ACCESS

Improving accessibility of services of general interest – organisational innovations in rural mountain areas

- AS priority area: Accessibility and Connectivity
- Duration: 01/09/2008 - 31/08/2011
- Project webpage
- Project on the website of the Alpine Space Programme

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Project summary

ACCESS was an INTERREG IV B project developed in the framework of the Alpine Space Programme (ASP). It involved eleven PPs from Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland. The partners had come together to improve the accessibility to services of general interest in sparsely populated mountain regions.

The maintenance of a spatially and socially equal accessibility to services of general interest (SGI) is a core issue to the functionality of mountain areas. However, the ongoing territorial concentration of SGI leads to a vicious circle of further deterioration in the quality of provision which in turn causes a decreasing demand of the existing services. The withdrawal of SGI has many negative consequences for the affected regions of which a reduced functionality, competitiveness and a higher amount of

motorised mobility are the most pertinent.

The ACCESS project therefore aims at improving the accessibility to SGI in sparsely populated, mountain areas. This will be done mainly by finding new forms of organisation of SGI, using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and fostering demand oriented, integrated mobility systems. To achieve these ambitious goals, ACCESS builds on a transnational approach and on participatory methodologies to assess the specific demands of stakeholders on different levels.

Hypotheses

- Coordination of sector policies to prevent exploitation of natural resources and single-sector economies
- Sensitive Alpine territory requires appropriate and diversified measures (consensus-oriented multi-stakeholder approach)
- Rural-urban partnership requires vital networks and processes
- Cross-sectoral and integrated approaches are needed to slow down impacts in rural areas
- Rural areas need to cooperate and complement each other
- Ageing population requires adaptation and offers opportunities for Alpine areas

Keywords

- accessibility
- public services
- urban-rural partnership
- governance

Topics

- unspecific
- Balanced accessibility
- peri-alpine relationship
- Developing access to information and knowledge

Results

Results of a project can be differentiated in outputs, outcomes and impacts of an intervention. Source:OECD Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management.

Outputs

Output	Category	Language(s)	Target group	Remark
Final Report	Report	EN	Policy makers, civil servants / administration / planner / scientists / specific institutions	Final results of the ACCESS project and recommendations

Output	Category	Language(s)	Target group	Remark
Regional Intermediate Reports	Report	EN	Policy makers, civil servants / administration / planner / scientists / specific institutions	Regional Analysis on pilot areas on status quo with regard to different indicators (connectivity, population density etc.).
Transnational Intermediate Report	Report	EN	Policy maker; civil servants / administration; Planner; Scientists; Specific institutions	Transnational comparison on situation in different pilot areas with regard to services of general interest.
25 implemented pilot projects	Report	EN	Policy maker / civil servants / administration/ planner/scientists/specific institutions	25 implemented pilot projects which serves as model on how to improve service of general Interest in mountain areas.
8 strategies for better accessibility to services of general interest	Report	EN	Policy maker; civil servants / administration; planner; specific institutions;	on the basis of the pilot projects, the ACCESS partnership developed 8 strategies for better accessibility to services of general interest in mountain areas.
Regionalplanung für den Ländlichen Raum - Neue Wege zur Grundversorgung in Ländlichen Räumen	Report	D	Policy maker; civil servants / administration; planner; specific institutions;	Description of new ways of service delivery in the rural area (Region Südlicher Oberrhein).
Verbesserte Erreichbarkeit von Einrichtungen und Dienstleistungen der Daseinsvorsorge im Alpenraum - Strategien und Gute-Praxis-Beispiele	Brochure	D	Policy maker; civil servants / administration; planner; specific institutions;	Description of ACCESS results.

accessibility, public services, urban-rural partnership, governance]

Résumé of project outputs

Results which are directly or indirectly suitable or applicable for practitioners / politicians and civil servants / administration:

- The pilot actions-database can be directly used by practitioners / politicians and civil servants / administration.
- The roadmaps are meant for further use in the whole Alpine Space: "To that end, this paper picks up on the results achieved through the development of various strategies in a number of

model regions in order to make such findings available to the rest of the Alpine Space and with the hope that all Alpine regions will be able to reap the benefits of the experiences gained within the DEMOCHANGE framework. Also documented below are methodologies for the transnational development of spatial planning and regional development strategies that were tested by international experts during several workshops held in Italy, Austria, Germany, and Slovenia." (Roadmap, p. 7)

- The Swottool is useful for municipalities and regions for a first analysis, but without experience not easily applicable.
- The Public Participation Manual and Materials are useful for practitioners and administrations to give some ideas, but unexperiences people would need support.

Which of the project results are usable for which aspect of SSD and which are the most relevant for practitioners / politicians and civil servants / administration?

- Most relevant for practitioners / politicians and civil servants / administration is the database of pilot actions.
- The roadmaps give background information about demography-related objectives in spatial planning and regional development.
- The SWOT-tool is suitable for all aspects of SSD as long as strength-weakness-opportunities and threats can be clearly identified.
- The Public Participation Manual and Materials are describing general methods applicable for all aspects of SSD which can be discussed in a broader public.

Are there results which need further steps to be useful for practitioners / politicians and civil servants / administration?

- Many outputs are only available in English which could be obstructive for practitioners / politicians and civil servants / administration. Translations into the different alpine languages could be helpful.
- A document "Analysis of demographic data: WP4 list of indicators & guidelines for data collection is named in "Output 4.5 - Work Package 4 DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE IN THE ALPINE SPACE short regional reports with summary", p. 8, but could not be found at the homepage.
- The database of pilot action is useful to give ideas for action, but to transfer them to other regions would need more information in some cases

Which kinds of stakeholders have been involved, how have their competences been used in the project and are there options for a better implementation?
Mainly local and regional policy makers (mayors of municipalities), administrations and public service providers were involved. In context with participation also the public had the opportunity to contribute.
Are the results (tool, method, indicator, recommendation) directly or indirectly addressing the strategic objectives for the Alpine Space?
The SWOT-tool, the pilot actions and especially the roadmaps contribute to the strategic objective "Balance and equity in access to services of general interest across the Alps". The systematic SWOT analysis is suitable to detect the demographic challenges of the regions and can raise awareness for them.
What could be long-term outcomes of this project? If none, why low impact? Why high impact? What is needed to achieve outcomes in the long-run?
Some pilot regions started projects in the frame of Demochange, which are continued after the project ended. E.g. the pilot region Nidwalden started 4 activities which are pursued (Revitalize old knowledge; Future Living Facilities; On the spoor of culture and nature; Apprenticeship in trade and crafts) (Source: http://othmar-filliger.ch/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/IGWestStans_20131218_2.pdf)"

Further long-term outcome could be higher awareness for the issues of demographic change and their implications in the pilot regions.

Outcomes and Impacts

Unlike project outputs, outcomes and results cannot be described in a standardised way. Therefore, they are listed as free text:

Achievements that could be further implemented

The SWOTTOOL can be implemented in all Alpine regions to identify the challenges connected to demographic change. A translation of the pilot activities and the possibility to contact a person in case more information is needed would ease the implementation of pilot activities in other regions as well as free access to all documents named in the pilot activities database.

Remaining gaps

Besides the "Short regional report book with summary" for each of the ten pilot regions only for the three pilot regions in Austria and Germany more detailed versions of the analysis are available. The short regional reports are an output of the WP4, which was dedicated only to the analysis of demographic change. The further work in the pilot regions is not documented in form of reports, but only in the pilot action database. These descriptions are quite short and documents, which are connected to a pilot activity are just named, but not available (e.g.: pilot activity "More Mobility, local supply and social integration for elderly people": a questionnaire is named, but not available: Ankündigung DT Seniorenerhebung Fragebogen.dox, Annuncio IT Seniorenerhebung Fragebogen.dox, Seniorenerhebung Fragebogen Version 9 DE.dox, Seniorenerhebung Fragebogen Version 9 IT.dox)

Emerging contradictions

Synergies

- Internal and external costs of living and commuting
- Sustainable settlement development
- Regional analyses
- Toolbox for analysing mobility, settlement patterns and service provision
- Decline of services in remote areas
- Pilot action database

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Last update: **2015/01/05 14:19**