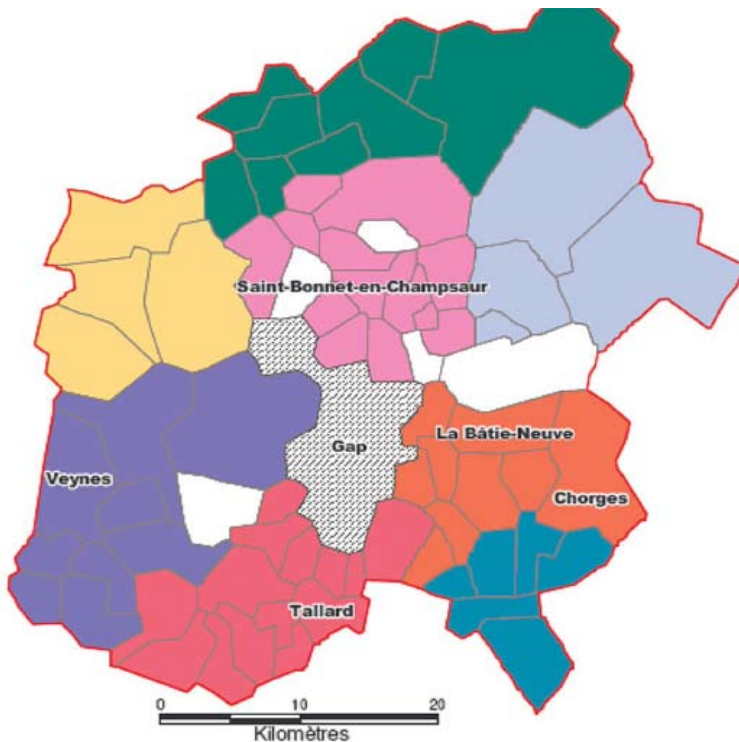


Fig. 5-4: A common issue: some communes, like Gap, stand apart from existing cooperation structures

For each topic, the territorial diagnosis interpreted the indicators in terms of possible development issues for the Region, and invited participants to react to the following aspects:

- *The relevance of the proposed indicators*⁹ : how suitably do they contribute to identifying important issues for the Region? Which other indicators should be used?
- The nature of the *problems linked to identified development issues*: it was a question of assessing how the indicator-based approach helps concretely specify the problems municipalities are facing.
- *Possible solutions to deal with specified problems*: participants were invited to discuss strengths and weaknesses of main instruments addressing these problems.

With regard to indicators, discussion highlighted main limitations of indicator-based territorial diagnoses, which are: the lack of data, since important phenomena, such as part-time employment in tourism, are not covered; their obsolescence, since official statistics do not inform on dynamic phenomena, as yet; and finally, the use of generic indicators, which convey a poor meaning when addressing specific Alpine issues. However, Context Analysis indicators were deemed suited to reveal the main development trends; discussion helped to specify how they question sustainable development in the Region and in their respective municipalities. The main results are as follows:

- *The Region is developing, although most dynamic trends concern firstly the core city and its periphery*

Population increases are mainly due to in-migration flows, based on young adults with families. This results in an important demand for new housings, which are mostly semi-independent houses, while at the same time there exists a lack of houses to let in the Region, intensified by the low dweller turnover. Moreover, jobs and services concentrate in Gap and cannot develop in low populated areas, where the demand would be insufficient to secure a return for investment. Access to these facilities makes inhabitants more and more dependent on private transportation. Local stakeholders focused on two intertwined issues: on one hand, efficient management of land resources in the region, since risks of scarcity and related potential conflicts are not duly acknowledged; on the other hand, accessibility and mobility in the region, since home-to-work,

⁹ They come from WP8 or are inspired from WP7 phenomena assigned to the main trend 'Urbanisation'.

home-to-school or home-to-other facilities displacements are increasing and do not follow always the same paths.

- *Threats are pressing on an economy perceived as basically turned towards household services or, in some areas, agriculture or tourism*

With regard to the assimilation of immigrants, the main issues concern professional training and precariousness of some jobs, or seasonal activities, even when unemployment rates are not so high in the region. The diversification of economic activities is another concern. It reveals difficulties to direct development towards high value-added activities, due to obstacles such as distance from the innovation centres, which would make it possible to widen the composition of immigrants settling in the Pays Gapeçais.

- *More effective cooperation between municipalities questions local reluctances to develop cooperation with the central city*

It also questions differences in wealth and possibilities of action between municipalities and cooperation structures. The multiplicity of the latter results from various responsibilities normally assigned to municipalities, which can be transferred to inter-municipal structures, as for example in the fields of economic development or tourism. There is an urgent need to better articulate these structures and rationalise the distribution of responsibilities. However, attempts to implement in the whole Region a single structure counting on a large range of responsibilities were up to now unsuccessful, since local structures do have the habit of working in common and do not feel it necessary to experiment larger structures; some mutualisation of competencies can come out from particular arrangements between existing structures. Another concern is the participation of civil society, which is easier in small municipalities insofar as they have kept some competencies. On a larger scale, no direct participation becomes possible.

Second workshop: possible strategies to address problem/conflict resolution

Unbalances in the region come from polarisation and competition between different zones, since spatial development options are intended to control and orient demographic and economic growth but are not fully acknowledged and shared in the whole region. Demographic attractive-

ness is a chance for the region and stems from the articulation between an urban centre providing jobs, services, administrations, and a periphery offering a sought-after living environment, or even specific activities such as winter tourism. These functional complementarities call for more efficient organisation of services and jobs to alleviate unbalances in the region without prejudice to the quality of the living environment, which is the main factor for attractiveness. The challenge is to be able to manage the region and develop it like a coherent unit. Solutions are not obvious since they question relationships between municipalities.

In this respect, addressing efficiently the problems of the region requires enhancing cooperation within the region as a means for more effective management and control of expected development. The second workshop was especially dedicated to ways to alleviate unbalances and tensions between communes through efficient implementation of planning and development instruments, assuming they would be all the more efficient as implementation is commonly conceived between municipalities and other bodies within the region. The workshop aimed to define conditions allowing dialogue in the implementation of these instruments and to identify good practices to be possibly incorporated into strategies addressing problems and possible conflicts.

Two types of instruments were analyzed. On one hand, the cooperation instruments, such as the *Communautés de Communes* or the Pays Gapençais, which aim to steer active cooperation between municipalities, but do not address all issues that lead to tensions within the region. On the other hand, local urban planning or economic and social development instruments, which are managed by various bodies (the communes, the *département*, even the State, and sometimes ad-hoc structures) and thus need to be coordinated in their implementation to tackle various facets of conflicting issues.

With regard to strategies aiming at encouraging dialogue related to both types of instruments, two main guidelines to enhance more effective cooperation emerged from the debate:

- *The improvement of information tools and knowledge infrastructure addressing problems detected in the Region*

There is an urgent need to reduce tensions coming from incorrect appreciations or differences in perception of problems that concern municipalities. One priority would be to establish an inter-municipal database, dedicated to land use, multi-activity, realization of new activities and

demand in transport. Information tools needed should also concern social facilities, such as children care or home nurses, tourism vacancies, or even procedures to realize new housings or activities, since the quality of these services is hampered by unequal access to information, for both the bodies in charge of these aspects and people requiring information.

- *The creation of a good climate for intra-regional exchange*

It was seen as a precondition to optimize the implementation of instruments aiming to tackle problems shared between various municipalities. Notably, benefits should stem from opportunities to mutualise instruments which local authorities are responsible for, or to develop synergy, through particular arrangements, with instruments managed by supra-communal authorities. There is no crucial lack of instruments, but all instruments have their own objectives and are managed by specific bodies that do not have enough opportunities to consult each other yet, due to distance amongst others reasons. A good practice would be to develop networking between services in charge of instruments that complement each other in order to mutualise technical means and possibly share implementation between a central office and local antennas in closer contact with the needs of local population or enterprises.

These guidelines get a strategic character since they were seen as essential to prepare the implementation of comprehensive land planning and development instruments in the region, such as a '*Communauté d'Agglomération*' grouping Gap and communes belonging to its urban expansion basin, or a 'SCOT' (Regional Integrated Development Plan). They are still in the limbo but, when implemented, they would be efficient to steer sustainable regional development and, furthermore, to give more attention to the region's specific objectives at higher administrative and government levels. But their implementation will imply profound changes with respect to responsibilities currently granted to single communes or to existing *Communautés de Communes*.

Evoked strategies would find their justification with regard to the implementation of these instruments, but putting them into practice goes very beyond what the Pays Gapençais itself can do: this structure is not perennial, since it was established with the objective of preparing future implementation of these instruments, fighting against local idiosyncrasy and promoting actions to demonstrate that a shared development perspective would prove beneficial to the whole region. At the moment, the matter is developing learning processes with a view to being able to pass to the upper stage in terms of cooperation.

Instruments and good practices to be possibly adopted/followed

We will not review all instruments which were discussed in the workshops; instead, we will give some examples of desirable actions which can turn into good practices when implemented through related instruments, in compliance with the above mentioned strategies.

- *Urban planning and housing issues*

Local urban plans were criticised since they lead to spatial development choices that differ widely between neighbouring communes, which represents a source of tensions and questions efficient management of land resources. Besides, settlement densification is either costly, when it implies reconstruction of ancient districts, or not well accepted in villages, when it leads to important changes in the traditional urban scenery. Local urban plans would make more sense when established at inter-municipal level, where they could better regulate land use zonings, in order, for example, to avoid multiplication of over-dimensioned industrial/commercial areas to the prejudice of agriculture. Moreover, villages which count very few inhabitants have the problem of attaining the critical mass which would make it possible to implement some instruments which proved effective in Gap, as for example the acquisition of agricultural land to be preserved by installing 'united farms' entrusted to organizations for social rehabilitation through work, or the setting up of programmed operation of housing improvement. Other actions that could be implemented through local housing plans concern setting up measures favouring the access to housing of disadvantaged persons or making it possible to reserve houses to be rented by seasonal workers.

- *Employment and economic development issues*

New instruments have been created, such as the PER (Rural Poles of Excellence), which can help attract additional activities. Food processing or timber industries could have some chances, together with solar energy or medicinal plants, but some concern comes from the lack of dialogue and cooperation forums between economic actors and local authorities. The PERs give local, regional and national actors this opportunity, thus enlarging the range of action for public authorities facing the market approach of private investors.

- *Mobility issues*

They call obviously for setting up local displacements plans and urban transport perimeters, which are presently limited to the commune of Gap. Besides, a multiplicity of actors is concerned. Good practices are still quite in the limbo, since public transport network is skimpy and would serve only few car parks which make access to public transport easier. At the moment, wished actions consist of providing access to public services which concentrate in Gap, through networks of local antennas, or have a more symbolic character, as for example proposing tickets valid for both Gap theatre and bus transport from selected departure places in the region.

Possible stakeholder-identified DIAMONT follow-ups

The workshops offered a platform for overdue discussion on an integrative and more coordinated regional development strategy, which would become effective through future implementation of the comprehensive instruments mentioned above. Even when participants were persuaded of the need to set up such a strategy, discussion allowed them to classify some essential problems and define ways to prepare its implementation.

The challenge is now to give an operational follow-up to the workshop results that are still in form of guidelines for future action to be defined yet, prior to possible decision and implementation. Workshop participants were not entitled to take concrete decisions on possible follow-ups, but certain local actors took the opportunity to express their wishes:

- There is a wish to *keep more than the trace of the discussion and results*, since they were felt worth wide dissemination in the Region in order to reach stakeholders who did not participate;
- The participative method was experimented in the workshops and proved effective in detecting and analyzing problems and looking for solutions they call for. It would be useful to *better formalize the method*, by defining for instance sets of cartographic documents that may be required to enhance reflection, with a view to possible application in other regions;
- A *feedback from the workshops held in the other test regions* is wished, since, amongst others, time was insufficient to dwell on solutions which have proved effective in certain countries and could give some ideas to local stakeholders.

Besides, following the debates one mayor proposed to put on the stakeholder agenda three priority actions:

- *Creation of a real estate observatory* and elaboration of a charter on land policy;
- *Constitution of a mobility centre* that would experiment car sharing and other transport options even in the whole Département;
- *Make a 6-month survey of methods to attract high level firms.*

However, such actions will not be decided immediately, since one has to wait till the next municipal elections, due in March 2008.

5.1.4 Conclusions, lessons learned

WP10 and 11 activities in the French test region possibly look less conclusive than expected. We did not revise the so-called DIAMONT instruments, but sought to tackle problems to implement them more efficiently. We did not find panacea solutions to conflicts within the Region, but proposed guidelines to make it possible to smooth sources of tensions out. In fact, choosing the Gap Region led to reviewing issues and interrelated problems, which could not be ranked from the beginning. We took the risk to address many topics at once, instead of focusing on those issues which are already well acknowledged in the Region, or were envisaged from the beginning to orient WP10 and 11 activities in all test



The studious atmosphere of the workshops

regions, for which results would have possibly proved more operational.

In fact, slight adaptations in terms of method, approach and expected results were needed to complete WP10 and 11 activities in a test region where issues are perceived very differently in towns and in small rural villages. Besides, we tried to get benefit from previous DIAMONT results, notably the indicators, even when they were seen as pertaining to top-down approaches. Since such adaptations proved efficient in Gap, we think they would be likewise justified in other comparable regions, as for example the Digne-les-Bains or Draguignan regions in French southern Alps. However, we think it would be desirable to analyse at the same time cooperation and local governance issues, which are interrelated and sometimes conflict with one another.

5.2 Idrija (Slovenia)

5.2.1 The selected test region

Table 5-6: Summary of test region characteristics

Basic information about the selected municipality:	
Test region name	Idrija
Area	293.7 km ²
Population	11,990
Population density	41 inh./km ² (Slovenian average 98.5 inh./km ²)
Elevation of main town	369 m asl
Substantiation of choice of test region:	
	- Long mining tradition
	- Historical importance
	- Positive commuter flows
	- Successful industrial restructuring after 1991
	- Industries in line with modern economic trends
	- Limited influence of Ljubljana
	- Limited accessibility
	- Lack of space
	- Sensitive mono-structural enterprises



Mercury mine Archive, Idrija

The town of Idrija is located in western Slovenia. Its municipality spans the upper basin of the Idrijca River and the mountains, representing a transition between the subalpine and karst regions. Most of the municipality consists of levelled karst territory, eroded by streams. The remainder includes several small karst plateaus cut by deep valleys and gorges.

The prevailing bedrock is carbonate (limestone and dolomite) with a wide variety of karst phenomena. The entire area is tectonically very active because of the Idrija Fault, which has caused many earthquakes. The presence of mercury ore is associated with this fault.

Space for settlement is very limited, and is concentrated in the high-elevation karst plateaus and narrow river valleys, where all major settlements are located. The slopes above the river channels are too steep and prone to landslides. Due to its variegated relief, limited natural resources and remote location, the municipality is sparsely populated.

Idrija Region is well known for its traditional lace manufacture, which dates back to over 300 years. On the other hand, the discovery of a mercury ore proved decisive for economic development, contributing to early industrialization; for a long time, this was Europe's largest mercury mine and the second-largest town in what is today Slovenia; after World War II, the mine declined and was closed in 1990. Fortunately, the last decades were marked by Idrija's soft transition into one of Slovenia's most successful centres for electrical products and the town is known for its high-tech firms. Idrija's new industries are very much in line with modern economic trends.

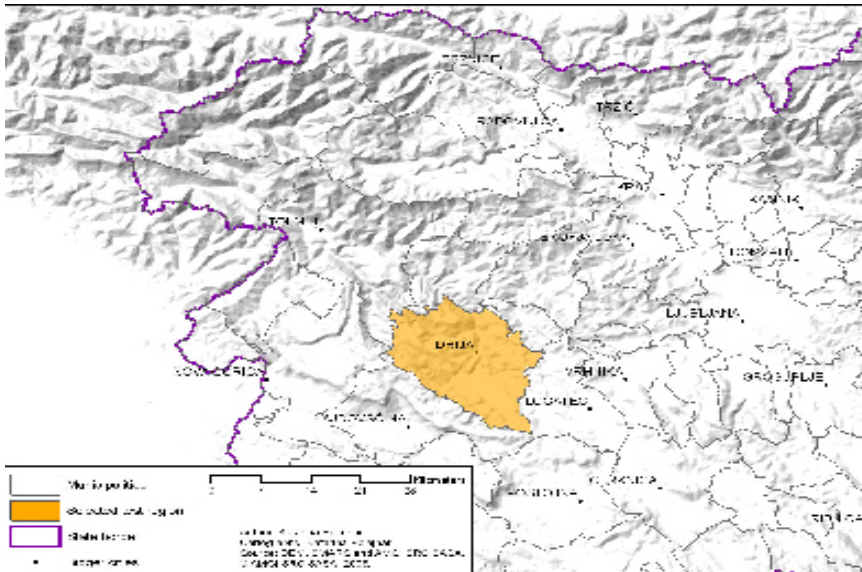


Fig. 5-5: Location of the test region in Slovenia and the Alpine Convention territory

Idrija’s economic development was reflected by changes in its population. Until World War I, the number of inhabitants had increased constantly, but after the war it started to decrease. Since 1990 the population has been stable. However there is a great difference in population density between the center of the municipality and the remote hilly areas. Two-thirds of the entire population live in two centres: Idrija and Spodnja Idrija.

Idrija faces transportation difficulties because it is cut off from major transport axes.

The main problem in this Labour Market Region is mono-structural economy, which represents a significant risk because a recession could push the municipality of Idrija into a critical situation. Therefore it is crucial to find and mobilize new economic opportunities to prevent this potential problem from becoming a reality.

5.2.2 The workshops: objectives, methodology, and participants

We carried out a detailed Context Analysis for the selected test region. This made the basis for a subsequent SWOT Analysis and for selection of the thematic areas to be discussed during the workshops. The objective of the first workshop was to identify existing and possible con-

flicts in the test region with special reference to the selected thematic areas. The objective of the second workshop was to discuss possible strategies and instruments closely linked to the main problems, and determine options for conflict resolution.

The number of participants made it possible to apply the “World Café” method, but in the second part of workshop 2 the debate between stakeholders got so intense and interactive that we continued with a plenary session, although we ensured that everyone had the opportunity to speak their mind, not only the “loudest” participants.

In the preparatory phase, we tried to establish deeper connections with the municipal government and with the Regional Development Agency in order to include all crucial decision-makers in workshop discussion. Basing on the selected topics, we invited stakeholders from various institutions:

- The mayor of the municipality;
- Officials responsible for the economy, environment, and social matters;
- Local communities, societies, and associations;
- The Regional Development Agency;
- NGOs;
- The local chamber of crafts;
- Important companies;
- Members of all crucial political parties.

NGOs responded with the least enthusiasm: only two members attended the workshops. On the other hand, representatives of local communities responded quite strongly.

5.2.3 Moderation team activities and stakeholder feedback

Context Analysis and SWOT Analysis

The Context Analysis was based on indicators that had been selected in previous phases of DIAMONT project. This analysis was carried out according to three thematic areas:

- Productive environment;
- Human resources;
- Basic infrastructure.

The purpose of the Context Analysis was support for the SWOT Analysis, which was also performed separately for each of the above thematic areas. The results of both analyses were confronted with stakeholders' opinions on current problems and future development in Idrija at both workshops.

The SWOT Analysis yielded the following results:

Strengths

Idrija is characterized by a long mining tradition. Once this ended, it was forced to open up to other countries, establish business contacts with the global market, be flexible and adapt to market conditions. All this led to Idrija's early establishment as a strong center of technical knowledge. A pronounced technological orientation remained after mining activities ceased. Thanks to its industry, Idrija is an important employment center offering job opportunities to both local people and people from the neighbouring countryside. Specialization - initially in mining, now in electrical appliances - is the reason why people do not depend substantially on agriculture. In any case, natural conditions are not favourable for farming.

Idrija's current industry has mainly been export-oriented. Its specific historical development caused the formation of a creative milieu featuring openness to new ideas and knowledge, strong interpersonal relations, a high level of communication, solidarity, strong identity, sense of belonging, active participation in civil society, and intense interpersonal contacts.

Economic success has been reflected in favourable social development because, despite the unfavourable natural conditions, the inhabitants remain in the Region. Because Idrija was never a source of out-migration, it has quite a stable population structure, which implies a relatively balanced age structure.

Idrija Region is also a promising tourist destination due to its considerably well-preserved natural features and rich technological heritage. Its heavily forested land offers great potential for renewable energy (biomass).

The fact that the population is concentrated in a relatively small area, within several centres located along main traffic axes, appears to be favourable for infrastructure development.

Weaknesses

Idrija's high economic development was accompanied by a number of negative effects: mono-structural orientation, high dependency on existing enterprises, low level of self-employment and lack of entrepreneurship. The service sector is poorly represented, mostly due to limited employment opportunities for highly educated people in fields other than engineering. Tourism is poorly developed, capacities are weak and the Region has not clearly emerged as a tourist destination.

In the long run, this could lead to an unfavourable economic situation exacerbated by poor accessibility, insufficient infrastructure, isolation, poor road system and low transport speeds. Better conditions cannot be expected due to limited opportunities for building (lack of space) and for better transport connections, and the high cost of road construction. Significant investment in infrastructure is a must if this Region intends to maintain its favourable economic situation. Prudent development of infrastructure is all the more necessary since the municipality faces a lack of suitable industrial areas.

Opportunities

Idrija is not so remote; provided suitable connections are constructed, it could be actively included in development currents. It could also be connected with research centres in Ljubljana in order to improve its capacities. The area's relatively high share of university students could be of great benefit, but at the same time self-employment spirit should be promoted. By encouraging labour force transfers, the knowledge flow could grow more intense and lead to additional innovative capacities. Cooperation between enterprises should be strengthened based on clustering advantages.

Threats

A possible collapse of local economy could result in several catastrophic outcomes; under the worst circumstances this could lead to depopulation of the area. An additional problem could be lack of space and limited commuter hinterland, which could result in enterprise relocation to other areas. Due to overspecialization, this area is prone to structural crises.

Existing/potential problems and conflicts

The Context Analysis and results of the first workshop provided important information on existing and potential problems and conflicts in Idrija, which served as starting points for the second workshop. The greatest conflict sources in the Region are the following:

Spatial planning

The economic efficiency of large enterprises and their desire for expansion, the ever-increasing demand for labour and the request for reasonable amount of residential buildings, a small area suitable for intensive agriculture on the one hand and spatial limitations on the other emphasize the importance of spatial planning, which must be carefully devised. The anticipated conflicts require participation of all stakeholders.

Financing infrastructure projects

Better infrastructure is part of local community, economy, agriculture, and tourism's interests due to the area's geographical isolation. Satisfactory accessibility will require major financial input, which raises the question of who will provide it.

Interregional cooperation

Interregional cooperation is of great importance when it comes to major projects. Should the region seek opportunities for cooperation with the capital, Ljubljana, or should it rather strengthen relations and cooperation with neighbouring regions?

Socioeconomic inequality between Idrija and the adjacent countryside

Municipality of Idrija is divided on two diverse development areas: the town and the rest of the municipality. Hilly countryside mostly faces weaker infrastructure and accessibility accompanied with worse supply.

Possible strategies and instruments to address problem/conflict resolution

In the second workshop we discussed two strategies of great importance for future development and prevention of potential socioeconomic crises in case of recession in Idrija. Both are strongly linked to risky mono-structural economy, unsatisfactory accessibility, weak interregional cooperation, and land-use management.

Tourism development strategy

At the first meeting, stakeholders expressed the need to work out a tourism strategy and then put it into practice. At the second meeting we established the points of departure and framework for creating the strategy. Idrija has great tourism potential based on its technical mining heritage, remarkable natural sites, and long tradition of lace manufacture. Even UNESCO expressed interest in Idrija's unique technical and cultural heritage. This test region can satisfy a variegated tourist demand by offering cultural, natural, technical, and sports activities together with quality cuisine. Stakeholders would like to count on a quality selection of activities attracting high-level guests who would spend several days in the area. In addition, local residents should be mobilized in order to contribute their share to promoting tourism. Idrija is not easy to get to, so it must appeal to visitors through an attractive and variegated selection of activities. One example of such an approach is organizing half-day, one-day, or two-day programs with well-marked and advertised hiking itineraries. For example, these might include a culinary route, a route through Idrija's countryside, a mining route, and so on. Idrija has underdeveloped accommodation facilities (only 96 beds for tourists and only one small hotel), so the first step would be to set up a good hotel and private rooms where foreign and domestic guests could stay overnight. Special attention was given to inter-municipal cooperation and common tourist marketing with neighbouring municipalities because all of them are attractive and are facing the same struggle in order to keep tourists in the area for more than just one day. Stakeholders agree that tourism activities should be based at inter-municipal level: some contacts with neighbouring municipalities have already been restored. However, the key for working out a successful strategy is harmonizing the interests of all crucial stakeholders in the area.

Long-term development strategy

Stakeholders considered and provided answers to the following questions. What should Idrija's social, economic, and ecological image be like in 20 years? Which steps need to be taken in order to achieve positive results? Participants emphasized the importance of ecology. Mining has left deep environmental wounds and, even though the mine is no longer active, its rehabilitation is still in process. Some participants are worried about open spaces in town, where the pressure toward land take is very intense. They believe that the share of such spaces should not



Participants in the first Workshop in Idrija

be reduced. 63% percent of the municipality is covered by forest, thus exploitation of biomass is also a possibility for developing renewable energy sources. Current demographic trends are worrisome because the population is aging, even though the share of the elderly is lower than Slovenian average. Young people and families will remain in Idrija only if the situation stimulates an increase in self-employment rate, number of family firms and medium-size enterprises. Younger residents must have the opportunity to be educated and receive appropriate employment in Idrija, as well as to build houses or buy apartments in the region. They will also need financial help to attain independence and valuable experience from older residents, which could be obtained through intergenerational ties and social interrelation.

Public places and buildings are insufficient and in poor condition. They are important for maintaining vital face-to-face interaction and help strengthen local identity, so it is necessary to renovate them.

Insufficient accessibility affects all spheres of life and economy, from tourism to demographic changes. This is why basic infrastructure needs to be established and maintained. The town of Idrija needs to be connected with neighbouring regions and with the surrounding countryside. In the workshop, stakeholders also suggested financial sources for necessary infrastructural improvements: the municipality, the state, EU funds, and private capital in the form of public-private partnership.

The test region could also become a research center with special emphasis on mercury research and alternative psychiatry.

Idrija's isolation is perceived as a disadvantage, but speaking of organic farming this could become an advantage, especially when growing genetically unmodified crops.

Institutional concentration should remain unmodified and bureaucratic procedures should become less time-consuming, but this issue can only be resolved at the state level.

Based on the main concerns about existing and potential problems in the test region as identified by stakeholders and the Context Analysis performed by DIAMONT Slovenian partner, below we present some selected suitable instruments and best practices to be followed, assessing their specific applicability and defining terms of use. Instruments were suggested partly by stakeholders at the first meeting in June and partly afterwards by DIAMONT partner basing on the results of the first workshop.

We identified the following problems and instruments:

Instruments for strengthening weak interregional and inter-municipal cooperation

- *Regional pool of commercial areas/industrial districts (Germany),*
- *Inter-municipal business parks (Germany),*
- *Public establishment of inter-municipal cooperation (France),*
- *Contrat de Pays (France).*

Sustainable spatial development can only be achieved through stable and constructive cooperation between neighbouring municipalities. Participants are sceptical about the establishment of administrative regions, so other forms of cooperation are needed, especially addressing land-management issues.

Negative past experience is still recalled by local stakeholders. Idrija has always been a marginal area and has been treated unequally. This is why participants are very cautious and unenthusiastic about the idea of inter-municipal and interregional cooperation, unless Idrija is the center of such agreements and the respective institutions are located in the town.

The test region should strengthen connections with other stimulating employment centres in Slovenia and Friuli Venezia Giulia, particularly in the following fields:

- Mercury mining and rehabilitation of closed mines;
- Traditional lace manufacture, through establishment of an educational center, and promotion in connection with two other centres, Škofja Loka and Žiri;
- Psychiatric research;
- Cultural activities;
- Alternative energy resources management.

Idrija has traditionally been oriented toward the international market rather than the regional market; therefore it is not particularly interested in collaboration with neighbouring municipalities. Still, there exist some issues that need to be tackled at inter-municipal level: public infrastructure, energy supply, waste management, tourism, education, communication and transport infrastructure, and health service.

Instruments for resolving the lack of free space for industry and housing

- *Urban redevelopment measure (Germany),*
- *Cadastre of brownfield sites and commercial vacancies (Germany),*
- *Building-land acquisition fund (Austria).*

The town of Idrija lies in a narrow valley, surrounded by mountainous countryside. The most suitable plots of land have already been taken; therefore, it is almost impossible to construct new buildings for industry and housing. Two large enterprises in Idrija are unable to expand and the threat exists that they relocate outside the region, in an area featuring more space and easier access. Not having the opportunity to build their own house or buy an apartment pushes young families away from the municipality, mostly to the capital, Ljubljana.

Stakeholders stated that the municipality needs more space for housing, even though the number of inhabitants is stagnating and is even expected to decrease. The discussion on this issue led to the following conclusions:

- The town's housing heritage is old and in poor condition. Renovation of old buildings is expensive and it appears more practical to build a new house. The only way to induce people to preserve old architecture is to offer financial support.

- Elderly people usually live in houses that are too large and located too far from basic services (stores, health centres, banks). How can they be motivated to move into smaller and more comfortable apartments providing better access to services?
- Spatial planning in the test region is insufficient and the determination of best quality agricultural land obsolete. Urbanization should be supervised and steered through a plan approved by the municipal council.
- Many individual buildings are only partly occupied, the other part representing latent capital. Through proper tourist development, this capital could be re-activated.

Instruments for reconciling differing future development visions between local government and private sector

- New Mountain Plan (Italy).

All stakeholders - political decision-makers, economic actors, and representatives of civil society - should achieve consensus on what future development in the Region should be like and how to attain it. This task is very complex, time-consuming and ambitious, but necessary when pursuing sustainable development.

Idrija has two important and successful enterprises. Unfortunately, relations between them are strained and very competitive, so the atmosphere is not favourable to clustering and knowledge exchange. The working conditions for employees are stable and satisfactory: they do not resent from competition between the respective managements.

These enterprises are not actively involved in municipal issues unless when directly linked to production.

As far as public participation is concerned, stakeholders surprisingly agreed that in the initial steps of decision-making all stakeholders should be invited to present their points of view and receive all the information they require. However, in the operational phase the effect is likely to become inversely proportional to the number of stakeholders.

Instruments for steering urban sprawl in less fertile agricultural and riverside areas

- *Standardized formula for assessing the „organic development“ of residential areas (Germany).*

The lack of available space has caused local people to build houses in less fertile agricultural areas and even in riverside areas, but this trend must be vigorously curtailed because of natural hazards which can endanger people living in those areas as well as those living downstream. On the other hand, there are many vacant houses in poor condition in the town of Idrija that need to be renovated and repopulated.

All stakeholders agree that the classification of agricultural land is no longer up-to-date; many pastures are overgrown with brush and nobody is cultivating this land any more.

5.2.4 Conclusions

Although Idrija is not a typical Alpine municipality, it is characterized by some typical Alpine aspects such as poor accessibility and lack of space for settlement and industry. Since the main workshop focus was laid on land-use management, Idrija represents a good example of a region having problems due to rapid economic development which leads to facing certain spatial and human resource limitations. In addition, mining heritage and tourism potential based on technical background have influenced development of the Region. The effort of the municipality to rank Idrija among UNESCO destinations is opening some prospects for tourism. On the other hand, this imposes restrictions on the possibilities of re-building because all technical monuments must be protected. For this reason old buildings will have to be re-adapted in order to revitalize the town center and enable further development.

The topics selected for workshop discussion proved adequate for the Region's conditions. The lively discussion was directed toward identification of problems, conflicts and present/prospect opportunities.

Idrija will have to steer its current situation through careful land management and sustainable planning. This could prevent it from experiencing a structural crisis and assure long-term evolution into a successful high-tech economy.

Further development possibilities were discussed in the second workshop.

Idrija should strive for better care of the environment, creating quality conditions for younger people, increasing the level of self-employment and stimulating enterprise development. Idrija could also become a research and educational center in mercury-based research and alternative psychiatry. The abundance of forest in the countryside offers prospects for biomass-based renewable energy production.

Stakeholders expressed scepticism about inter-municipal cooperation because of previous mostly negative experience. Only a few topics that do require an inter-municipal cooperation are recognized.

Who can help this test region achieve the above goals from the financial point of view? Potential sources are the municipality, the state and the EU, but stakeholders will primarily have to rely on their own sense of creativity and strong will to succeed.

5.3 Immenstadt-Sonthofen (Germany)

5.3.1 The selected test region and DIAMONT participatory approach

General description

The test region of Immenstadt-Sonthofen comprises five municipalities of the southern part of the district Oberallgäu in the Southwest of the German Alpine Convention area. Kempten is the closest city of supra-regional importance and situated about 25 km to the North. The distance to Munich amounts to 155 km. The Oberallgäu is the southernmost county in Germany. To the South, the county neighbours the two Austrian federal states of Tyrol and Vorarlberg. The size of the test region is 254.46 km² with 48 373 inhabitants and an average population density of 190.1 inh/km². The altitude of Immenstadt im Allgäu is 732 m asl, of Sonthofen 745 m asl.

The delimitation of the test region corresponds with the recent delimitation of the so-called Alpsee-Grünten Alliance being an inter-municipal cooperation entity concerned with tourism marketing. The Alliance is named after two very characteristic sites of the region: the Alpsee is one of the largest lakes in the Allgäu region; the mount Grünten (1 738m asl) is one of the northernmost mountains of the Allgäu Alps.

The topography of the test region only allows one transport connection by road to Austria, namely to the Bregenzer Wald region via Balderschwang. Train connections to Austria do not exist. The situation thus resembles a cul-de-sac. Connections to the supra-regional transport system are not very well developed. The main road connection to Kempten and the motorway A7 to the North is the B19 (southbound, this road ends in the Kleinwalsertal). In East-West direction, the B308/310 connect the Alpsee-Grünten region to Lindau and Füssen. The train network is limited to a northbound connection to Kempten.

Characteristics of the municipalities in the test region

The results of the performed Context Analysis show a distinct subdivision of functions between the municipalities of the region Alpee-Grünten. This is also underlined by the results of a Cluster Analysis which has been carried out to classify the municipalities in the Alpine space according to their development.

Sonthofen: traditional centre for administrative functions, high share of jobs in the third sector, highest share of jobs in urban branches, highest population density and highest share of area used for settlement and infrastructure, rather high real estate prices; however: decreasing number of workplaces, rather low and further declining employment rate, negative population development, strong ageing tendencies.

Immenstadt: economic centre of the region offering most of the working places (55.7% in the production sector), therefore high number of employees commuting into Immenstadt, highest density of enterprises, largest enterprises; however: continuous ageing of the population.

Blaichach: characterised by industrial influences, very high share of employees in the production sector (76.6%), high share of investments in the municipality and generally good financial position regarding tax revenues and indebtedness, certain importance as place of living for employees of Sonthofen and Immenstadt (rather high share of employees commuting to these municipalities), rather high real estate prices, continuous immigration; however: declining provision of jobs.

Burgberg: land resources being already scarce, existing potentials intensively used, rather high population density and rather high real estate prices, but only few workplaces, employment situation declining, relatively few and small firms, high share of people commuting to Sonthofen or Immenstadt, population tending to move away from Burgberg.

Rettenberg: most rural municipality of the Region, highest number and density of farms, only few and relatively small enterprises, low number of jobs in urban branches, low and further declining number of workplaces, very tense financial situation of the municipality (low tax revenues and very high indebtedness), gaining in importance as living municipality for employees of Immenstadt and Sonthofen, strong increase in population, strongest increase in area used for residential purposes.

Substantiation of choice and participatory approach

The test region Alpsee-Grünten was selected due to its following characteristics:

- The core towns of the region (Immenstadt and Sonthofen) are situated in the actual Alpine region, therefore it can be expected that the Region has to face the “typical” Alpine problems of regional development.
- Immediate influences by the Munich agglomeration do not exist.
- A cooperation between the municipalities of the Region already exists, since they are incorporated into the Alpsee-Grünten Alliance. The cooperation is still limited to the tourism sector where the municipalities have a joint budget for concerted public relation work. Nevertheless, this alliance could be the basis for a more extended cooperation.
- The five municipalities are involved in the current LEADER-process of the county of Oberallgäu. In this context a regional development concept is currently being developed. Therefore the local stakeholders are interested in the discussion on possible perspectives for regional development and on possibilities for steering development by means of instruments. Thus, the realisation of the workshops in the test region is not only carried out as a part of DIAMONT-project but can also factually contribute to the current development processes in the region.
- The local stakeholders expressed their interest in realizing the workshops.

The workshops were intended to be workshops of and for the Region. The DIAMONT project was seen as an adequate framework for discussion in the Region, but local conditions, problems and customs should strictly be respected. It was decisive for realizing the workshops in this Region, that relevant stakeholders expressed their great interest from the beginning of the workshop preparation phase. In order to strengthen the ties of the workshops to the Region, it has been decided to commit parts of the workshop organisation to the mayoralties of Immenstadt (for the 1st workshop) and Sonthofen (for the 2nd workshop). They coordinated the date for the two workshops, sent out the invitations and helped with other details of preparation. As a consequence the mayors were present in the workshops, and the participants developed a strong empathy with this joint adventure.

5.3.2 The Workshops

Workshop methodology: putting into practice

The methodology of both workshops was strictly oriented on the World Café Method as agreed with all DIAMONT partners:

- We created a good discussion atmosphere by inviting the participants for coffee and snacks.
- The participants changed tables after the respective discussion rounds to avoid deadlocked discussion. The changing process was guided by chance.
- All results of the workshops were documented using cards and pin-boards according to the Metaplan technique.

The detailed organisation of the workshops was guided by the following principles:

- We tried to inspire the discussion from an integrative point of view, avoiding the formation of sectoral thematic sub-groups, whose results are often difficult to amalgamate afterwards. Due to the complex questions, it has been decided to offer only three rounds, but to give more time for discussion (40 - 45 minutes per round).
- All participants should deal with the same set of questions in order to integrate all of them in the whole discussion procedure and get a view as broad as possible on the topics discussed.
- The rounds should build up on each other thematically in order to create a continuous discussion flow. The people remaining seated on the table were responsible to preserve continuity.
- The discussion in the sub-groups should be strictly governed by the participants themselves to ensure that we really catch the opinions, visions and perspectives of the local people. Therefore the table moderators were recruited exclusively among the participants, and the participants themselves had to present the results of their discussion.



Short input

Group discussion

Plenary session

Closure

The moderation team consisted of three persons, two members of DIAMONT-project team (Bosch & Partner GmbH) and one external moderator, who is well known in the region and professional in moderation techniques.

Both workshops were structured in the same way:

Table 5-7: Structure of the workshops

	1 st Workshop (9.00 - 12.30)	2 nd Workshop (9.00 - 13.00)
Short input by the moderation team	Information on INTERREG and DIAMONT presentation of Context Analysis ("Fitness Check" for Alpsee-Grünten)	Results of the 1 st workshop presentation of instruments
Group discussions	Three rounds of discussion	
Plenum	Summary of results by participants	
Closure	General summary by the main moderator	
	Perspectives for 2 nd workshop	Next steps: How to continue the process?

Characterization of participating stakeholders

We consciously restricted the participants primarily to members of the local government and the public sector. As the discussion was focused on inter-municipal cooperation and the better planning and management of industrial and commercial areas, creating a "protected" atmosphere seemed to be important for facilitating a close exchange between the mayors and the representatives of the building authorities. This should create a good basis for subsequent discussion in a wider circle of participants.

16 persons participated in the 1st workshop. All municipalities were represented also by their mayors and members of the municipal administration (especially main offices, building authorities, department of business development). In the 2nd workshop the same group shared the discussion with three exceptions, but the five municipalities were represented, anyway.

Due to the broad participation of mayors the decisions taken during the workshops especially concerning the follow-up of the process have binding character.

5.3.3 Moderation team activities and stakeholder feedback

The main focus of the 1st workshop was

- to discuss the results of the “Fitness Check” (detailed Context Analysis) carried out as preparation for the workshop and to identify the main constraints of sustainable development in the Region;
- to especially discuss the impulses necessary to foster competitiveness of the Alpsee-Grünten Region;
- to think about strategies for a closer inter-municipal cooperation.

The main focus of the 2nd workshop was

- to develop first ideas of an economic development profile describing the specific strengths and opportunities for the Region;
- to further specify the discussion on recent supply and (future) demand of areas for development (especially commercial and industrial areas and the associated infrastructure);
- to discuss instruments for steering spatial development, which comprise elements of inter-municipal cooperation.

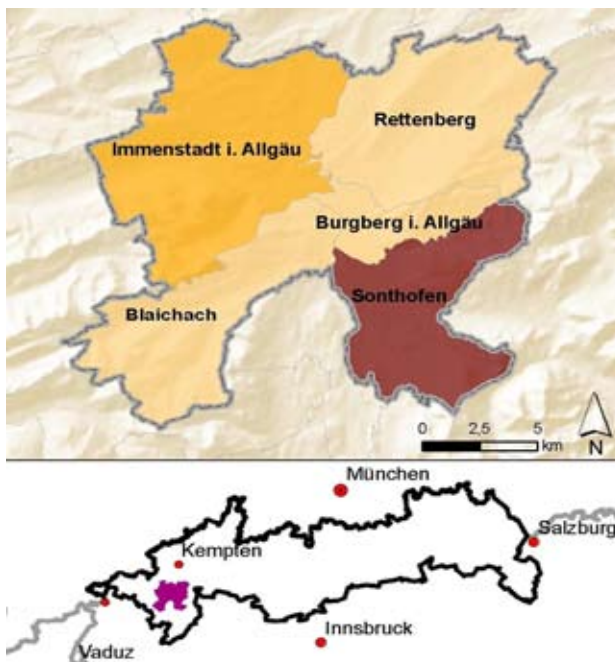


Fig. 5-6: Position of the Immenstadt-Sonthofen test region

Existing/potential problems and conflicts

Input:

As input for the discussion on existing and potential problems in the region a comprehensive analysis of municipal data was carried out describing:

- the economic situation (as sectoral structure, indebtedness and tax revenues, number of enterprises, situation in tourism, number of - part-time and full-time - farms, number of high qualified workers, etc.);
- the human resources (as population change, demographic aging, changes in labour market, etc.);
- the basic infrastructure (as transport infrastructure, change in development area, change in area used for dwelling and industrial / commercial purposes, etc.),
- the commuter relations in the wider region (including the county-free city of Kempten in the North of the county).

Discussion and Results:

The participants confirmed the main problems identified in the course of the Context Analysis:

- The population is aging. Young people leave the region for finding better professional opportunities. Qualified working places are missing in the region.
- At the moment, the industrial economy strongly depends on only few big enterprises. This implies big risks for the regional economy as a whole. It is very difficult to attract new firms, amongst others owing to the big competing power of the northern municipalities (Kempten and its surrounding municipalities).
- The high real estate prices hinder development.
- There exists a great scarcity of available land. Especially flooding prevention requires extensive areas being not available for development purposes.
- The high indebtedness of some municipalities strongly restricts leeway for action.
- Tourism is still in the main focus of the regional economic development, but the whole sector has only limited economic output. The investment activities in tourism are not sufficiently coordinated (lack of a common strategy of the municipalities).

- A big part of the population is seen as being too passive and steady state-oriented and not aware of the future challenges for the Region. They strongly confront a more active industrial and commercial development and do not have any eye for future risks and problems, which the particular economic structure in the region implies.
- There is still too much competition between the municipalities within the region. They compete for attracting enterprises instead of struggling for maintaining the economic power in the region. These conflicts constrict economic development instead of fostering competitiveness of the region as a whole.

Possible strategies to address problem/conflict resolution

Two basic strategies have been discussed during both workshops:

1. improving the knowledge base concerning present and potential supply and demand for commercial and industrial areas, including a more specific concept of how the region can better present its specific strengths and better focus future activities on further developing the business location of Alpsee-Grünten (developing an “economic development profile”);
2. strengthening inter-municipal cooperation within the Alpsee-Grünten region in the perspective of subsequently enlarging this cooperation both spatially and thematically.

Input:

As input for the discussion on an “economic development profile” and as starting point for a systematic analysis of the areas available and necessary for further development, Bosch & Partner prepared a comprehensive map displaying the potential areas for commercial and industrial development in the five municipalities. The basic information for this map was provided by the workshop participants during the preparatory phase of the 2nd workshop. This map was studied and discussed by the participants during the 2nd workshop.

The input for discussing possible strategies for more intensive cooperation was more indirect. By presenting the concept of Labour Market Regions or Urban Areas¹⁰ respectively, and the analysis of commuter relations in the broader region of Kempten, Sonthofen and Immenstadt

¹⁰ Urban Areas based on commuter data were delimited for the German Alpine area in order to better consider the influence of the very well developed system of public transport in the area and the strong influence of the Munich agglomeration.

in the 1st workshop, the participants were sensitised for the necessity of thinking in terms not only of the local context of their own municipality, but rather of the interdependencies existing within the Region. Furthermore, the selection of the test region as coinciding with the Alpsee-Grünten Alliance provided a perfect basis for discussing more effectively the possible options for a thematically extended cooperation of the municipalities within this alliance.

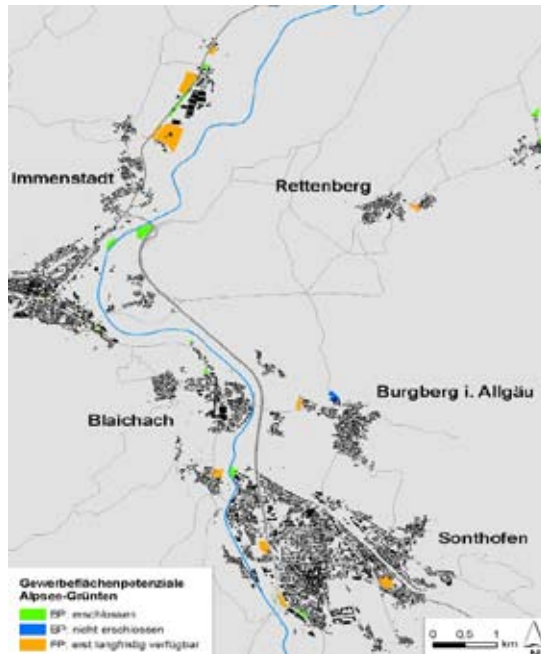


Fig. 5-7: Potential areas for commercial and industrial development in the test region

Discussion and Results:

Ad 1)

The necessity for further discussion on the supply and demand for commercial and industrial areas had already been identified during the 1st workshop. Therefore this issue was picked up as one of the main topics to be discussed in the 2nd workshop. The participants agreed that by focusing only on tourism the Region will not be able to improve its economic situation; in contrast it should be avoided that investing in tourism becomes a bottomless pit. The development of industry, trade and services will be indispensable for creating long-term perspectives. But the municipalities are badly prepared to cope with these challenges. Presently

decision makers do not have any specific information on the demand that resident or new enterprises have for future expanding or establishing, or on the potential the region still has or could further develop.

Closely linked with this diagnosis the following more concrete questions were formulated by the participants especially during the 1st workshop:

- How can contacts with resident enterprises be intensified in order to become well informed on their future demand of land and infrastructure?
- Which specific profile could the region develop in order to attract new firms in a more strategic and goal-oriented manner? Which sectors should be strengthened based on the existing business structure by following a cluster strategy¹¹?
- How can the region make better use of its potential of areas for development? How can the areas already used or designated for industrial and commercial purposes be characterised or classified (e.g. according to their specific suitability and their current stock of enterprises)?
- How can the municipalities better cooperate in order to provide more attractive areas on the one hand and to preserve the scarce resources on the other hand?

The 2nd workshop tried to tackle some of these open questions by

- delineating some first ideas for an economic development profile for the region, and
- qualifying the present provision of commercial and industrial areas in the municipal land use and construction plans.

From the discussion on an economic development profile some ideas resulted such as:

- centre of excellence for wood, forestry, biomass energy and wood processing (basing on the “green centre” in Immenstadt),
- cluster of electro-techniques and mechanical engineering (based on the already existing firms),
- cluster on dairy farming,
- service sectors (without more specification),
- education and training (in contact with the university of applied sciences in Kempten).

¹¹ Cluster is interpreted here as a loose, geographically bounded collection of similar and/or related firms that together create competitive advantages for member firms and the regional economy.

On the whole the participants found out that really innovative and promising ideas are still missing, and they became aware that more discussion on these topics would urgently be necessary. They also noted that inter-municipal exchange is indispensable for making progress in such a discussion.

From a first and rough qualification of the areas designated for industrial and commercial development it resulted that:

- the areas being presently available are very small, dispersed and insufficiently developed in infrastructure;
- these small areas are only attractive for small-sized trade and handi-craft businesses;
- few areas being more extensive are only designated in long-term planning;
- all areas are strongly concentrated along the National Highways B19 and B308;
- in some cases the development of these areas will be in conflict with nature protection and conservation of landscape amenities;
- an inter-municipal industrial and commercial area could possibly provide a more attractive business place but will not be the final solution for the existing problems.



Vivid discussion on areas designated for industrial and commercial development in the 2nd workshop

In general, participants asked for more active and goal-oriented business development in the Region. It is not satisfying that the responsible authorities confine themselves to providing subsidies. They should be much more active in steering development and fostering communication between the municipalities and the local economy. At the moment the position for business development in the District Office does not seem adequately filled. A professional (possibly external) analysis of the areas and potentials and the management of these areas are urgently needed.

Ad 2)

In view of the problems the region presently is facing and is expecting to face in the future, already in the 1st workshop all the participants agreed that without a more intensive cooperation between the municipalities and without a larger vision for the future there will be no perspectives for the region in the long run. Due to the presence of the mayors in both workshops, this common and unanimous expression of willingness to cooperate can be interpreted as serious. This was also proved by the fact, that at the end of the 2nd workshop the participants fixed further concrete steps beyond DIAMONT workshops in order to continue the process and not lose the valuable results already achieved with the workshops.

The participants also agreed that a closer cooperation of the five municipalities, already working together within the Alpsee-Grünten Alliance, could be a good basis for future intra-regional cooperation on a larger scale. Due to the functional interactions going beyond the spatial limits of the five municipalities, the necessity to enlarge the cooperation and include especially the northern municipalities around Kempten generally exists. Nevertheless such a widened cooperation still seems very ambitious (a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush). It was an often-mentioned statement in the workshop that planning and cooperating on too large a scale hinders concrete action (see chap. 5.3.4).

In the 1st workshop the participants voted for institutionalising the cooperation e.g. by establishing a Regional Development Agency coordinating common activities as well as structuring and intensifying the marketing for the region. The head of the county authority was addressed to get more strongly involved as a catalyser of inter-municipal cooperation within the region. In the 2nd workshop these statements were re-affirmed in general. Nevertheless, the participants developed a more realistic

vision by proposing to commit all further steps to a working group at the end of the workshop. This working group shall be joined by selected representatives of all municipalities. The representatives will be in charge to inform the municipal councils about the process started in the DIAMONT workshops, to coordinate further activities and provide some necessary fundamentals for decision making. The chair of the working group was already appointed during the workshop and concrete dates for further meetings have been fixed. It seems that, by delving more into the challenges of cooperation, the participants detected that the devil of inter-municipal cooperation is in detail management.

Instruments and best practices to be possibly adopted/followed

Input:

The discussion on possible instruments for steering regional development took place in the 2nd workshop. At the end of the 1st workshop the participants asked for being provided input by the moderation team concerning instruments and best practice examples on steering industrial and commercial development and managing scarce land resources, in order to make development options more vivid and comprehensible. As the topic of inter-municipal cooperation had been so strongly highlighted in the 1st workshop, the moderation team decided to work primarily on instruments comprising elements of inter-municipal cooperation. Given this background the following instruments were presented as input for the 2nd workshop:

1. Inter-municipal Location Marketing (exemplified by the region of Pillerseetal / Tyrol, Austria),
2. Regional pool of commercial areas (exemplified by the regional association of planning in Neckar-Alb / Baden-Württemberg, Germany),
3. Regional land use plan (exemplified by the region of Rhein-Ruhr / Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany and SCOT for the Métropole Savoie / France).

Ad 1)

The Inter-municipal Location Marketing has to be interpreted more as a strategy than as an instrument. The region of Pillerseetal Tyrol (including six municipalities) started a comprehensive initiative for better characterization and marketing of the region as economic location. It

aims to keep the revenues and purchasing power in the region, bring the existing business potential to the market and develop a common strategy for marketing commercial and industrial areas. Important steps are inter alia:

- carrying out a systematic analysis on the existing business structure and the availability of areas for development,
- realizing a competitor analysis,
- establishing a suitable institutional structure for concerted marketing,
- checking which instruments could be suitable for steering regional development.

The exemplary strategy of Pillerseetal attracted wide interest from the participants. They adopted the idea that a more comprehensive strategy will be necessary to solve the problems of their region. Nevertheless, they also became aware that by agreeing on such a procedure a lot of preparatory work would have to be done. The problems of the Pillerseetal region are rather similar to those in Immenstadt-Sonthofen, therefore the example of Pillersee could be used to reflect on first steps in this direction.

Ad 2)

The regional pool of commercial areas is a new instrument, not yet established on a broad basis; it can be interpreted as the further development of the idea of inter-municipal industrial and commercial areas (with common marketing). Indeed the latter contributes to a more coordinated management of land resources in regions where availability of suitable areas is very limited and the existing areas for development are not sufficiently prepared for a higher demand; but inter-municipal industrial and commercial areas do not solve the problem of insufficient coordination of supply and demand, therefore this instrument did not prove successful in all cases. In contrast, the regional pool of industrial and commercial areas is a more comprehensive approach aiming to provide solutions tailored to the market needs. The pool includes the areas offered or designated by several municipalities; the bigger the pool is, the larger and more diverse and attractive is the offer. We explained the legal and organisational procedure using the example of Neckar-Alb, where a regional association of planning manages the pool. Important elements of the implementation are an independent valuation of all pooled areas, a common financial balance of risks and a fair distribution of industrial taxes proportional to the values contributed to by each pool-partner.

The pooling concept was of great interest for the participants. The structural concept could convince. Nevertheless the question arose, if a pool can also be established and become sufficiently attractive having only few areas to contribute. The participants agreed that pooling could be a great opportunity, but an external moderator would be needed to help the municipalities overcome their competition.

Ad 3)

The regional land use plan was presented to inspire the discussion on better coordination of municipal land use plans. Discussing on these, the participants confirmed that the municipal planning authorities are actively working with land use plans even if they are not available yet in digital form. Nevertheless, they admitted that the steering power of these plans is limited: in case of residential areas there is a rather strict compliance to the specifications contained in the land use plans, whereas in case of commercial and industrial areas the plans are often adapted ex-post to arising demands.

The concerted development of land use plans for several municipalities at regional level was seen as attractive in general. But participants made some reservation and saw a lot of problems coming along with such a procedure. They still see that the interests and preconditions of each municipality within the Alsee-Grünten Region are rather different. This is different from the example of Rhein-Ruhr, which was presented as input, where the conditions of the participating municipalities are apparently much more similar. Somebody also commented that on the one hand the Regional Plan (overcoming the limits of the single municipalities) is not sufficiently consulted by the municipal planning authorities, but on the other hand it often proves poorly useful because the level of regulation is too unspecific and the contents scarcely linked with the regulations at municipal level.

5.3.4 Conclusions, lessons learned

Both workshops in Immenstadt-Sonthofen have been developed following a strong participatory and bottom-up approach, beginning with workshop preparation and organisation, which were strongly supported by the mayoralities of Immenstadt and Sonthofen, then moderation, which aimed to strictly limit the input and activate intensive discussion between participants, up to the closure, when the participants' ideas and initiatives have been taken up for supporting a well-structured follow-up procedure.

The discussion was very fruitful and the participants very enthusiastic. The moderation team got very positive feedback. The workshops offered a platform for overdue discussion on a more coordinated regional development strategy.

The fact that in the first workshop the participants came to an agreement on establishing a Regional Development Agency in such an easy and straightforward manner made us somewhat sceptical. Therefore for the 2nd workshop the strategy was chosen so as to go deeper into details and specify problems and ideas for solutions. The discussion in the 2nd workshop proved not at all less intensive and dedicated, but showed that concrete concepts and strategic ideas are still missing. This was a very important experience for all participants and finally let them draw the conclusion that the process should imperatively be continued. Given this background the group decided to set up a working group with representatives from the five municipalities in order to structure the further process. The chair of the working group was appointed at the end of the 2nd workshop, and some concrete steps were decided on the following: at the end of October the municipal councils should be informed about the workshop results and the ongoing process; at the same time all municipalities should nominate representatives for the working group; the group should meet for the first time in mid-November. Due to the very active participation of the mayors of the five municipalities it can be expected that the results of both workshops will be of political relevance.

It has been confirmed by participants that the spatial level of the Alpsee-Grünten region is very suitable for discussing topics of regional development and inter-municipal cooperation. They agreed that on the long run a spatially extended context should be pursued. But for the time being it makes already a big challenge to develop a common strategy at this lower level.

The appropriate spatial level for discussing problems of regional development and for developing feasible strategies was frequently debated within DIAMONT. The Labour Market Regions (LMR), developed by DIAMONT, are seen as a suitable concept to delimit such spatial units. In Bavaria there are in general four possible levels of planning and decision making in the regional context:

1. the planning regions - at this level the "Regional Plans" are elaborated;
2. the territories ("Teilträume"), which are defined depending on the specific problem constellations of municipalities or districts within a region - sometimes the territories have been delimited in accordance with the counties, sometimes they cover several counties, sometimes

- only parts of different counties - at this level the so-called “Problem-oriented Territorial Reports” (Teilraumgutachten) are elaborated, until now not being available for the whole of Bavaria;
3. the counties (“Landkreise”) - not being units for spatial planning but often referred to for developing intra-regional strategies;
 4. the municipalities - having core planning authority, municipal land use plans and construction plans are elaborated at this level.



Fig. 5-8: Delimitation of the Urban Area and Labour Market Region of Immenstadt-Sonthofen

It is often criticised that regions and territories are too large to propose development strategies being sufficiently concrete for implementation. The territories, moreover, often comprise municipalities with very different structures, problems and preconditions for action. At the same time the municipalities are seen as too small for developing concepts meeting future requirements. DIAMONT LMR lie in between, they try to embrace municipalities showing functional interrelations. In the case of Immenstadt-Sonthofen we worked within the limits of a LMR. In order to get a more precise description of functional relations, the commuter data have been analysed to delimit so-called Urban Areas in the German Alpine

Convention area. Sometimes, also in the case of Immenstadt-Sonthofen, they are smaller than the LMR. The area covered by the Alpsee-Grünten Alliance is once again smaller than the Urban Area, since it comprises only five municipalities. The conclusion is that in general the LMR could be an appropriate spatial category to discuss on regional development. Nevertheless the delimitation has to be critically revised or sharpened in concrete cases using more specific criteria on functional relations.

In the 1st workshop we promoted DIAMONT transnational approach, announcing that, in the 2nd workshop, we would give input on instruments used and strategies applied in other Alpine countries. We did so by presenting the strategy for an “Economic Development Profile” in Tyrol and mentioning the French SCOT (Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale) having similarities to the regional land use plan in Germany. Our impression was that it was rather difficult for the participants to assimilate the SCOT, as the French planning system is very different from the German one. In contrast, they felt attracted by the Tyrolean project. A more intensive discussion on the peculiarities of different instruments and country-specific preconditions could have possibly opened stronger transnational perspectives.

“The workshops acted as a perfect start-up for further activities on inter-municipal cooperation. By actively participating in the workshops, the mayors expressed their willingness for stronger cooperation in the future”.



Hubert Buhl, First Mayor of Sonthofen giving his final statement

5.4 Tolmezzo (Italy)

5.4.1 The selected test region and DIAMONT participatory approach

The area centred on the municipality of Tolmezzo (easternmost Italian Alps) exhibits both a good representativeness within the (national) Alpine context and a specific appeal in the framework of DIAMONT 'field' activities.

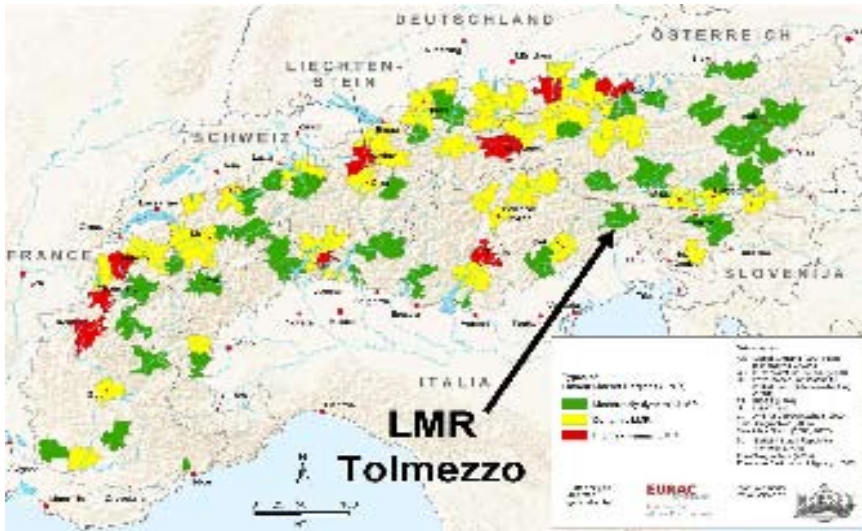


Fig. 5-9: Labour Market Regions

See Table 8, containing a descriptive outline of the area: it appears to be particularly attractive with a view to encourage/test the implementation of sustainable development policies; refer also to both the SWOT Analysis results, providing a summary assessment of present and prospect conditions, and the Indicator Analysis, which quantifies present conditions and establishes comparisons with wider-scale settings (see Tables 9 and 10).

In the area, many municipalities are so small that they chronically suffer from scarce opportunities of creating jobs, cooperation, more complex visions. This has been the main issue DIAMONT moderation team has striven to cover by submitting identified instruments and resolution strategies to stakeholders' scrutiny during the two workshops.

Yet, one bigger problem looms in the background: this land is perceived as a place to be abandoned: from Tolmezzo area it is too short a distance to the downstream flatlands, which have a very strong attraction thanks to the opportunities they can offer.

The basis for selection of the municipalities to be included into the Italian test region has been provided by EURAC's Alpine-wide analysis (see chapter 2.2): the 17 municipalities surrounding the core town of Tolmezzo make up the Labour Market Region of Tolmezzo which coincides with the test region. According to a number of selected indicators, Tolmezzo LMR has been classified of the stagnating type (as opposed to the dynamic and highly dynamic types), which is the type to be most frequently found among LMRs in the Italian Alps.

The area is part of the Province (county) of Udine, the biggest of the four provinces into which the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia is subdivided.



Fig. 5-10: Test region location

One further subdivision exists: the so-called Mountain Communities (sub-counties made up exclusively of mountain municipalities). The Mountain Community of Carnia includes the whole test region, the only exception being the municipality of Moggio Udinese, included into the neighbouring Gemonese Mountain Community.

Besides, Carnia happens to be a well-known historical region, featuring a strong distinctive character and identity, which have been somehow preserved throughout the centuries and the successive Venetian, Austrian and Italian rules.

Table 5-8: Summary description of the Italian test region's main features

Test region	Name:	Labour Market Region of Tolmezzo	
Basic characteristics of test region	Name of municipalities included	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tolmezzo (core) 2. Amaro 3. Arta Terme 4. Cavazzo Carnico 5. Cercivento 6. Enemonzo 7. Lauco 8. Moggio Udinese 9. Ovaro 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Paluzza 11. Preone 12. Raveo 13. Socchieve 14. Sutrio 15. Treppo Carnico 16. Verzegnis 17. Villa Santina 18. Zuglio
	Area size Median altitude Population (n°) Population density	<p>736.9 km² 417 m asl (573 m asl for all the Italian Alps ; 600 m asl for all the Alps) 31 943 (31/12/2005) 43.3 inh/km² (FVG Federal Region: 154.1)</p>	
	Environment and historical heritage	<p>The area comprises sections of the valleys of the Tagliamento river and its tributaries: although anthropogenic perturbation exists, this river network represents one of the very few instances in all the Alps still bearing remarkably pristine character from headwaters to outlet. The area is characterized by a high variety of vegetation types, featuring a number of endemic and rare species. Due to low anthropogenic pressure and contiguity with areas of great ecological value (Slovenia and Carinthia), the wildlife heritage is rather rich and exhibits a high biodiversity. The disastrous earthquake occurred in 1976 caused devastation in some parts of the area. The reconstruction has changed the landscape (modern buildings). Part of the historical heritage has been lost. The A23 motorway (Venice-Vienna) follows the course of the river Fella impacting on the narrow valley.</p>	

Continuation Table 5-8: Summary description of the Italian test region's main features

<p>Basic characteristics of test region</p>	<p>Economy and society</p>	<p>Since the middle of the last century, the area has been exhibiting a constant, in some cases sharp, decline in the number of inhabitants. Only the valley bottom settlements, (Tolmezzo, Arta Terme, Amaro), where services and economic activities are located, have been maintaining and in some cases increasing their population; it should be noted, however, that such increases appear to be lower than during the previous decades. The agriculture (mostly traditional-type) exhibits a constant decline, while tourism faces problems stemming from: 1) insufficient awareness of the environmental potential of the area; 2) the relatively low altitude of the mountains coupled with climate change (lack of snow) affecting the ski infrastructure.</p> <p>Concerning transportation, the main roads are supplemented by a well-developed network of secondary roads. The railway system in the area is based on a line linking Udine to Tarvisio; nowadays, it is used mainly for goods transport: since a decade, a lot of secondary stations have been closed making it more difficult for local population to use the train. There is a well developed network of public buses; its core is the town of Tolmezzo, connected to Udine by frequent service; reaching other destinations in the valley, on the other hand, can take a lot of time due to low-frequency connections.</p> <p>The cultural heritage keeps some importance, esp. related to the language (Friulian is not considered as a mere dialect); some religious rites have almost disappeared, together with the rural civilization they were part of, but some processions have survived (e.g., the Kiss of the Crosses at Zuglio).</p>
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Table 5-9: Summary SWOT Analysis

Strengths	<p>Strong environmental assets Strong cultural identity Widespread awareness of public participation issues</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Lack of holistic and systemic vision on the part of decision-makers Actual centralisation and lack of transparency in decision-making Municipalities often undersized, also due to long-lasting depopulation Impairment of natural streamflow regime Accessibility and isolation: not so much geographic as cultural and related to exchange of information and availability of services</p>
Opportunities	<p>Enhancement of environmental assets: development of environmental tourism Development of IT services as a way to overcome isolation Spontaneous interest groups clearly reveal local social needs which should be acknowledged by decision-makers.</p>
Threats	<p>Persistence of outdated, sectoral and unshared visions on development and vocation of the area Persistence of centralised and scarcely transparent decision-making Becoming a region of mere transit, crossed by (heavy-impacting) supra-regional infrastructure</p>
Problems relevant for land use management	<p>Land take: linear infrastructure (highways, high-voltage power lines); hydropower; pervasive mountain tourism Tourism suffers from being scarcely profitable when based mostly on second houses. Conservation of historical heritage</p>
Priorities (proposed solutions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder councils should be acknowledged as effective tools to solve conflicts and avoid bureaucracy bottlenecks; the local media should provide information on these tools. • Education providers should act as demand-stimulators towards new professionalism. • Concerning agriculture, European/regional incentives should clearly and comprehensively promote land protection and environmental enhancement: the scheduled revisions of the existing programming sectoral tools should be steered accordingly. • The establishment of a Biosphere Reserve encompassing the Tagliamento watershed should provide a framework to ease implementation of the 'Environment as Development' concept. • Introduction of green hydropower quality labelling to encourage compliance to environmental standards: one good example to follow could be the Swiss approach, featuring the participation of a renowned scientific institution acting as a moderator between hydropower producers and environmental organisations. • Public transportation should be optimized, adapted to changing needs and encouraged against private mobility.

Items in bold derive from stakeholders' feedback.

In the end, identifying the municipalities making up the test region basing on mere functional criteria, as through the LMR approach, can be judged only partly satisfactory in this case: cultural ties exist (but long-lasting competition as well!) encompassing a wider area. On the other hand, extending stakeholder participation up to the full 28 municipalities making up Carnia MC (and possibly the additional 7 ones located in the adjacent Canal del Ferro valley) would have proved hard to manage, and probably unfruitful. This is why UNCEM team decided to strike a compromise by accepting LMR boundaries when preparing the Context Analysis, but introducing at the same time some flexibility concerning workshop participation: one common thematic focus happening to be Spatial Planning, workshop 2 was extended to Interreg WAREMA project (its pilot area encompasses the overall Carnia and Canal del Ferro), so as to secure contribution from particularly active stakeholders coming from LMR-adjacent communes.



The test region “Tolmezzo”

Table 5-10: Concise Summary of test region Context Analysis

Fields	Indicators	Value	Mean value for the country (Alpine part)	Mean value for the Alps	+/- comparison IT	+/- comparison EU
Demography	Population change, %	-3.4	2.8	5.8	-	-
	Young-age-dependency ratio	0.18	0.21	0.24		
	Old-age dependency ratio	0.31	0.28	0.25		+
Labour market	Foreigners	0.011	0.030	0.071 (no De)	-	
	Employment rate (employed people - place of residence / population 15-64)	0.61	0.64	0.67 (no De)		
	Jobs per inhabitant 15-64	0.56	0.55	0.58 (no De)		
	Female employment rate 25-45	0.71	0.70	0.74 (no De)	+	
	Employment rate of persons >55 (on people >55)	0.10	0.12	0.14 (no De)	-	
	Employment in public services, place of work	0.06	0.04	0.06 (no De)		
	Self-employed / population 15-64	0.19	0.23	0.15 (no De)		
Educational and vocational training	Employment rate (employed people - place of residence / population 15-64) - change, %	10.82	8.82	6.67 (no De, Si)		
	Jobs per inhabitant 15-64 - change, %	12.43	9.06	4.15 (no De, Si)		
	Secondary education / population >15	0.295	0.271	...		
	Tertiary education / population >15	0.050	0.060	...		

Continuation Table 5-8: Concise Summary of test region Context Analysis

Fields	Indicators	Value	Mean value for the country (Alpine part)	Mean value for the Alps	+/- comparison IT	+/- comparison EU
Forestry	Share of area covered by forest, %	70.6	49.3	45.5	+	+
	Enterprise density (local units per 1000 inhabitants)	86.8	93.5	65.5 (no De)	+/-	
Enterprises	Enterprise size (employees per local unit)	4.3	3.9	5.7 (no De)	+	
	Enterprise births per 100 local units	4.8	6.9	6.9 (no At, De, Li)		
	Tourist beds per inhabitant	0.04	0.10	0.09 (no De)		
Environment	Semi-natural and natural open areas, %	19.0	34.5	34.1		
	Artificial areas, %	1.73	2.71	2.56		
	Effective mesh size non artificial areas, km ²	225.4	1225.9	951.5		
	Effective mesh size semi-natural areas, km ²	203.4	1115.1	853.6		

Legend:

- Concerning comparisons with national and EU values, “+” and “-“ signs refer to Tolmezzo TR exhibiting higher and lower indicator values, respectively; “+/-“ sign refers to Tolmezzo TR exhibiting slightly higher indicator values (the absolute value being generally below 10%). EU comparisons refer to 27 countries.
- Data rows in bold refer to final selection of the minimum set of common DIAMONT indicators.
- Data derive from the 2000 (for agriculture) - 2001 census; changes are evaluated with reference to the previous census (1990-1991).

5.4.2 *The workshops*

Workshop methodology: putting into practice

The methodology adopted for both workshops was the so-called 'World Café'.

The first workshop was held in Tolmezzo on 20 June 2007. The stakeholders were subdivided in 3 tables trying to ensure mixed expertise in each table. No. 5 questions concerning the most significant problems-solutions-instruments were submitted to stakeholders. Each question was accompanied by the request to prioritize the answers. The 5 rounds lasted 30 minutes each, the participants had flip-chart paper on their tables to write down the answers.

After each round one person from each table exposed to the audience the prioritized results as written on their respective flip-charts. The original structural scheme - i.e., different discussion tables; public presentation of the results from each table at the end of each question-round - appears to have been somehow altered during the last two rounds, when the high sensitivity on the topics, sharpened by the substantial absence of local authorities, made the stakeholders spontaneously join in a general and passionate discussion, whose largely shared results continued being duly recorded on the flipchart.

The second workshop was held in Tolmezzo on 23 October 2007. The applied methodology was again the World Café. The discussion was focused on intra-regional cooperation as a strategy to promote sustainable development and overcome conflicts.

Copies of translated best practices and instruments adopted in other Alpine Space regions had been distributed to participants in order to get a feedback on possible application in the area. The workshop was divided into 3 rounds plus plenary final discussion aimed at summarizing the results and exploring opportunities for project follow-up. Once again, the original scheme was slightly altered during the first two rounds, when the stakeholders felt the urge to pass offhand plenary comments on the questions, before settling down to concentrating on the answers. A presentation made by the project manager of Interreg INNOREF-STRASSE project (selected as best practice by DIAMONT team), focused on the application of spatial planning coupled with participation processes, closed the workshop.

In both cases, the moderation team was composed by two members of UNCEM DIAMONT team.

Characterization of participating stakeholders

19 stakeholders participated in the first workshop. Most of them represented NGOs, associations, consultants, citizen committees, Watershed Partnership and Mountain Communities; no mayors attended the meeting. Seeking to augment the participation of local authorities, the second workshop was jointly organised with Interreg project WAREMA under the auspices of which a Watershed Partnership has been established in the test area: 17 participants were recorded, among whom 1 mayor, representatives from 3 Mountain Communities and 1 municipal councillor.

The substantial absence of the mayors confirms that, even if in the area the participatory approach is well known and adopted by other EU projects, the municipalities do not appear very interested, probably partly due to the number of similar events organised in the region. It is also worth underlining that the “*concertazione*” approach (consultation and agreement between institutional public and private bodies) is the traditional Italian way to interpret (somewhat restrictively) participation and cooperation.

5.4.3 Moderation team activities and stakeholder feedback

Table 9 above shows the summary results of the SWOT Analysis: a first version was presented during workshop 1 and helped steer the discussion; the present final version includes the stakeholders’ feedback.

Existing/potential problems and conflicts

Together with the prepared Indicator and SWOT Analyses, the following basic concepts have driven the selection of the thematic fields to be submitted to the stakeholders’ attention:

- Complying with DIAMONT partners’ recommendations, where Land Resource Management issues have been identified as crucial in order to address objectives referring to sustainable development in the Alps;
- Taking advantage of DIAMONT Italian team’s expertise gained in the test region area and its neighbourhood: their vision on the problems/conflicts has been shaped during several participatory events held in the framework of other Interreg projects (INNOREF, WAREMA).

The above led to the final identification of a limited number of strategic thematic fields to be operationally utilized during workshop 1:

a) *Economy and society*: this topic includes aspects dealing with Labour Market, stagnating economy, multi-decadal declining demography, etc;

b) *Land use*: Land Take issues should be covered here (at present they concern infrastructure rather than building);

c) *Quality of services*: owing also to problem economic compatibility, mountain areas frequently suffer from lack of adequate public/private services;

d) *Institutional and cooperation*: this broad class includes a number of crucial issues concerning not only relations of different levels of local government between themselves, but also the extent to which public information and participation to decision-making are fulfilled.

Several problems and conflicts affecting the area emerged to common appreciation during workshop 1; the most relevant findings have been incorporated into the SWOT Analysis. Some additional comments follow:

I - Socio-economy

- Education providers should promote innovative sectors (IT, environment, etc).
- Development: EU projects have lacked of follow-up in terms of structural development and new professionalism so far.

II - Land Take

- Institutions and functions often overlap. Local authorities suffer from short-term vision, whilst the federal regional level does not provide a clear overview of the strategic implications of different courses of action.

III - Services

- The offer of services appears to be too rigid: development of innovative services is needed, to be possibly enclosed within the framework of a specific model for services in mountain areas. Concerning public transportation, it suffers from being exclusively axed on the core city (Tolmezzo).

IV - Cooperation

- Small municipalities are more exposed to political pressures from the higher level (Federal Region).

V - Conflicts

- Lack of awareness of the common good (but this tends to be a national problem): the social groups feel they are not adequately represented by the political parties any more. On the other hand, development of spontaneous interest groups can result in decision-stopping when excessive, even though failing to acknowledge them to some extent reveals the public administration's lack of both transparency and experience with participatory processes.

Possible strategies to address problem/conflict resolution

The following basically refers to workshop 2, since its main focus was conflict resolution.

Common problem: Insufficient *inter-municipal cooperation*; it has been identified through joint inter-partner screening of test regions conditions and workshops 1 results. In Tolmezzo, it contributes to poor spatial management capacity and inadequate planning tools; combined with lack of transparency in decision-making and poorly effective participation, they frequently generate conflicts on land resource management.

Feasible proposed strategy to manage land resource management conflicts, including instruments and best practices to be possibly adopted:

1. Setting up a stakeholder committee (to address land resource management issues);
2. Setting up sectoral networks (to promote sustainable development);
Instruments: inter-municipal policy resolutions; WAREMA Watershed Partnership; ASTERs (Associations between municipalities); stakeholder commissions (Conferenze dei servizi);
Transnational: regional pool of commercial areas (Germany).
Best practices: RECOVER project.
3. Establishing an inter-municipal spatial database (definition of a common knowledge base);
4. Providing expert contribution to shape prospect scenarios and shared vision;

Instruments: FVG Regional Spatial Plan (= Piano Territoriale Regionale PTR), Municipal Master Plan (Piano Regolatore Generale); Regional Web Data Base;

Transnational: Municipal Land Policy Resolution (Germany).

Best practices: STRASSE project.

5. Integrating the available planning tools into a common strategic spatial planning framework oriented towards sustainability.

Instruments: FVG Regional Spatial Plan (= Piano Territoriale Regionale PTR), FVG New Mountain Plan and Local Action Plan;

Transnational: SCOT (France).

Best practices: STRASSE project;

Transnational: Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve (Switzerland).

Stakeholders' feedback on the proposed strategy is recorded below.

Stakeholder participation (items 1 and 2 of the above strategy):

The mountain communities' central function should be acknowledged as a starting point; the existing ASTERs (six¹²) in the area and the FVG region role as final recipient and financing actor should be acknowledged as well. Cooperation should be encouraged and rewarded, so as to overcome direct relations between single municipalities and region. Some issues have managed to raise strong community participation (but not the ones affecting important economic interests): local authorities should gather/convey community's demands.

No general-purpose stakeholder committees, no stakeholder multiplication: strengthen existent different-level/purpose structures.

Consultation on strategic planning: formal acknowledgement of community structures based on written regulations; stakeholders to be consulted: partly pre-identified, partly dependent on specific objectives to be discussed (variable-composition); third-party external moderators should participate. Consultation results: shared protocols, conventions, contracts.

Knowledge base and visioning (items 3 and 4 of the above strategy):

Specific data (esp. raw data) are available (via webGIS platforms), but there are too many and difficult to find. Accessibility proves accept-

¹² Until March 2006, there were two ASTERs in the area: the two Mountain Communities (Carnia and Gemonese). Another smaller (so that it could not be legally granted the ASTER status) Association existed, including the four municipalities of Tolmezzo, Amaro, Cavazzo Carnico and Verzegnis.

able to professionals/experts, much less to citizens: need for specific training/education. No metadata online catalogue available, no interoperability of existing databases, no common portals for small databases, existing databases not updated: FVG region should finance all that: instead, they have stopped financing conversion of municipal master plans into digital format.

No more databases, rather ensure compliance with European/national standards: database validation and general organization should be FVG region's duty: a general easy-accessible database should be constructed; data management: at local level (mountain communities should have a department in charge of spatial data collection and dissemination), but interchange and free dissemination should be ensured; the public authority should be the owner of the data, since they have been obtained through public financing. Databases should be thematic; sustainability requires also that innovative knowledge and indicators be developed based on clear objectives and result sharing.

Expert contribution: qualified experts should be included into stakeholder partnerships, so that they can work basing on stakeholders' feedback and using adequate technology.

Strategic planning (item 5 of the above strategy):

Integrated planning requires shared decision. Subsidiarity principle, it is acknowledged by the Italian constitution, but conflicts may emerge (e.g., from the FVG Region Spatial Plan adoption procedure which is underway). Transnational/national infrastructure, river basin and region planning: local communities participation should be activated, otherwise top-down decisions are prone to community rejection. Compatibility in space and time between different planning levels should be ensured (optimum time frames should depend on goals). Strategic environmental assessment: it will provide a fundamental scheme to improve quality of decisions, by enforcing compatibility with sustainability requirements.

Italian mentality tied to zoning: shifting to Anglo-Saxon physical-diagram concepts for spatial policies would be advisable. Subsequent integration between strategic and inter-municipal planning should take place. The latter, though being foreseen, still needs a regulatory framework: careful spatial definition and long-term duration of inter-municipal entities should be provided for, so as to allow for development of adequate visioning, as sustainability requires: present ASTERs bear no relation to historical districts.

Additional comments on the pre-selected common thematic focus: intra-regional cooperation

The following summary remarks can be drawn from stakeholders' feedback on the common selected thematic focus:

- Owing possibly to a lack of comprehensive questions on the proposed problem resolution strategy, the stakeholders' attention has been again directed towards somewhat sectoral problems and solutions; limited feedback has been obtained on the proposed instruments (even if it is true that additional ones have been brought forward by the stakeholders);
- A certain gap has been noticed between the attitude of institutional (i.e., local authorities) and non-institutional (i.e., planners and professors) stakeholders, the former inclining towards stressing the importance and results of the experienced inter-municipal cooperation and community participation structures, the latter remaining to some extent sceptical as to the soundness of present cooperation and participatory democracy (people's spontaneous activism and mobilization is rather viewed as a sign of reaction against unsatisfactorily implemented participation in decision-making);
- In the end, however, some important conclusions have been reached: 1) Standardization, updating and easy accessibility of knowledge bases are crucial elements to foster cooperation and participation; 2) Stakeholder committees should be formalized and institutionalized to some extent, in order to get full acknowledgment and participation in the strategic planning process; 3) Instruments to have recourse to include: Strategic Environmental Assessment procedures; protocols and conventions stemming from stakeholder consultation; data dissemination departments within local governments.

5.4.4 Conclusions, lessons learned

As it was to be expected, the impact with practice produced, at least for the Italian test region, a rearrangement of the original process as foreseen for DIAMONT work packages 10 and 11: even if it is true that the boundaries between solutions and instruments - as well as between problems and conflicts - often appear somewhat dim or artificial, in spite of UNCEM's moderation team efforts to steer stakeholders' criticism and suggestions towards instruments, their focus was mainly directed towards problem identification, as well as towards the conflicts that almost invariably problems imply, without omitting - it is true - some precious hints at their possible solutions.

The following aspects are worth highlighting:

Public Participation Methodology:

Workshop participants showed a high degree of involvement: the good interaction established between stakeholders and moderation team gives proof of the suitability of the methodology (the ‘World Café’) selected by UNCEM and adopted by all DIAMONT partners in the workshops.

Instrument Database:

The creation of such database at Alpine Space level was appreciated by all participants and perceived as an important knowledge-provider. In particular, Italian stakeholders paid careful attention to the presented selection of transnational instruments (including the French SCOT and the German Pool of Commercial/Industrial Areas and Municipal Land Policy Resolution): comparison with local instruments allowed deeper insight on actual and potential applications. Stakeholders expect further relevant inputs to come from the foreseen database disclosure to public.

Perception of the region:

A clear message coming from the stakeholders is to obtain concrete and lasting results in the test region: the present effort at cooperation between different ongoing EU projects aims at this objective, and this has been acknowledged. Participants showed a very good knowledge of problems affecting the test region as well as of available instruments to tackle them; they also hinted at the objectives to be attained.

Intra-regional Cooperation:

Concerning the specific selected transnational topic, it was remarked, especially by planners and experts, that recent tentative voluntary agreements for cooperation between municipalities have proved poorly effective so far, possibly due to competition among municipalities or valleys and lack of awareness; on the other hand, local governmental stakeholders tend to stress the fact that many inter-municipal associations have been established in the wider area of the upper Tagliamento river basin, and that successful instances of public participation in decision-making exist (actually, mostly dealing with less “economically sensitive” issues, such as social services planning). At any rate, a spur is being represented by citizens’ participation: numerous committees and voluntary associations have been established for protecting the threatened environmental assets of the area and enhancing the local sustainable economy through, among others, the recently proposed creation of a Biosphere Reserve.

Besides overcoming the crucial drawback represented by the small size of single municipalities, a sound resolution strategy for the problem of insufficient intra-regional cooperation should include the following:

1. An easily accessible standardized and updated knowledge base
2. Formalized public participation structures;
3. A strategic spatial planning framework based on sustainability, unifying under a common vision the different sectoral policies.

5.5 Traunstein-Traunreut (Germany)

5.5.1 The selected test region and DIAMONT participatory approach

EURAC delimitation of Labour Market Regions (LMR; DIAMONT Work Package 8) differentiates between LMR Traunreut, consisting only of two municipalities - Traunreut itself and Taching am See - and LMR Traunstein with 10 surrounding municipalities. As Traunstein and Traunreut are neighbours with strong interlinkage, it was decided to treat these two LMRs as one test region named LMR Traunstein-Traunreut. Both cities are “Mittelzentren” in the Bavarian central-place system, but the “political weight” of Traunstein as administrative regional centre is higher. Upgrading Traunstein to the “Oberzentrum” status is under discussion - a political decision which would pave the way for institutions of tertiary education.

The municipalities included in this test region are Bergen, Chieming, Grabenstätt, Nussdorf, Ruhpolding, Siegsdorf, Surberg, Taching a. See, Waging am See, Wonneberg, Vachendorf and the two core cities Traunstein and Traunreut.

The size of the whole LMR is 554.3 km² with 83,979 inhabitants and an average population density of 151.5 inh/km². The altitude of Traunstein is 602 m asl and Traunreut is 551 m asl.

Geographical characteristics

The county of Traunstein is situated in the South-eastern corner of the German state of Bavaria. It shares borders with three Austrian federal states, namely Tyrol, Salzburg and Upper Austria and with the German counties of Berchtesgadener Land, Rosenheim, Mühldorf am Inn and Altötting. The northern border of the county of Traunstein matches the border of the Alpine Convention. The county of Traunstein consists of

four cities and 39 municipalities. Of these, the cities of Traunstein and Traunreut and 11 surrounding municipalities make up our Labour Market Region. The municipality of Ruhpolding is the only municipality of the test region sharing a national border with Austria. The city of Traunstein is located 86 km at linear distance South-east of Munich and 31 km North-west of Salzburg.



Fig. 5-11: Labour Market Region Traunstein-Traunreut (municipal borders are delineated in pink)

The area of LMR Traunstein comprises parts of the following natural landscape units:

- In the southern part the limestone “Chiemgauer Alpen” (Chiemgau Alps), reaching altitudes of 1960 m above sea level;
- In the eastern part the “Inn-Salzach-Hügelland” (Inn-Salzach-Hills);
- In the western part the “Inn-Chiemsee-Hügelland” (Inn-Chiemsee-Hills); both above areas represent pre-Alpine landscapes modelled under glacial influence;
- In the northern part the “Alzplatte” (Alz plateau).

The region is split into a northern part that is mostly dominated by industry and large-scale agriculture, while the southern part included into the morphological Alpine region features a strong, small-scale tourism industry. The urban core of the region is split between the

administrative and employment center of Traunstein and the city of Traunreut, which is the biggest municipality in the region in terms of inhabitants.

Regional economy is dominated by chemical and pharmaceutical industry and tourism.

The population of the municipalities differs significantly. Wonneberg, Taching and Vachendorf have less than 2,000 inhabitants, while Siegsdorf has over 8,000 inhabitants. The city of Traunreut is home to more inhabitants (ca. 21,500) than Traunstein (ca. 18,100), but Traunstein has more workplaces and as county seat more administrative functions.

The average population density of 151.5 inh/km² is lower than the average value for the German part of the Alpine Convention area (AC) - 168.9 inh/km² - but higher than the average of the whole AC - 140 inh/km².

Within the LMR the population density and accordingly the share of area occupied by settlements and infrastructure (ASI) differ considerably. Ruppolding features the lowest population density (42.2 inh/km²) and share of ASI (1.49%), while with 176.6 inh/km² Vachendorf has the highest population density (apart from the core cities).

Substantiation of choice

The test region of Traunstein was chosen on the basis of three considerations:

- It represents a section of the German Alpine region that is not under the immediate influence of the agglomeration of Munich.
- The influence of Salzburg is increasingly affecting LMR Traunstein. Particularly, the region is experiencing a growing competition in retail trade; therefore, it can be regarded as representative for many cross-border situations in the Alpine region and the need for trans-boundary cooperation and coordination in regional development.
- The LMR Traunstein is composed of a heterogeneous set of municipalities with different economic and demographic structures. While some municipalities predominantly serve residential purposes, others - particularly Traunstein and Traunreut - feature a broad mix of branches and functions. This situation theoretically makes the region well suited for discussion on urban-rural linkages.

Current framework for regional cooperation

The LMR Traunstein is part of the Bavarian Planning Region 18, which comprises the counties of Rosenheim, Altötting, Mühldorf, Traunstein and Berchtesgadener Land, and is currently in the process of elaborating a Regional Development Concept. Part of this concept addresses the issue of inter-municipal and regional cooperation and the draft version explicitly mentions instruments such as pooling of commercial areas, trade-off mechanisms and stronger inter-municipal cooperation.

5.5.2 The workshops

Workshop methodology: theory and practice



Fig. 5-12: Presentation of DIAMONT at workshop 2

In the first workshop, participants had discussed four different topics simultaneously at four different tables - residential development, retail development, demographic change and institutional framework. In the following meeting (workshop 2), the discussion topics were building up on each other, which is why every topic has been assigned for discussion at three tables simultaneously. The table rounds followed a brief summary of the first workshop and a short introduction to the respective round topic by ifuplan staff.

Workshop participants, this time being more familiar with the methodology, were themselves in charge of organising and moderating the discussion at each table. Each of the three table rounds was summed up individually for the whole audience by a table representative. At the end, ifuplan staff summed up the results of the three rounds and moderated a plenary discussion.

Characterisation of participating stakeholders

With 18 participants, the second DIAMONT workshop was - with the exception of two new participants - attended by the same stakeholders as the first workshop. Participants mostly represented local administrations and civil society of the region. Only two mayors out of 13 municipalities participated, one coming from the core city of Traunstein, the other representing the rural, tourist municipality of Chieming.

10 participants represented the city of Traunstein, as either officials or private stakeholders. Another 6 represented supra-municipal institutions such as the EuRegio, the County Environmental Agency etc. Two participants represented other municipalities of the Labour Market Region. Therefore, only three municipalities were represented at workshop 2.

As key decision-makers from the Labour Market Region municipalities were not participating, the workshop group was not in a position to take decisions. With regard to further steps in the field of sustainable land resource management in the region, this posed a considerable constraint for the adoption of decisions within the workshop.



Discussion between mayor, building authority and Agenda21-representative

5.5.3 Moderation team activities and Stakeholder feedback

Existing/potential problems

In the course of the first workshop, participants identified the following existing problems of land resource management in the region:

- Lack of intra-regional cooperation and coordination / inter-municipal competition;
- Lack of awareness among private individuals;
- Intense competition and different planning standards for retail across the Austrian border.

Possible Strategies to address problem/conflict resolution

Participants in workshop 2 were asked to develop strategies on three levels of land resource management, as illustrated below.

Definition of objectives, levels and potential of cooperation

Moderation input:

In the first workshop round, the moderation team introduced some topics to the audience that were intended to serve as a framework for discussion on objectives, levels and potential for possible regional cooperation. Participants were asked to discuss how objectives could be fixed on a regional basis leading to a participatory draft of regional guidelines. The definition and quantification of objectives requires also coordination of various perspectives (policy, interest groups, population) coming from various municipalities. The various institutional settings of cooperation (private or public) were also introduced in order to substantiate the discussion.

Discussion:

Discussing these topics, participants came to the conclusion that the definition of regional objectives is only feasible in a long-term perspective. Current fields of cooperation such as tourism, culture and regional transport could serve as starting points for a broader regional approach. Participants also mentioned the possibility of trade-offs between commercial activities and sports/recreation, using the example of public baths that could be financed basing on inter-municipal agreements.



Lively discussion at the workshop table rounds

Despite the fact that the issue of sustainable land resource management had been presented in the first workshop in all its implications (financial, social and ecological), the definition of objectives and the discussion on the foreseeable extent of cooperation turned out to be very complex for participants.

On the one hand, the discussion process was rather focused on the presentation of the first workshop results and the need to analyse state and future demand of land use. On the other hand, participants stated that common guidelines and objectives for the region would open up existing structures and work flows in a productive sense and are therefore highly desirable.

Knowledge base

The second discussion round was dedicated to discussing the knowledge base on which land use decisions are being taken in the region of Traunstein.

Moderation input:

Four aspects of land management-related knowledge were presented to participants, namely assessment of inner-urban potential, assessment of organic development demand, anticipation of expansion plans of local firms and analysis of additional demand stemming from relocation of inhabitants and businesses. Concerning the potential of brownfields and commercial and residential vacancies, the Economic Promotion Agency

for the County of Traunstein is already maintaining an online-database for the county. However, it turned out that this database is neither comprehensive nor updated regularly and not available in GIS-format.

A survey of the test region municipalities produced the result that - apart from the city of Traunstein - no municipality is maintaining a cadastre on brownfields and commercial vacancies. In this context, particularly mayors from small municipalities argued that they are very well informed about these land resources. Surveys carried out in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, however, suggest that the opposite is true and municipalities are often surprised at the extent of inner-urban development potential.

As a further aspect, the issue of assessing future demographic trends and spatial requirements for organic development was raised. Currently, these assessments are often exaggerating the future growth that can be realistically expected.

Furthermore, the moderation team raised the question whether land conversions towards commercial and residential use are always based on a sound analysis of respective intra- and extra-regional demand.

Discussion:

The idea of assessing the status-quo of brownfield potentials and vacancies in the region was picked up enthusiastically by participants. They indeed considered the knowledge base in the region to be insufficient in that respect and argued for a standardised assessment procedure throughout the county to enable aggregation of municipal data at county level. They suggested that county authorities should elaborate such a procedure and communicate it to the individual municipalities. Other participants stressed that these inner-urban brownfields and potentials have some limitations and from their personal experience are often very difficult to activate - either for reasons of contamination or for owners' unwillingness to sell.

The calculation of future land demand on the basis of demographic data and trends was only reported to be taking place in the city of Traunstein. All the other municipalities are managing land without a standardised procedure for assessing future demand. This supply-side planning strategy (*Angebotsplanung*) is adopted by a multitude of peripheral municipalities in Germany and in many cases results in over-dimensioned commercial areas involving significant municipal provisional investment. Participants argued that further knowledge is needed about support programmes and the variety of instruments available for regional development implementation. In general, the round stated that an improvement of knowledge on the sta-



Summing up workshop results

tus-quo of land resource management, future developments and respective instruments is needed and local stakeholders are aware of this need.

Instruments and best practices to be possibly adopted/followed

The instruments that were presented at the workshop are designed to tackle the issue of land resource management at various levels (knowledge base, awareness raising, assessment of demand, inter-municipal coordination). In the course of the workshop, it became clear that there is a perceived need of improving the knowledge base for land resource management and increasing voluntary cooperation in the region, but stakeholders clearly refrained from the idea of more binding regional cooperation structures. The instrument of regional land use plans, following the example of the SCOT in France, was seen as very critical by participants. Similar attempts in the test region (inter-municipal land use plan of Wagging a. See, Taching a. See and Wonneberg) failed in the past; therefore, the potential for newly introducing this complex instrument at a level of more than 20 municipalities was not deemed realistic by stakeholders.

Confronted with the instrument of regionally pooling commercial areas, participants raised the question why economically successful municipalities would agree to such an arrangement. They came to the conclusion that only municipalities facing similar difficulties in marketing their commercial areas would be willing to participate. The option of integrating further fields such as ecological compensation, tourism etc. in the trade-off schemes was not deemed realistic by participants.

Additional comments on the pre-selected common thematic focus: Intra-regional cooperation

In the test region of Traunstein, several spatial frameworks exist that could serve as starting points for efforts of intra-regional cooperation:

- The Bavarian Planning Region 18, comprising roughly 800,000 inhabitants within 5 counties plus the city of Rosenheim;
- the EuRegio Salzburger Land - Berchtesgadener Land - Traunstein, comprising 91 municipalities;
- the county of Traunstein, comprising 31 municipalities and 4 cities.

These existing entities are comparably large and, therefore, unanimous decisions from all participants are unlikely to be reached on significant issues of municipal policy such as management of land resources or the competitive field of commercial development. In Germany, as well as in Austria, municipalities are key players in spatial development and the discussion on intra-regional cooperation touches their core responsibility of planning authority.

In the workshops, participants argued that existing cooperation structures in the fields of tourism, education and culture, sports and recreation should be used as starting points for more ambitious forms of cooperation.

An issue that was raised several times is the complexity and long-term perspective of intra-regional cooperation, that is often in conflict with terms of political offices and records, for which elected politicians are held accountable for. In times of growth being only measured by newly developed greenfield sites and new commercial areas, inner-urban development and brownfield activation are comparably time-consuming and their political reputation is still rather marginal.

A sensitive issue that has been encountered in the region was the fact that the Bavarian Planning Region 18 is currently in the process of drafting a Regional Development Concept, which represents a highly political issue. Until the adoption of this concept by the Regional Assembly, far-reaching projects such as regional cooperation structures are rather unwillingly discussed by key stakeholders in the region, as they are waiting to implement so-called landmark-projects stemming from the Development Concept upon its official adoption. In that respect, DIAMONT workshops were - even though they addressed core issues of the upcoming Development Concept - not yet endorsed by key stakeholders from the region.

Possible stakeholder-identified DIAMONT follow-ups

At the end of the second workshop, participants expressed their interest in following up the issue of land resource management in the near future.

A possible follow-up, however, would first require the back-up from strategic actors in the region. As DIAMONT workshops were explicitly following a participatory approach, supra-municipal political representatives such as the head of the county authority (= *Landrat*) or representatives of the Provincial Authority (*Regierung von Oberbayern*) had not been invited to the workshops. The underlying consideration was that DIAMONT workshops should focus on the local level and stakeholders' perception of spatial trends; local stakeholders were expected to speak more freely about their visions without the attendance of high-ranking political representatives.

Thus, in order to inform these supra-municipal levels and win their support for the project, it is deemed necessary to schedule individual meetings with their respective stakeholders and carry out a workshop on behalf of the county administration with a more comprehensive attendance from municipal authorities. This impression was expressed by participants when asking for a core group of prospective mayors who should continue the dialogue started with DIAMONT workshops. The pool of participants in the two workshops in the test region of Traunstein - altogether roughly 20 stakeholders representing various institutions - can be also considered as a "nucleus" for further activities in the field of sustainable land resource management.

In the end, participants expressed their wish to continue the process in one way or the other. As possible follow-up projects, stakeholders announced to consider individual projects on municipal level (e.g. brownfield cadastre) and suggested the county level to introduce guidelines, which - if followed coherently - could lead to regionally aggregated outcomes. Far-reaching cooperation schemes on regional level, however, can currently only be considered as long-term goals requiring a number of preliminary steps.

5.5.4 Conclusions, lessons learned

Summing up the two workshops, it can be concluded that stakeholders from the test region have been very cooperative and also thankful for the facilitation of such a platform of exchange within the framework of DIAMONT.

Due to the low turnout of political decision-makers (2 mayors participated in the first workshop, 2 in the second workshop), participants were not in the position to take immediate decisions, which might be interpreted as an advantage as it enabled participants to creatively discuss. On the other hand and as a result of the absence of municipal decision-makers, tangible results could not be achieved at the end of the workshops.

On the basis of the theoretical input given at the beginning of each workshop, participants were particularly interested in good-practice examples of these instruments, which underline that initiatives of intra-regional cooperation can in fact be realised in similar spatial contexts.

With the Labour Market Regions, a new spatial category has been introduced by DIAMONT project, which workshop participants had not been familiar with. The delineation was not discussed in detail, but it became clear in the process that other spatial affiliations are interfering with the spatial category of Labour Market Regions. For example, the municipalities around Lake Chiemsee - of which only two, Chieming and Grabenstätt, are part of the Labour Market Region - have already developed their own regional management which would need to be considered when creating a framework for intra-regional cooperation. An interesting contribution was given by one participant who stated that such regional management approaches should also reflect natural units, such as river catchments or Lake Chiemsee.

On the other hand, participants clearly welcomed the opportunity to discuss issues of land management on a smaller geographical scale than existing large-scale entities and with a more diverse range of participants. The atmosphere at the workshops was summed up by one participant:

“It was a unique and inspiring experience to discuss the issue in such a diverse and open atmosphere.”



The exhibition “How to live? Where to live?” has been arranged for the City of Traunstein by the DIAMONT project - Discussions at the opening evening.

Table 5-11: Workshop 2 participants and their background

Last name	First name	Function	Institution/ municipality	Description of institution
Berger-Stöckl	Marlene	Head of Environment Division	Water and Environmental Association Chiemsee	Association of municipalities around Lake Chiemsee addressing issues of water management and environmental development
Glaßl	Bernhard	Executive officer	Office for Building Law, Municipality of Traunstein	Municipal administration
Graf	Benno	Mayor	Chieming	
Hechenbichler	Hans	Head	Municipal Building Authority, Ruppolding	Supervises and is consulted on the overall building development of the municipality
Hechfellner	Klaus	Municipal Construction Supervisor	Municipal Building Authority, Traunstein	Supervises and is consulted on the overall building development of the municipality
Hensold	Claus	Head of Department	Bavarian State Office for the Environment, Land Management Section	The Bavarian State Office for the Environment is conducting research, drafting guidelines and carrying out campaigns for sustainable land resource management.
Herrmann	Mechtild	County Building Supervisor	County Building Authority, County of Traunstein	Supervises and is consulted on the overall building development of the county
Hohenschutz	Stefan	Head of Department	Administrative and Legal Department, Municipality of Traunstein	Municipal administration
Kleyboldt	Ewald	Representative	Agenda21 Traunstein	Local Agenda21-groups are a platform for non-elected citizens to contribute to municipal development in several fields of sustainable development.
Mayer	Hans	County Head	Federal Retail Association Bavaria	The association promotes the interests of retail SME in Bavaria.

Continuation Table 5-11: Workshop 2 participants and their background

Last name	First name	Function	Institution/ municipality	Description of institution
Mertl	Manfred	Head of Department	County Environmental Authority, County of Traunstein	County administrative unit that is in charge of environmental aspects in county planning procedures
Pieperhoff	Jürgen	Managing Director	City Marketing Traunstein Ltd.	Board financed by local enterprises promoting Traunstein as a place for business
Rassek	Barbara	Head	Agenda 21-Coordination, Municipality of Traunstein	Coordinates Agenda21 process in the City of Traunstein
Rubach	Steffen	Managing Director	EUREGIO Salzburg - Berchtesgadener Land - Traunstein	The EuRegio is an EU-funded voluntary association of the German counties of Traunstein and Berchtesgadener Land with the Austrian federal state of Salzburger Land for the promotion of cross-border economic, social and environmental development in the region.
Rutkowski	Beate	Deputy Chairwoman	Bund Naturschutz, County Section Traunstein	The <i>Bund Naturschutz</i> is one of the most influential and important environmental NGOs in Germany. One of its current campaigns addresses the issue of urban sprawl and its effects.
Schuat	Herr	Representative	Agenda21 Traunstein	Local Agenda21-groups are a platform for non-elected citizens to contribute to sustainable municipal development.
Schwäbisch	Elmar	Head	Department for Urban Planning, Municipality of Traunstein	Municipal authority in charge of carrying out urban planning and supervising urban development
Stahl	Fritz	Mayor	Traunstein	

Table 5-12: WS2 matrix - discussed issues and feedback

Time	Questions	Answers (prioritized 1 - 5)	Common priorities & results
30'	<p>Relation of land supply and current and future demand</p> <p>Is there a shared perception of land management objectives?</p> <p>Willingness to cooperate regionally in land management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing structures (taxation, subsidies) need to be overcome for inter-municipal cooperation • Money is deciding over land use, not the people. • <i>Raumordnungsverfahren</i> (instrument for assessing spatial effects of big-scale projects) is well-intentioned, but not very effective. • Municipal borders obstruct cooperation. • Joint commercial areas (joint management) on one territory • How does municipal funding function in other EU-countries without business tax? • What do we need? What do we have? How can we bring these two aspects together? Common coach, inter-municipal binding plans, assessment of demand • Large-scale retail: Support bottom-up development (competition is the problem) • Financial trade-off between commerce/sports/recreation • Axis of regional traffic is the basis for future land use. • State Development Plan needs to be observed more strictly. County authorities have not contributed to space-efficient building (-> question of appropriate decision-making level). • Analysis: Is there a need for additional commercial areas? • Objectives: Joint formulation of objectives, draft binding plans, assess trends (trade, housing) • Cooperation of municipalities is desirable in the future. • Recreation/Financing • Information exchange on planned commercial areas • Cooperation exists in the fields of tourism and culture. 	<p>Cooperation structures exist.</p> <p>Importance of cooperation per se is not objected to.</p> <p>Establishment of more extensive cooperation structures, however, is a long and comprehensive regional process.</p>

Continuation Table 5-12: WSZ matrix - discussed issues and feedback

Time	Questions	Answers (prioritized 1 - 5)	Common priorities & results
30'	<p>On what basis are land use decisions taken in the region?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cadastre of brownfields and vacancies • Assessment of development needs • Analysis of future demand • Demographic development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cadastre of brownfields should be elaborated • Option of an internet-based European cadastre of brownfields • Analysis: What land resources do we have? Are these plots in demand? What use is densified building of if nobody wants it? Carry out a cadastre of brownfields and commercial vacancies regionally and comprehensively on a standardised basis • Assessment of basic preconditions • Activation is the main problem • Fee on vacant or underused plots • Funding programme for inner-urban development • Expansion plans of existing companies - Strengthening of the existing stock of businesses and workforce 	<p>Knowledge base needs to be improved.</p> <p>Strengthening of existing stock of businesses is at least as important as establishment of new firms.</p> <p>What is the focus of the region (housing, business, tourism and recreation)?</p>
30'	<p>Options for implementing a regional strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regionally pooling commercial areas • Joint land use planning • Other ways of implementing regional cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected mayors as "nucleus", involve head of the county authority • Visionary mayor as driving force • Mayors that have participated in DIAMONT workshops should push the issue. • County authority should initiate a workshop with all mayors from the region. • County authority, head of county authority as initiator/mover, but professional monitoring required • Open discussion, results should not be pre-determined. • Strengthening regional planning • Commercial interests in the region are too diverse. • Cooperation already exists in the field of tourism (bus line around Lake Chiemsee). • Assessment of existing cooperation structures necessary • Assessment of demand should be carried out on both sides of the border. • Need for action has to be substantial. • Target objectives necessary for land take • Pick up from existing structures 	<p>Intra-regional cooperation schemes exist on "soft" issues.</p> <p>Key decision-makers/stakeholders are necessary to promote the process.</p> <p>It is up to municipal authorities to start the process, other institutions can only act as supporters.</p>

5.6 Waidhofen/Ybbs (Austria)

5.6.1 The selected test region and DIAMONT participatory approach

General description



Fig. 5-13: Labour Market Regions (LMR) Waidhofen/Ybbs. The northern boundaries match the border of the Alpine bow.

Table 5-13: Population size and trend in LMR Waidhofen/Ybbs

Municipality	Population 1991	Population 2001
Waidhofen an der Ybbs	11435	11686
Allhartsberg	1724	1766
Ertl	1211	1245
Opponitz	1031	959
Seitenstetten	2981	3136
Sonntagberg	4288	4275
Ybbsitz	3915	3804
Gresten-Land	1553	1546
Randegg	1872	1939
Gaflenz	1677	1799
Maria Neustift	1608	1656
Weyer Markt	2324	2360
Total	35619	36171

The Labour Market Region (LMR), as identified by EURAC, of Waidhofen/Ybbs is composed of one core city (Waidhofen/Ybbs) and eleven surrounding municipalities: Allhartsberg, Ertl, Opponitz, Seitenstetten, Sonntagberg, Ybbsitz, Gresten-Land, Randegg, Gaflenz, Maria Neustift and Weyer Markt. The size of the test region is 802.12 km² with 36,171 (2001) inhabitants and an average population density of 44.4 inh/km² (total Alps 68.1 inh/km²). The altitude of the core city is 356 m a.s.l. The highest altitude reaches 1500 m asl. So, the LMR includes sub-montane, montane, high-montane areas and some of the pre-alpine belt.

The LMR is located in the eastern part of northern Alps (Flysch and limestone Alps) within the federal states of Lower and Upper Austria and at the frontier to Styria. The time distance by car to the capital towns of Lower and Upper Austria Linz and St. Pölten is about one hour. The LMR Waidhofen/Ybbs is located 25 km South of the motorway connecting Linz to Vienna (A1), the main east-west route along Austria. The closest large town is Amstetten - located straight on the A1 - featuring well developed business and industrial areas. The time distance to the next international airport (Vienna) is one and a half hour, while the grassed runway within the LMR is only accessible to small private airplanes. There exists a railroad connection to Amstetten, whence the main railroad line can be reached, as well as another narrow-gauge railway connecting some communities in the LMR. However, the LMR is located at a dead-end position of the railway system and the public transport within the LMR is quite limited and not effective.

The area of the LMR comprises parts of the following protected areas:

- Naturpark Niederösterreichische Eisenwurzten (Nature Park Eisenwurzten);
- Nationalpark Kalkalpen (National Park Limestone Alps);
- Kulturpark Eisenstraße (Cultural Park Iron Road).

The test region is located at the intersection of “Eisenwurzten” and “Mostviertel” (cider quarter) areas, characterized by old industrial and mountain farming structures. Farming in this area yields high quality dairy products as well as an outstanding cider, which is sold on the regional and national markets. The settlement structure features industrial towns, market places with central functions for small and medium hinterlands. Beside the towns and villages the main settlement pattern is characterised by single farms (square farms and other regular granges), as the colonisation of this area by Germanic and Slavic settlers took only place in high medieval times (starting in the 11th century).

Lying close to deposits of iron ore (known since medieval times) has turned the region until today into an above average industrial space, where metal industry, fine mechanics, but also furniture industry and rock and gravel quarrying, play a mature role. Some of the municipalities belonging to the LMR Waidhofen/Ybbs are part of the LEADER+ project “Kulturpark Eisenstraße” which is a supra-regional tourist project building on the historical region of iron manufacturing.

Table 13 gives an overview of the population size and trend for LMR communes: seven communes show a positive growth whereas four are characterised by population loss.

Substantiation of choice and participatory approach

The LMR Waidhofen/Ybbs was selected because of its following characteristics:

- Subsequently to the national analysis which was carried out for Austria, the LMR showed the highest land take values (1991-2001, see Fig.14), for settlement and infrastructure relative to the natural population growth.
- In the LMR there exist enterprises with national and even international relevance and a need for high skilled workers, as well as a core city with a high variety of branches and functions, whereas some of the municipalities are mainly rural and face depopulation and over-aging.

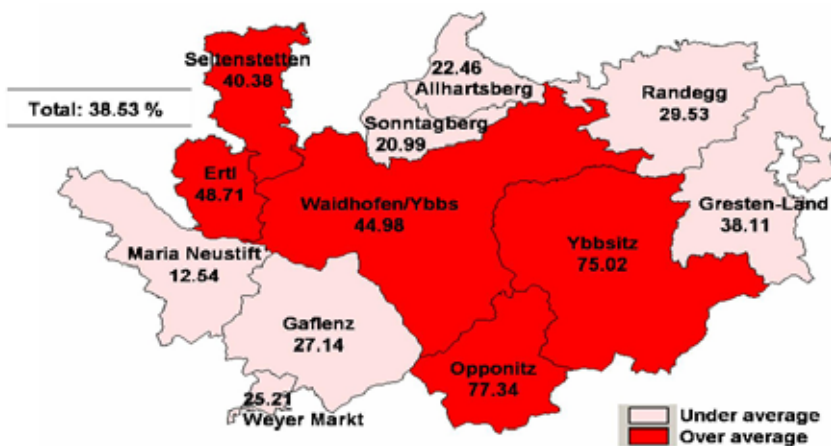


Fig. 5-14: Land take values (1991-2001) in % in LMR Waidhofen/Ybbs.

5.6.2 The workshops

Workshop methodology: theory and practice

First workshop

With the help of the municipality of Waidhofen/Ybbs invitations to the workshops were sent out by mail to more than 200 stakeholders of the region. Furthermore, telephone calls to the most important stakeholders were made by Austrian DIAMONT team. In order to motivate local population to participate a small gift was promised to all participants (a chocolate sweet of Innsbruck and a book).

The first workshop was scheduled on a Saturday. This allowed many professionals to participate, as they had no working obligations, but the participation of politicians was below expectations. So, the second workshop was scheduled on a Friday. Indeed, more politicians joined the workshop, but unfortunately we missed the working population, then.

The methodology of both workshops was based on the World Café method as agreed with all DIAMONT partners, but some variations were introduced:

- In the first workshop a group of students of the University of Innsbruck joined the table discussions to moderate and take notes.
- For the second workshop we had to adapt the World Café to a small group of people, since only eight participants showed up.

After the initial presentation of the Context and SWOT analyses, in the first workshop eight questions/problem areas were discussed on two to three parallel tables hosting at least four stakeholders each. The table discussion was structured in three blocks: ten minutes for comments on the Context and SWOT analyses, ten minutes for an assessment of the opportunities and risks for the region and at least ten minutes for reflection on possible instruments to steer sustainable development in the region.

Of all results minutes were taken, and the main results marked on flip-charts. After lunch break the results of the first table round were presented and discussed, as well as the results of the last table round before the end of the workshop. There was also time for a final plenary discussion.

Second workshop

In the second workshop only one large table was set up to discuss the two given impulses. These had been selected by participants in the first workshop through a questionnaire, sent out by mail.

This workshop had to focus on the choice and elaboration of steering instruments. Based on DIAMONT Instrument database, UIBK staff had prepared material including best practices examples in other countries, regions and municipalities of the Alpine bow. Two short impulses on these topics were given, then the participants were allowed 30 minutes for internal discussion. Subsequently, UIBK staff members joined the table and moderated the discussion in order to support the structuring of the results.

Press releases were provided to regional and national media and let out a moderate echo (two press articles, two internet articles). During the second workshop a video was shot, including an interview with the mayor of Ybbsitz.

To summarize:

- The main focus of the 1st workshop was to identify main problem fields in the test region with the help of the Context Analysis and the stakeholders of the region.
- The main focus of the 2nd workshop was to find solutions for sustainable regional development in the test region with the help of best practices, impulses and the stakeholders of the region.

Characterisation of participating stakeholders

For the first workshop we invited stakeholders working in all sectors in order to obtain a broad range of opinions on problems facing the LMR. For the second workshop we intended to reach the decision-makers of the region, so we invited not only the participants in the first workshop but tried to reach the mayors of the municipalities as well. They had also been invited at the first workshop, but besides the mayor of Ybbsitz the others did not show up, although most had promised to.

Therefore, a lot of effort was made at contacting mayors and motivating them to participate in the second workshop at Ybbsitz. We received very positive reactions concerning our project; nevertheless, only two mayors participated (Ybbsitz and Gresten-Land). However, three official representatives of municipalities were present at the second workshop.

Table 5-14: Second workshop at Ybbsitz: participants and their functions

Name	Institution	Position	1 st (part)	2 nd (part)
			workshop	
Josef Hofmarcher	Municipality of Ybbsitz	Mayor	X	X
Leo Hochpöchler	Municipality of Waidhofen /Ybbs	Member of city council	X	X
Werner Aigner	Municipality of Waidhofen /Ybbs	Member of city council	X	X
Leopold Latschbacher	Municipality of Gresten Land	Mayor		X
Tatjana Stangl	Municipality of Opponitz	Representative		X
Gerhard Lueger	Municipality of Ybbsitz	Member of city council		X
Karl Piaty	Waidhofen/Ybbs	Shopkeeper		X
Gudrun Streicher	Ybbsitz	Kulturpark Eisenstrasse		X

5.6.3 Moderation team activities and stakeholder feedback

Existing/potential problems and conflicts

In the course of the first workshop participants were asked to identify main problem fields in their region. As an input they were given tables and maps reflecting the Context Analysis and covering the following issues:

1. *Economy and society*: General aspects of the region, like employment rate, female employment rate, number of enterprises and farms, tourism, indebtedness, population trend and aging, etc.
2. *Basic infrastructure*: Transport, educational and healthcare infrastructure, etc.
3. *Regional cooperation*
4. *Land Take*: Change in area used for dwelling and industrial/commercial purposes.

During the discussion participants confirmed the main problems identified in the Context Analysis:

- There is a remarkable “brain drain” of young well educated persons to university locations (Vienna, Linz and Salzburg), as well as of skilled workers looking for higher positions and better paid jobs outside the LMR.

- The economy of the region strongly depends on few very large companies with a lot of employees. These companies strongly depend on high skilled workers who are difficult to find: Threat of enterprise relocation.
- Women work mainly part-time; especially for them it is difficult to find qualified jobs.
- Retail trade in the core city faces high rents and is only able to survive thanks to special small-scale business incentives.
- There is plenty of inner urban brownfield on the one hand and on the other hand low-developed land uses on the municipalities fringes, due to private homes and companies' strong need of space for e.g. parking: High low-developed land uses despite natural population growth.
- There are great differences in real estate prices between the core city and the surrounding municipalities.
- Insufficient planning due to obsolete spatial plans and concepts.
- Insufficient public transport which leads to high private commuter flows at rush hours.
- Underdeveloped tourist offer despite high recreational values.

Four topics emerged from these main problem fields:

- Improvement of educational infrastructure with the help of regional cooperation and strengthening/upgrading public transport infrastructure;
- Adaptation of tourist offer to future demand;
- Supra-municipal land use management;
- Supra-municipal traffic concept.

Participants in the first workshop were asked to select two of these topics to be worked on during the second workshop.

Possible strategies to address problem/conflict resolution

Topic 1: Improvement of high education infrastructure

As input for the discussion on higher educational infrastructure, participants were given the following impulse:

Establishment of a Professional Level University

The LMR has a very good school system, but for higher education young people have to move to locations outside the region. Among the different possible orientations for a Professional Level University (metal technolo-

gy, tourism, senior care services), participants agreed to develop the idea of a technical college for senior care jobs. This would on the one hand meet the demands of the aging population in the Alps and on the other hand attract young people to the region in order to take advantage of the educational offer, since a college with such a faculty can only be found in Germany up to now. Additionally, women within the region would have more opportunities to find qualified jobs either in the university or in the adjoining infrastructure (senior centres, dwellings, care).

Participants picked up this idea enthusiastically, and the following questions were raised and discussed in the course of the workshop:

Is further extension of the existing and very well developed regional school system towards a Professional Level University reasonable?

Great acceptance was recorded concerning this idea; nevertheless, a working group would be needed to assess the demands of the region. Stakeholders especially from the economy, social sciences and decision-making sectors should be included in the development of the idea. The need of a very well devised strategy was mostly addressed to secure financial support from the provincial and federal governments.

Aren't there any possibilities to implement qualifying courses for local professionals in industry, in order to keep them in the region?

The idea of a Professional University for senior care jobs was adopted, but others were developed as well, since there is a demand of training/education of skilled workers in the region. On the one hand enterprises have difficulties in finding high skilled workers, while on the other hand employees have no possibility to further develop their skills in the region. Therefore, the original idea extended towards providing a broader range of professional training opportunities for employees within a new college to be established. Thus, the idea of a *Technical Education Centre Mostviertel* (TCM) was born.

What kind of interlinking effects are to be expected?

First of all, the region would gain a unique position in Austria, since such a college has not been established in the country yet. Therefore, it can be expected that people in the region, most of all younger people, will have the possibility to stay for further education, but this should also attract people from outside to teach and study. Since it was discussed to offer a broader range of trainings especially for adults, it can be expected that the economy will also benefit.

Can the existing infrastructure (public transport, inner urban brown-field) be used and to which purposes?

- In the core city there already exists a centre offering services for small newly established enterprises; this centre could also be used and extended as a college. Additionally, there are many vacant houses (private and commercial) which could be used, but a survey of vacancies would have to be carried out. One of the participant mayors mentioned that in his municipality such a survey is being carried out, but it would be necessary to extend it to the whole region in order to assess the overall potential.
- To factually involve the whole region an overall traffic concept is needed, especially addressing public transport which, according to participants in the first workshop, does not work satisfactorily. It was then proposed to establish a working group including representatives of both the public sector and the important companies in the region.

Is enhancement of regional competitiveness feasible?

The enhancement of regional competitiveness was anticipated, but it would need a well structured concept including the above mentioned topics as well as sound intra-regional cooperation.

What kind of arrangements are to be made?

- Establishing a working group which should include a broad range of representatives;
- Evaluating the situation: benefits for the economy, the public etc.;
- Survey of possible locations, either a single or multiple locations all over the region, also focusing on sustainable regional development and thus taking advantage of the potential of the region;



Fig. 5-15: Concept for the Technical Education Centre Mostviertel

- Development of a well articulated concept to gain support from the provincial and federal governments.

Figure 15 illustrates the two functions of the proposed TMC for the LMR Waidhofen/Ybbs.

Topic 2: Supra-municipal land use management

Participants found it hard to get tuned in to the second workshop topic. Even though land take is quite high within the LMR, participants did not consider this topic as one of the main problem fields. Even though supra-municipal land use management was one of the main topics selected after the first workshop, those participants who had selected it did not take part in the second workshop. Nevertheless, people who joined the second workshop did discuss it, and a few very interesting issues were raised:

Inner-urban business premises:

Intentions of sustaining inner-urban business premises are present, but this turned out to be rather difficult. In the core city newly established shops were granted special small-scale business incentives, but this backfired since once the incentives ended the shops closed again. There are plans to carry out a site analysis to re-convert industrial vacant premises into cultural or shopping centres.

Living space for young families:

Especially young families move house to the surrounding municipalities since real estate prices are very high in the core city. Additionally, the “Wohnbauförderung” (housing aid¹³) common throughout Austria has a negative effect on inner-urban residential areas. Some municipalities have already undergone analysis of building sites to distinguish between favourable and unfavourable locations for promotion and to increase attractiveness.

Intra-regional Cooperation:

Participants argued that intra-regional cooperation concerning land use management would be useful in some areas:

- Some areas within the LMR are affected by yearly flood events and cannot be used for further development. A joint protection against flooding would be one approach.

¹³ The housing aid is an instrument offering subsidies in terms of low-interest loans, benefits and grants to make the basic housing needs more affordable for the population.

- A regional spatial planning plan would be desirable, especially concerning leisure facilities.

Instruments and best practices to be possibly adopted/ followed.

The instrument presented to support the establishment of a Professional Level University for senior care was the inter-municipal location marketing exemplified by the region of Pillerseetal/Tyrol, Austria. Participants appreciated the instrument but expressed the need of developing an LMR-specific instrument by establishing a working group to initiate the establishment of such a college.

We presented the following instruments to be worked on concerning the topic of regional land use management:

- Alpine Plan;
- Regional land use plan;
- Consideration of extent of soil sealing in land plots in the establishment of sewage fees;
- Municipal eco-land account;
- Urban development contract.

Since it proved hard for participants to tune in to this topic, the instruments presented were not discussed in detail.

Additional comments on the pre-selected common thematic focus: Intra-regional cooperation

Within both topics intra-regional cooperation was covered, also because stakeholders from the whole LMR were invited. Additionally, there already exist cooperation initiatives (like the “Eisenstraße”) but mainly focusing on tourism. Of course the question arose how a Professional Level University can be implemented in the region by focusing not only on the core city but taking advantage of the infrastructure of the surrounding municipalities as well.

Possible stakeholder-identified DIAMONT follow-ups

At the end of the second workshop participants expressed their interest in developing the idea of implementing a Professional Level University. Since such an implementation would need back-up from strategic

regional stakeholders, as well as from the provincial and federal governments as main investors, a working group would be needed to evaluate the feasibility conditions thoroughly. Since one of the main topics for the next LEADER+ programming period (2008-2013) will be “teacher and pupils within the region” - 25 municipalities of the wider region being involved - the ideas developed during the second workshop will be assimilated into LEADER+ project application; thus further development of the idea will be ensured.

As for the above mentioned DIAMONT video, demonstrating participatory work and progress in different Alpine test regions may provide an impulse for further planning activities in Waidhofen/Ybbs Region as well.

5.6.4 Conclusions, lessons learned

Participants in both workshops showed their great interest in having such a platform for participative regional exchange within DIAMONT framework. However, during the second workshop participating stakeholders explained the low number of participants with an over-saturation of events of all kinds, arguing that an initiative on supra-regional cooperation had already taken place some years ago.

The World Café method proved to be an excellent instrument to stimulate discussion and bring stakeholders (policy-makers, businessmen, administrators, public services and local population) together and to start implementing participatory work and intra-regional cooperation.

University students were included in the process of the first workshop to develop their professional skills for their future jobs in planning, moderation or public relations; the presentation of their results and experiences, realised in the University of Innsbruck, was visited by more than 50 persons. It helped disseminate DIAMONT approach within the academic community and proved to be a leverage instrument for DIAMONT mission, ideas and instruments. Students who participated in the workshop maintained that they have learnt a lot, and one student is even planning to work with DIAMONT World Café method in her diploma thesis. Participants in the presentation (University teachers and students) expressed their positive impression on DIAMONT approach.



6

**Summary results and lessons
learned**

6 Summary results and lessons learned

6.1 Main discussed topics: highlighted problems, objectives and solutions

In the workshops several topics were discussed. Despite test region specificity, it remains possible to identify general thematic fields commonly covered, although often differently articulated and specified:

Economic development:

Economic activities are of crucial importance for further development especially because they create jobs. But even though the test regions are predominantly employment centres, they are facing many problems. Some (Idrija, Immenstadt-Sonthofen) have potential problems due to mono-structural economy or unbalanced productive structure (few big enterprises). There exist underrepresented activities that should be fostered (depending on the region, tourism, forestry, eco-farming, etc.). Shortage of adequate building and industrial/commercial space can hinder further development.

Regional cooperation:

Without more intensive cooperation between municipalities and without a common vision for the region there will be no perspectives in the long run. There are some important differences between test regions regarding regional cooperation. A range of instances of inter-municipal cooperation was provided covering sectors such as tourism marketing, co-funding of public transport, waste disposal, public health, etc. In France, the 'Pays' are seen as a first step towards more comprehensive approaches; at the moment, the main objective is to create preconditions for the implementation of a '*Communauté d'Agglomération*', to which responsibilities regarding housing, transportation, environment and economic development would be transferred. In some test regions (Slovenia and Italy) cooperation structures have proved poorly effective so far. Closer cooperation was suggested in the following sectors: tourism, public transportation, retirement benefits, childcare, strategies for industrial and commercial development and marketing, regional databases, etc. Development of cooperation needs better information not only for mayors and stakeholders, but also for the public; it was also suggested (France) that municipal bulletins be disseminated at wider regional level.

Land use management:

For a number of reasons (morphology, natural hazards, environmental assets), a limited amount of space exists in the Alps, that is suitable for construction and productive activities. Thus, land use management represents one of the crucial elements of sustainable regional development in the Alps. Many problems are related to this sector: 1) lack of adequate land management capacity and planning tools; 2) frequent conflicts between different actors (agriculture, tourism, industry, trade etc.), which are normally directed towards exaggerating consumption of scarce available land; 3) maintaining rural landscapes does not always meet with recreational demand. Among the discussed solutions, a “densification“ of city centres and settlements seems to be advisable, although possibly not fully acknowledged by all stakeholders yet. In the end, there is a need for an integrated vision able to sustainably adjust the spatial requirements of productive sectors - including environmental enhancement - bearing in mind expectable demographic trends. Scarce land resources could be better managed at regional (inter-municipal) level.

Demography / demographic change:

Demography seems to be one important factor, since all development relies on (qualified) younger population, which is rare in mountain areas due to aging and outmigration (the former process is present in all selected regions). Unbalanced age-structure of population can be related to factors such as property prices, accessibility of services and, particularly, employment opportunities.

Services:

Services have become the most important economic sector: they are tightly connected to human welfare, especially public services, and to productive activities when they enhance the economic environment.

Due to the sparse settlement structure, services in the Alpine area are often weak and unsatisfactory. This is why a specific model for services in mountain areas is needed, based on flexibility and, again, on a regional vision: rationalisation should be pursued, but not at the expense of local populations. Education is seen as one key sector in order to fight against outmigration of younger population.

Transportation:

The main problem seems to be isolation (related to both transportation and communication in general) and differences between centres and rural areas. Concerning public transportation, it should be optimized, adapted to changing needs and encouraged against private mobility, even though the sparse settlement structure poses a challenge in terms of sustainability.

Institutions:

Once again, the issue is to be raised here of the small size of municipalities (this affects mostly Italy and France): low-populated municipalities have no potential for effective promotion of innovation and successful development. Fostering broader cooperation seems to be the only effective solution. Additionally, local and regional authorities have to implement sounder participatory and collaborative processes and more clearly pursue transparency in decision-making: without full involvement of local populations, no sustainable regional development can be attained. A common vision must be reached in order to strengthen efforts and prevent conflicts.

6.2 Lessons Learned

The first lesson learned could be referred to *workshop participation*: it turned out to be somewhat low, when considering the number of invitations sent out. For Waidhofen and Tolmezzo test regions, this was particularly true as far as local authorities are concerned: the latter case could be also partly explained by evoking fear of becoming exposed to criticism from citizen groups. The only solution in order to try to overcome such a basic handicap seems to consist of selecting issues and objectives to be straightforward and, above all, clearly perceived as beneficial and (promptly) reachable in order to effectively address participation.

Enhancing inter-municipal or *intra-regional cooperation*, which was identified as the common topic to be jointly covered during workshop 2 in all test regions, proved to be rather promising, especially where (Alpsee-Grünten) the test region boundaries matched already existing cooperation structures. In the other cases, additional meetings would probably have been necessary to productively re-direct stakeholders' focus. It has to be noted, though, that the few successful instances could possibly have been objected to as resembling dedicated working

groups substantially made up of municipal decision-makers, rather than proper forums open to all actors, including citizen groups; in the end, all this seems to question the effectiveness of pursuing participation in its traditional inclusive concept: should instead collaboration among specifically selected figures be best suited, especially when concrete concerted results are aimed at? Definitely, European - and Alpine¹⁴ - way to less representative and more participatory democracy still appears to be a long way...

Extra work would have proved fruitful as well when aimed to enhance *transnationality*. The possible implications of presented transnational instruments and best practices turned out to be hard to grasp in their full extent by local stakeholders: a more intensive inter-partner discussion on national specificities, followed by additional workshops devoted to this issue (possibly featuring foreign expert participation) could have proved beneficial. The foreseen disclosure of the prepared DIAMONT Instrument Database, to be accomplished in the shortest delay to avoid its becoming outdated even prior to public use, could compensate for poor workshop transnationality: local stakeholders have generally perceived such a tool as a potential valuable knowledge provider. To these purposes, one important follow-up activity could consist of identifying some institution to which updating of the database could permanently be allotted: SOIA seems well suited to such a task.

Oddly enough when one considers that we are supposed to live in an advanced information society, another crucial issue consists of calling for wider and more effective *information*, communication, networking, dissemination of knowledge and achieved results. This one appears to substantially underlie many of the above (refer also to chapter 5.1) mentioned aspects, where information and knowledge widely perceived needs seem to be severely affected by either deficiency or unequal opportunities for access, or both. Quite often, information is not regarded by providers as an issue deserving professional care and lasting investment, but rather as something occasional, depending on almost extempore individual initiative: to quote but one example, Italian stakeholders recalled the quite inexplicable and unreasonable stopping of regional federal financing on updating and conversion into digital format of the established database of municipal Master Plans.

The latest comment above raises the issue of what we could philosophically label as *time and space*. As we have somehow anticipated, timing questions the conflicting requirements on the one hand of suc-

¹⁴ Except Switzerland, probably.

successful implementation of intra-regional cooperation - as intertwined with the objective of sustainable regional development - which requires long-term perspective and constant effort and purpose; on the other hand, we have the mid/short-term spans of elected decision-makers, whence sustainability is likely to be regarded as uselessly time-consuming and poorly rewarding. As for spatial levels, the selection of a suitable scale to effectively enhance wider participation in decision-making requires careful analysis of a number of issues:

- Municipal level is clearly too small, especially in the Alpine context, to adequately pursue sustainability, innovation and visioning;
- Supra-municipal entities composed of too many municipalities are unlikely to reach consensus on crucial issues - usually allotted to municipal responsibility - such as land resource management: even when similar preconditions and problems exist, they are unlikely to be perceived as such by too many actors;
- Functional criteria to identify suitable spatial levels, as with DIAMONT Labour Market Regions, can be a good starting point, but other criteria need to be taken into account as well in order to refine such basic aggregations;
- Present and past administrative, historical and cultural boundaries have to be borne in mind and respected to some extent;
- Sustainability, once again, calls for environmentally meaningful spatial scales, such as landscape units and, particularly, river basins or sub-basins or, more generally, water bodies catchment-areas.



7

Conclusions

7 Conclusions

The main aims of WPs 10-11 were to implement a participation process in selected test regions, including a bottom-up approach in order to assess the instruments identified as suitable to steer development and, particularly, land resource management towards sustainability. Special care was devoted, by applying the same participatory approach, to seek appropriate solutions to problems detected in these regions. Through such an approach, local populations' needs could be better assessed and consequently instruments could be identified that best fit the specific situation of the test regions.

The Alpine space is marked by great diversity. This is reflected not only in different living conditions, habits, and traditions, but also in problems. Although basic difficulties faced by Alpine regions are shared, such as poor accessibility and lack of building space, each region faces its own development problems and these must be tackled by taking into consideration the specific conditions of the region. At the same time, each region should be treated without neglecting the broad Alpine perspective. Transnational knowledge of problems and solutions is therefore needed to enable balanced development of the entire Alpine area.

With such a view, the Alpine Convention has been established with the long-term goal of protecting the Alpine environment and promoting sustainable regional development, basing on the endogenous potential of Alpine regions and populations. In this regard, participation processes are of crucial importance for further development, especially when instruments and tools appropriate for sustainable regional development have to be implemented. According to recent concepts, the main potential for sustainable regional development should be sought in the region itself, starting with human, social, and environmental capital, followed by tacit knowledge, institutional innovation and flexibility, regional identity and interpersonal contacts. Not only should local/regional potential be used, but local/regional ideas, expectations and initiatives must also be respected in order to attain harmonized development and avoid further centralization on the one hand, and marginalization and depopulation on the other. These concepts have clearly been confirmed during the workshops: use of all types of local assets has appeared crucial to gain competitiveness and attractiveness and sustainably foster development. Together with local initiatives, interregional cooperation should also be established, based on exchange of knowledge and, if pos-

sible, also on common actions, especially in regions where problems are shared and can be effectively solved through cooperation between local and transnational actors.

For this reason, DIAMONT project sought an adequate response from the selected communities on the instruments and tools developed within the project, being well aware of the fact that all research is limited when not verified and tested in real situations. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of research-based knowledge with the needs and opinions of local stakeholders has helped local communities identify their problems and seek opportunities for solving them. In addition, not only local impulse was given, but interregional comparison and exchange were also enabled since not only were the foreseen workshops carried out in five different countries and six different regions, but a transnational database was also prepared, containing over 100 entries on instruments and best practice examples available in the above countries and regions and suitable to steer development and land resource management; from this database, DIAMONT moderation teams drew some selected tools to be submitted to stakeholder scrutiny during the workshops; besides, test regions' stakeholders claimed they are eagerly awaiting the foreseen imminent database disclosure to the public.

It is satisfying to acknowledge that the participation process has resulted in free discussion and promising prospect cooperation between local stakeholders, basing on one crucial aim - to improve the situation in the regions and enable further development. In this way, local dynamics can be strengthened, some new ideas have appeared and - through DIAMONT expert research findings - exchange of transnational knowledge has started. For all these reasons, DIAMONT workshops have proved successful, enhancing learning processes in the regions and among the regions. In the end, we believe that DIAMONT can be regarded as a good example of a bottom-up approach, especially if workshop results and foreseen follow-ups can find further application and additional concrete actions are performed in the test regions and other similar Alpine contexts.

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