

REGALP Project Summary

Project description, main findings, conclusions and recommendations

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1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Key data

REGALP has been carried out under the 5th Framework Programme between September 2001 and August 2004 (Contract Number QLK5-CT-2001-02329, total project costs 2,165.000 Euro).

Objectives

The overall aim of REGALP was to investigate the interrelation between regional development and cultural (=man made) landscape change and to propose improvements and adjustments to policies on EU and national level.

Research team

The REGALP research team included partners from six alpine countries and researchers from various disciplines. The project was co-ordinated by Wolfgang Pfefferkorn, Regional Consulting. The partners were:

- Regional Consulting ZT GmbH, Vienna
- University of Berne, Institute of Geography
- Cemagref, Groupement de Grenoble
- Alpenforschungsinstitut Garmisch Partenkirchen
- University of Udine, Department of Economic Sciences in co-operation with the Institutes of Geography of the Universities of Padova and Milano
- Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, Ljubljana.

Inter- and transdisciplinary approach

The project was divided into six work packages. Each of the partners was responsible for one work package and contributed to all other work packages. The interdisciplinary exchange within the team was organised through meetings every three months.

REGALP combines top down and bottom up approaches: in 7 pilot regions selected the research team co-operated with local stakeholders through interviews and 'future workshops'. In May and June 2003, two workshops were held in each of the pilot regions. In October 2003 local stakeholders and decision-makers from all pilot regions exchanged their experiences in the Conference of Regions in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia. The policy recommendations were discussed in expert workshops on national and EU level.

The REGALP pilot regions

- Wipp Valley, Austria
- Lower Enns Valley / Lower Tauern, Austria
- Visp / Saas Valley, Switzerland
- Le Trièves, France
- Isarwinkel, Germany
- Carnia /But Valley, Italy
- Upper Sava Valley, Slovenia

Work packages and methods

Work package	Description of the task	Methods applied
WP1 Policy screening	Identification of the relevance of the landscape issue in EU, national and regional policies, description of the administrative structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of legal documents, literature and internet sources
WP2 Regional development and landscape change	Analysing the interrelation between regional development and cultural landscape change, for the whole Alps and for the pilot regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection, computation, analysis and interpretation of development data on municipal level (1971-2001) • Accessibility analysis of the alpine regions (NUTS III level) • Definition of cultural landscape indicators, building and testing of hypotheses about the interrelation • Interviews with stakeholders in the pilot regions
WP3 Policy evaluation	Evaluation of selected policies relevant for the interrelation between regional development and cultural landscape, in terms of relevance, coherence and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification of policy objectives and definition of main policy approaches • Building logic models for the public action • Definition of a reference system • Literature review and expert interview as a basis for evaluation
WP4 Landscape scenarios for the Alps 2020	Elaboration of two different scenarios for 2020, each for the whole Alps and for the pilot regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of “macrotrends” by literature review • Elaboration of clustering models for the alpine areas • Elaboration of scenarios for regional clusters and for the pilot regions
WP5 The view of locals	Making public the view of locals on regional development and cultural landscape change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two workshops in each pilot region • Conference of Regions: exchange between stakeholders of all pilot regions
WP6 Adjusting policies	Making proposals for adjusting policies on national and EU level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of a reference system for sustainable development by reviewing documents • Literature review for compiling background information • Systematic review of results of all work packages • Expert interviews • Discussion of draft recommendations in expert workshops

The results of the analysis of landscape change and the change of spatial structures, the evaluation of public policies, the future scenarios and the view of locals were finally summarised to the main project findings (see chapter 2). Based on the project findings the team elaborated draft policy recommendations and discussed them with the relevant administrative bodies. The final recommendations can be found in chapter 3.

For detailed information: see www.regalp.at

2 MAIN FINDINGS

2.1 **During the last 30 years there has been a significant polarisation between prosperous and less favoured areas in the Alps.**

The analysis of data of 5.700 alpine municipalities for the years 1971 to 2001 has shown, that the spatial structure of the Alps is characterised by a complex and small-scale mosaic of different development types. These types can be grouped in some representative clusters that are largely determined by their economic structure and their relations with urban centres. For the last 30 years we can observe an increasing influence of alpine cities on their surroundings and a decline of “balanced municipalities” (where no economic sector is dominating). The interpretation and generalisation of the development trends on local level shows, that a significant polarisation between the prosperous areas (alpine cities and agglomerations) and the less favoured periurban and peripheral areas has taken place during the last 30 years. Furthermore, the alpine space is not a self-contained entity, but closely connected with the surrounding areas. The nearby metropolitan areas like Lyon, Torino, Milano, Vienna or Munich have a strong influence on the adjacent alpine regions, causing suburbanisation and the loss of functions of smaller inner-alpine cities. This phenomenon is most visible in parts of the Italian Alps.

2.2 **The changes of the alpine cultural landscape have been characterised by a high land consumption for development on the one hand and by extensification of land use and marginalisation on the other hand.**

In the different spatial clusters the following development of spatial structures and the corresponding changes of the alpine cultural landscapes can be observed:

- The prosperous central areas, i.e. the alpine cities and their suburbs lying mostly in the valley floors, contain 57% of the alpine population and 71% of the alpine working places on 23% of the alpine surface. They are characterised by the increasing importance of commuting and a strongly increasing number of buildings. Within the limited settled area many claims for land use have to be met. The high land consumption for buildings and infrastructures causes heavy pressure on landscapes. In the surroundings of alpine cities agriculture plays only a minor role, the share of part-time farming is high, and there is a significant polarisation trend also in agricultural land use: While the favoured agricultural sites have either been used with high intensity and at the same time competing with settlement development, the less favoured sites have been lying fallow or have got re-forested.
- The periurban dormitory areas depending economically on urban centres and the peripheral areas characterised by low accessibilities are the less favoured areas in the Alps. Many of them are facing a loss of working places and a decline of basic services, several peripheral regions show even a decrease of population. The agricultural sector is still playing an important role in peripheral areas, but this could be attributed more to the lack of economic

alternatives than to the vitality of farming. The agricultural policy of the last years has contributed to preventing a large-scale withdrawal of agriculture.

- Beside the urban centres, there is a second pole of growth within the Alps: the areas with intensive tourism. Although tourism-dominated municipalities are often remote and lying on a high sea level, some characteristic features are comparable to the prosperous alpine valley floors: There are many in-commuters, a strong increase in buildings and a low importance of agriculture. Nevertheless, in tourism areas the stabilisation of an extensive agriculture (on a low level) can be observed. Tourism infrastructures and a high land consumption are causing heavy pressure on landscapes and on sensible mountain ecosystems.

2.3 Increases of accessibilities have been a major driving force for regional development and cultural landscape changes in the Alps.

The accessibility analysis¹ of the Alps on regional level has shown that the increase of accessibility due to the upgrading of transport infrastructures is one of the major driving forces for regional development and changes of cultural landscapes. For individuals and enterprises the increasing accessibilities have caused an expanded range of action, and thus changed the patterns of land use. The analysis shows, that accessibilities of alpine centres (nodes of transport infrastructures) have grown stronger than those of the periphery.

But although there is some correlation between the regional level of accessibility and economic indicators, the economic prosperity of a region does not depend only on a high level of accessibility. There are prospering areas with low accessibilities and weak areas with high accessibilities. Many tourist centres located on high altitudes belong to the former category, while there are also examples of the latter: some areas in the Italian Alps (influenced by the extra-alpine metropolises from Torino to Udine) are economically lagging although they are characterised by very high accessibilities. So we can hypothesise that improving the connections between weak regions and nearby strong centres does not necessarily help to mobilise the potentials of the weak region, and that it can even increase the weak region's dependence. We can also conclude that transport infrastructure is only one of the different determining factors for a prospering regional development (another one might be the enhancement of the social capital).

For the future development of alpine regions we can suppose that the alpine areas with high accessibilities and a strong economic performance are those with the highest potentials, while in areas with low accessibilities and a weak economic performance future crises are very probable. The expected increase of accessibilities due to the further upgrade of transport infrastructure can also be considered as a main reason for the expected increasing polarisation in future: the average accessibility level in the Alps will increase by 150% between 1995 and 2020, whereas accessibilities of the transport nodes in the central areas will increase by 500% or even more.

¹ Accessibility is defined as the potential of reaching a number of inhabitants within a defined time limit.

2.4 As regards public policies, six main approaches of dealing with the interrelation between regional development and cultural landscape can be distinguished. In the sustainable development debate landscape issues play a rather subordinate role.

The screening and the analysis of policy documents in the alpine countries in the frame of REGALP have revealed that there are a number of laws and resolutions which contain objectives concerning landscape, particularly in spatial planning and in regional, agricultural and nature conservation policies. Beyond this, in REGALP we have tried to assess public policies towards the interrelation between regional development (RD) and cultural landscape (CL). The transnational synthesis of the analyses of policy objectives and instruments in the partner countries and in the EU has allowed to distinguish six main policy approaches dealing with the interrelation between regional development and cultural landscape in a different way. These are:

- Planning to conciliate regional development with cultural landscape
- Supporting agriculture for regional development and maintenance of cultural landscapes
- Forestry policies for regional development, cultural landscapes and risk prevention
- Supporting projects for cultural landscapes or using cultural and natural resources
- Infrastructures for strengthening regional development
- Protection areas for nature and cultural landscape

Only few policies and instruments are dealing directly with the interrelation RD/CL. In fact, most instruments are oriented – in many cases rather exclusively – either towards regional development (in the sense of strengthening economy) or towards landscape (in most cases with protective approaches), or they include rather general orientations towards sustainable development whereby the cultural landscape issue in one amongst others, being sometimes not explicitly mentioned. All in all, landscape issues often play a rather subordinate role in the sustainable development debate.

2.5 Landscape oriented policies are highly in accordance with sustainable development aims, but the coherence of the public action is impaired by deficiencies of implementation and co-ordination. The effects of landscape oriented policies are difficult to evaluate – they must not be over-estimated, however.

The REGALP policy evaluation has allowed a diagnosis on the relevance, coherence and impact of the public action within the analysed policy approaches:

- Relevance: In general, the cultural landscape issues addressed within the studied policy approaches are socially relevant and in accordance with the aims of sustainable development. Several tools of the studied policy approaches of agriculture, forests, project and planning can be considered as pillars of the public action favouring a better conciliation between regional development and landscape concerns.

- **Coherence:** A formal complementarity between many devices of the studied policies and instruments can be explained by their common general aim of an integrated and sustainable regional development. However, the apparent good coherence is based on rather global and non-operational objectives, and restricted by several factors: a lack of co-ordination and co-operation, competition between different sectoral aims and instruments, various deficiencies in implementation and a lack of territorial approaches. Such deficits are obvious in all policy fields and on all levels from EU to local. Furthermore, there are also policies like economy and infrastructure strengthening which barely take cultural landscape into account.
- **Impact:** Within REGALP we have achieved a rather comprehensive state of the current existing knowledge about the interactions between regional development and cultural landscape and the policies influencing them. Nevertheless, it was evident that the evaluation of policy effects was a very difficult task, due to the high complexity of the issue as well as to a lack of concepts, tools and data.

Furthermore, we must see that, compared to major policies, the policies dealing intentionally with landscape are minor ones. Within the global economic framework (like the trends towards a globalisation of markets) the studied policies are only to a very limited extent able to reduce unfavourable regional trends like spatial polarisation or segregation of land-use. However, the studied policies can contribute to an attenuation of negative impacts, and may have some importance on regional and local level.

2.6 The maintenance of the agricultural cultivation can be considered a major policy impact in the Alps – however, agricultural policy is contradictory and characterised by a mostly conservative concept of cultural landscape.

The REGALP policy evaluation allows the conclusion that agricultural policy is one of the key policies regarding the interrelation between regional development and cultural landscape change. Several instruments are especially important for the alpine space: the compensation payments for less-favoured areas compensate the natural competition disadvantages of the alpine agriculture; agri-environmental measures support the maintenance of an extensive, environmentally sound and small-scale alpine agriculture. These measures safeguard the agricultural incomes and contribute to the maintenance of the agricultural cultivation of the Alps. Thus, the high financial support for alpine agriculture appears justified. However, innovative and territorial approaches in agricultural policies remain too weak, and policies reflect the prevailing conservative connotation of cultural landscape concepts, not taking into account changes in lifestyle and social demand in the countryside.

All in all, agricultural policy still bears a certain incoherence in itself: there are significant contradictions between sustainability-oriented actions and other agricultural policies addressing competitiveness and agricultural intensification.

2.7 Public policies are widely promoting the balanced and endogenous development of mountain areas, but this stays often insufficient and shows many implementation deficits.

The REGALP policy evaluation allows the conclusion, that public policies widely promote a balanced and endogenous development of mountain areas, often based on the internal valorisation of the local resources. But the standardised character of the promoted development models, for example by favouring similar forms of rural tourism in different regions, and the insufficient consideration of exogenous development factors (e.g. the stimulation of an external demand) often are deficits of such policies. As regards sectoral policy approaches, the following observations have been made:

- Spatial planning tools are very promising because they address regional development as well as cultural landscape concerns, but spatial plans from the European to the regional level are often not sufficiently implemented. Reasons for that may be the vague and barely operationalised character of many planning objectives and provisions and the lacking links with other sector policies.
- Regional development instruments contribute to the strengthening of rural areas. As regards European policies, instruments like Objective 2, INTERREG and LEADER certainly can play an important role in strengthening rural areas in the Alpine Space. The LEADER bottom-up approach has an important potential for strengthening regional development in rural areas – in general as well as in the alpine space – but it stays limited in its financial means and extension. More generally, mainly the minor programmes (like LEADER) consider landscape issues explicitly, while most of the “mainstream” programmes and projects remain focussed on economic development.
- Transport policies have very strong but ambivalent impacts on regional development and cultural landscapes. However, at present landscape issues are still barely considered by transport and infrastructure policies, especially long-term effects are often neglected. While the upgrade of the high-ranking transport infrastructure (TEN) tends to increase the gap between favoured and less favoured regions, the upgrade of the local roads contributes to the maintenance of remote settlements and to the area-wide cultivation of land. Several transport infrastructure measures may also lead to more commuter traffic and induce a scattered settlement development with negative effects on landscape. However, long-term effects of transport infrastructure are strongly connected to the level of travel costs and organisational regulations of transport – thus transport policy beyond infrastructures will also play an important role for the future development of cultural landscapes.

2.8 Scenarios for the Alps in 2020 are a good basis for discussing alpine development. The future development of the alpine regions depends on global macrotrends, public policies and on the attitudes towards local resources.

The REGALP research team has worked out future scenarios for the Alps as a whole and for the seven pilot regions in the year 2020. The REGALP scenarios were not intended to be tools for detailed forecasts, but to build a basis for discussions – within the research team as well as with experts, policy makers and regional stakeholders.

At first, the review of existing forecasts and scenarios for different sectors (like demography, technology, economy, transport, environment) revealed some exogenous “macrotrends” for the future alpine development. These macrotrends as well as the above accessibility analysis indicate that the gap between prosperous central regions and marginalised peripheral areas will get bigger in the next years, and that metropolitan areas outside the Alps will gain more and more influence on the Alpine area. But the scenarios can be differentiated, according to the influence of sustainability oriented policies. In REGALP an “Inertial Scenario“ and a ”Towards Sustainability Scenario“ have been elaborated – the first one assuming a low, the second one a high influence of such policies.

Apart from macrotrends and general policies which can be considered as external factors for the future development of the alpine area, there are also internal factors for the future development of the different regional development types within the Alps. Two main factors have been identified:

- “Alpine remoteness” of a region determines its situation of marginality; alpine remoteness is a complex factor constituted by the distance from centres, the altitude, the topographic features and the transport facilities.
- “Presence and use of endogenous resources” determines regional development potentials. It means the physical presence of diverse resources (like wood, water, beautiful landscapes, local products or skills etc.) as well as the local policies and attitudes.

2.9 Will the Alps of 2020 be characterised by extensive dormitory suburbs, new wilderness areas and some carefully set up sceneries? – A scenario of further polarisation

For the REGALP ”Inertial” scenario we assumed that public policies will not be strong enough to change the direction of the general polarisation trend in the Alps. In this scenario, the alpine centres and their surroundings will continue to attract population and working places. In urban and suburban areas land use conflicts and negative environmental impacts will increase. Residential commuter areas will expand, while at the same time they may lose local services and local identity. On the other hand, peripheral regions will be facing further losses of economical potential, services and inhabitants. The number and extent of steady peripheral areas – where alpine remoteness is counterbalanced by local activities and economic resources – will decrease. Agriculture will be reduced to favoured and well accessible sites, whereas reforestation of less

favoured sites will increase. Wilderness areas, which were not long ago limited to the south-western Alps, will be restored (on smaller scale) all over the Alpine bow. Tourism will be facing fierce competition and concentration. Only the well equipped resorts on high altitude will be successful, areas on lower sea level and with less adapted tourism infrastructure will have to give up or change their profile. The areas of intensive tourism will be those who still care for maintaining traditional landscapes as amenities for visitors and as a capital for the tourism industry. Thus, we can indicate four main features of the future alpine cultural landscape:

- (1) intensively used areas in valley floors, subject to permanent land use conflicts, and characterised by a mix of housing and industrial areas, transport infrastructures, leisure areas and areas of intensive agriculture,
- (2) extensive dormitory suburbs with pleasant housing conditions, but with only few services and without own economical activities,
- (3) new wilderness areas of agricultural abandonment and depopulation, where natural re-growth takes over the traditionally cultivated landscape,
- (4) alpine sceneries carefully maintained with the specific aim of preserving traditional cultural landscapes considered as valuable for the illustration of regional identity and for the entertainment of tourists.

2.10 Or will the Alps of 2020 show a more balanced development, due to the efforts of policy makers and regional actors? – A “Towards sustainability” scenario

Although the macrotrends point at a further polarisation, the Alps still have possibilities to attenuate these trends and to direct the alpine development towards a more sustainable future. In the REGALP “Towards sustainability” scenario a more balanced development will be achieved, abandonment and depopulation of large areas will be prevented, the concentration of activities in the valley floors will be attenuated and better managed. This could be reached if public policies better consider the specific potentials and needs of the alpine regions. The reconciliation of preservation and development can assure functioning of landscapes as well as sustainable living conditions.

In the REGALP “Towards sustainability” scenario the alpine centres and their surroundings will continue to be centres of economic activities and attract population, but the emerging land use conflicts will be better managed. The commuter areas near the centres will succeed in keeping local services and local transport networks, the stronger ones also different sectors of economic activities. The peripheral areas will develop better than in the “inertial” scenario. There will be more steady peripheral regions where the difficulties of remoteness are counter-balanced by local activities and resources. Some growing peripheral areas can even profit from their peripheral position by developing soft tourism, multifunctional agriculture and protected areas with landscape resources. The spatial concentration of tourism will not be as strong as in the “inertial” scenario, because of the good development of soft tourism and synergies with other economic sectors.

2.11 Stakeholders of the pilot regions confirm the future threats and challenges. They underline the need for policy measures and projects reducing the further polarisation and creating better conditions for less favoured areas in the Alps.

The REGALP bottom-up approach with the workshops in the pilot regions and the Conference of Regions gave the local stakeholders the opportunity to bring in their own experiences and views on regional development and cultural landscape change, as well as on policies affecting cultural landscape. The discussion about regional future scenarios showed that mostly the future expectations of locals fitted quite well into the REGALP “Inertial Scenario”:

- Local population worried much about the loss of the diversity of cultural landscapes and the expected forest overgrowth. Generally, they wished to maintain the agricultural cultivation in the Alps, and estimated, that agricultural subsidies are vital for the regions. However, more differentiation of subsidies was asked for in some cases.
- Another major issue of the pilot regions workshops was the urban sprawl, the loss of vitality of town centres and the lacking consciousness about the architectural heritage. This subject is strongly connected to the change of regional identities. Thus, the debate about Alpine architecture during the Conference of Regions was rather controversial between conservation oriented approaches and the acclaim for a high quality oriented new architecture.
- Local population of several pilot regions worried about weak development of regional economies and even depopulation. They wished to develop regional economic activities and make a better economic use of their regional potentials – landscapes and forests are considered important resources. The inner-regional communication and co-operation structures were very often considered as not being adequate for that.

Furthermore, in the pilot region workshops needs for local action were identified, and some project ideas were developed, which were presented and exchanged in the Conference of Regions. The projects aim at making a better use of regional resources, improving the consciousness about the landscape, improving regional identity and enhancing the development of the cultural and natural heritage. The question of how to build the bridge between ideas and their implementation remained open in many cases, since implementation normally happens outside or after the research project. However, some of these project ideas have been developed further and integrated into programmes like LEADER+ by local stakeholders.

All in all, the REGALP team estimates, that the workshops were a very good and useful tool for integrating the perspectives of local population into research work. The local stakeholders appreciated the opportunity to take part in development projects and to exchange views with other people from their region. Apparently at present there are not enough local events like these. In the workshops it also turned out that landscape is a key element for regional identity. The landscape topic appeals to people directly and emotionally, since it is connected to every day activities and even to individual experiences in the childhood. Thus, the landscape topic has proved to be very useful for integrating locals into regional planning and decision making.

3 MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Future sustainable development of the Alps requires a better balance between economic regional development and landscape concerns. The co-operation between sector policies and innovative governance approaches should be strengthened.

A future sustainable development of the Alpine Space needs the balanced application of all the policy approaches as were identified in the REGALP project (see paragraph 2.4). Thereby, regional development interests (in the economic sense) and cultural landscape concerns should be better balanced and conciliated. On the one hand the spatial impact and the landscape effects of sectoral policies (like infrastructure, transport, technology and regional policy) should be better evaluated and considered. Thereby, the alpine cultural landscape has to be considered as an asset and not as an obstacle for economic development. On the other hand nature and landscape protection policies should not exclude economic aspects. Generally, more cross-sector approaches and integrated strategies will be necessary. This implies the enhancement of dialogue, a better co-ordination of and co-operation between sector policies and administration. On all levels, from the European to the local, adequate and effective co-operation mechanisms should be introduced or further developed.

3.2 Awareness raising measures should disseminate a comprehensive concept of the alpine cultural landscape; knowledge about the reasons of landscape changes and their interrelation with regional development should be enhanced.

At present, cultural landscape concepts are mostly conservative, emphasising the aspects of maintenance and conservation. At the same time, cultural landscape issues are not sufficiently considered by many economic activities and the corresponding sector policies. In the sense of a balanced and sustainable development of the Alps it will be necessary to disseminate a more comprehensive concept of cultural landscape, and to improve the knowledge about cultural landscape issues and about the interrelations between regional development and landscape changes. Awareness raising campaigns may concern the general public, professionals groups dealing with landscape or causing landscape changes, as well as the public administrations and politicians. The proposed activities include lessons in schools, universities and in the frame of the vocational education for farmers, planners and other persons dealing with landscape development. Another important target group are consumers, who should be informed about the interrelations between alpine agriculture, its products and the concerned cultural landscapes. Thus, consumers might be ready to pay higher prices for labelled alpine quality products. Last but not least, information activities focussed on policy-makers on all administrative levels will be useful.

3.3 Future perspectives are required for successfully balancing economic, landscape and environmental issues. Public policies need to be better adapted to future trends.

The REGALP analysis and interviews have confirmed that presently there is too much orientation into solving existing problems instead of anticipating and reacting to the problems of the future. The accelerated changes demand for a more flexible way of action. The alpine countries and regions will have to adapt to new trends and demands. In order to meet future challenges, the policies need to be highly responsive and take a prospective, future oriented approach. Future trends, emerging values and lifestyles, which do not fit any more into the traditional urban-rural classifications, require new theories and concepts, new policy approaches and adequate instruments for action.

3.4 The complex and small-scale spatial pattern of alpine development demands for a better territorial adaptation of policy instruments. More sensibility for specific regional and local situations is necessary.

The Alps are characterised by a complex and small-scale pattern of development trends. The diversity of the regional conditions also calls for diversified and regionally adapted public policies. The same policy instruments will not have the same effect in different regions. If public policies are expected to be effective, they have to be well adjusted to the different requirements on the local scale. The first step should be the enhancement of monitoring and evaluation of the territorial effects of public policies. The results should serve as the basis for the calibration of policy objectives and instruments to regional conditions and development trends.

3.5 Public policies should contribute to a spatially balanced development within the Alps. Especially marginalised regions need more support to make a better use of their regional resources.

Public policies should not contribute to an increase of the gap between prosperous and less favoured regions within the Alps, but give value to the differently developed areas. Policies should better take into account small-scaled regional disparities, consider the problems of lagging rural regions and promote urban-rural partnerships. Public policies should contribute to safeguarding the economic and social base of vital Alpine regions. Endogenous regional development should be enhanced and astutely combined with the exogenous constraints and opportunities. Public policies should better support regional actors in profiting economically from regional resources, particularly from cultural landscape. Especially the weak and peripheral areas, which are facing a decrease of population, economic activities and services as well as the abandonment of agricultural land, need more support. This should help them to make a better use of their local resources in order to turn their disadvantages into new opportunities, such as: high “naturalness”, good ecological conditions of the sites, amenity and peacefulness.

3.6 In the prosperous alpine areas the policy action should focus on dealing with phenomena of growth, on reducing pressure of development on the landscapes and on managing land-use conflicts.

Public policies should, especially in the prosperous alpine valleys and in areas with intensive tourism, contribute to reducing the pressure on landscapes and the negative environmental impacts of development. This needs an improved control of settlement development. Spatial planning aims should be better implemented. The trend towards suburbanisation seems difficult to be stopped, but the type and quality of the new suburbs can be significantly affected by spatial planning policies. Therefore, the aim should be to steer the processes toward suitable areas and patterns to ensure the quality of the resulting living environments. Policies should contribute to an improved management of land use conflicts and promote new and alternative negotiation procedures.

3.7 In order to maintain alpine settlements and the alpine cultural landscape, public policies should help to maintain the agricultural cultivation and search innovative ways to strengthen the alpine agriculture.

As alpine agriculture is a particularly important factor for cultural landscape, for the maintenance of alpine settlements and for the identity of alpine regions, public policies should contribute to maintaining the cultivation of alpine areas. Natural competition disadvantages of mountain agriculture should be further compensated, but this is not enough. The concept of a “vital countryside” requires keeping agriculture an economic activity, so the alpine agriculture needs to be economically strengthened. Since mass production is an option only for a very limited number of alpine farmers, the farmers in less favoured areas have to find additional opportunities to win their position in the market. The regional tourism sector and nearby urban markets may be promising options. Organic farming and ecologically sound forms of cultivation should obtain a specific support. Furthermore, the development of rural regions and the co-operation between agriculture and the other sectors should be enhanced.

3.8 Alpine tourism needs new strategies for facing the challenges of the future. The enhancement of a sound small-scale alpine tourism should bring profit to many rural alpine regions.

The development of new strategies for the alpine tourism should constitute a main focus of regional policies, because alpine tourism faces big challenges, which are due to the changing structures of tourism demand, to the economic concentration and to the foreseeable climate changes. This calls for alternatives to traditional ski-oriented tourism. On the one hand, the spatial concentration of intensive tourism to the most suitable areas seems to be rather favourable, because thus the problematic impacts on cultural landscapes can be better controlled. On the

other hand, public policies should support rural alpine regions in developing soft and small-scaled tourism. Thereby cultural landscape, regional products and typical regional resources should be put in the foreground of tourism development concepts and marketing strategies. The enhancement of co-operation with other economic sectors, agriculture above all, could enable a better use of regional resources and distribute profits from tourism more evenly across the alpine regions.

3.9 For the sustainable development of alpine regions it is necessary to strengthen bottom-up approaches and participation. Finding common languages and co-operation frameworks across societal groups will help to overcome real and mental barriers.

In several REGALP workshops the participants expressed their satisfaction with the fact that they were asked to bring in their opinion about the future of the pilot regions and about regional and cultural landscape development issues into a research project. Although there are some participatory planning processes existing on local or regional level, some stakeholder groups do not have enough opportunities to take part in development planning. So they feel powerless and are not able to adopt policies, programmes or plans. In an atmosphere of lacking communication politicians and administrations not seldom serve as scapegoats – they are blamed for anything that goes wrong.

We conclude that bottom-up approaches, participatory procedures and empowerment should be enhanced. Thereby, a better quality and acceptance of regional planning can be achieved, regional potentials can be better used, and land use conflicts can be discussed within a stable frame. It will be necessary to encourage the different stakeholder groups to more communication and to improve the co-operation structures within the regions. Furthermore, also the communication and co-operation between different regions should be enhanced. The use of different, well-known and innovative communication and participation tools, such as scenario workshops and the method of “future pictures and future stories”, should help to overcome sectoral, territorial and mental barriers. More publicity should be given to successful cases of participation.

3.10 Landscape is a key element of regional identity. Landscape tools should be more often used for strengthening regional co-operation and for participatory decision making.

Landscape is a key element of regional identity. The REGALP workshops have proved that the landscape topic is very useful for integrating local population into regional planning procedures and participatory decision making. Dealing with landscape changes and their reasons helps to overcome territorial, institutional and sectoral barriers, because landscape is an issue everybody can talk about from everyday experience. This fact should be more considered in discussions

about good governance on local and regional level. Landscape changes should more often be used as a communication tool and a unifying concept for comprehensive projects.

3.11 As regards regional development, managing changes seems to be one of the key challenges of the future.

The Alps, like many other areas, are facing an 'acceleration of acceleration'. This leads on the one hand towards an increasing physical accessibility and mobility, on the other hand to growing uncertainties with regard to regional identities, to cultural, social and ecological issues. Managing changes and supporting people to apprehend these changes and to adapt to new and unknown situations becomes an important issue for regional planning and development as well as for research. Hereby new and innovative strategies should be followed in order to enable diverse strategies for different types of alpine regions.

3.12 Research on rural areas demands for transdisciplinary approaches – going beyond the traditional system of research – and for the participation of regional stakeholders.

As regards research on spatial development, the famous "ivory tower" often acts as a mental barrier – this brings about that the target groups do not really understand and therefore underuse the generated knowledge. Very different from this, the REGALP experiences gained with local, regional and national decision-makers, in the pilot regions workshops and in the Conference of Regions have been predominantly positive. The REGALP team concludes that generally research on rural areas should be oriented more to the needs of end users: regional, national and EU policy and decision makers as well as NGO's. Researchers should involve these target groups into research work: not only at the end to tell them the results, but throughout the whole working process of the project: let the target groups bring in their needs and opinions, make them participate!

3.13 The predominantly conservative concepts of cultural landscape need some modifications – we suggest a public discourse about the objectives of cultural landscape development.

Most "cultural landscape" concepts as presently conceived have a prevailingly conservative connotation in public, which is reflected in policies: The terms of maintenance and conservation are most often used in connection with cultural landscapes, e.g. in agricultural and nature protection policies. Correspondingly, at present (and also in the next years) the subsidies aiming at the maintenance of the agricultural cultivation are the main financial focus of policy measures towards cultural landscapes. Public policies barely address development issues such as land-

scape design or landscape valorisation, just as little as the value of cultural landscapes as an asset for regional development, or the recreational, ecological or historic functions of cultural landscapes.

As a long-term measure, we suggest to start a public discourse about the general objectives of policies concerning cultural landscapes which goes far beyond the aim of maintaining the area-wide agricultural cultivation. Several questions need to be further discussed: *Which functions does cultural landscape fulfil? Which are considered as being especially important, and where? Does the preservation of museum landscapes for the sake of visitors make sense in specific cases? Who takes over responsibility for cultural landscapes?* The discourse should use scientific contributions from landscape research programmes and projects. In the long run this discourse should result in the development of new models of financing the maintenance and development of cultural landscapes. For instance, we can imagine the definition of cultural landscape functions for specific areas (similar to what has been done for forest functions for many years). Thus, landscape types could be defined, e.g. landscapes with a high recreational function, or landscapes with a high cultural value and a high need for action, or landscapes where the process of renaturalisation and a certain degree of wilderness would be acceptable.