



COMUNIS

Inter-municipal Cooperation for Strategic Steering of SME-oriented Location Development in the Alpine Space

Final Publication June 2012



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1. A brief introduction: Inter-municipal cooperation for commercial location development in the Alpine space

One should think that in a region such as the Alps, where land is a scarce resource due to topography and where efforts are constantly made to preserve the unique natural landscape, municipalities work together to strategically manage land use for commercial purposes. However, the reality looks a bit different. Driven by inter-municipal and regional competition and the fear of losing businesses and workplaces, municipalities tend to individually develop even unfavorable sites in order to satisfy demand. In fact, it is proven that in some areas of the Alps municipalities with some hundred or a few thousand inhabitants have on average 9–10 commercial/industrial areas on their municipal territory (WEISSENSTEINER 2012). Such practices are ecologically unsustainable. Moreover, they are costly if companies (have to) abandon their economic activities and leave behind unused infrastructure and buildings. This situation is aggravated when considering that local businesses mostly want to expand their facilities within the same commercial zone adjacent to the existing company site or build new ones in the countryside. Since the majority of the demand for commercial areas (80–90 %) originates from local or regional enterprises, this prevents abandoned structures to be re-valued. Eventually, such practice results in blots on the landscape.

This is exactly the point where the Alpine Space project COMUNIS starts and attempts to counteract above-mentioned malpractices and encourage joint approaches. Eleven partners coming from regions in six different countries have jointly developed cooperative and comprehensive strategies for inter-municipal Commercial Location Development (CLD) in the Alps. Based on the experiences gained in eight pilot areas, they formulated guidelines supporting municipalities to work out and implement strategies for CLD at the inter-municipal level.

But what does this mean now? Which challenges does COMUNIS intend to surmount?

Doing business is often a challenge for municipalities in mountain areas. Pressure on the municipalities is high. They are confronted with the demand for new infrastructure, housing and social services (often costly to maintain

in the periphery), while being faced with land scarcity, diverse land use interests, obligations to preserve the landscape, peripheral location with bad accessibility, etc. Moreover, economically, municipalities encounter decreasing budgets and revenue potential, increasing cost pressure and expectations on the part of inhabitants and businesses. This results in a competitive struggle for resources. Strategic and operative planning requirements increase to meet inhabitants' and companies' demands to the municipality as service provider. To 'survive' as a location, promotion and communication are essential, using new methods and technologies, such as Web 2.0, social media, etc., forcing municipalities to fulfill these demands.

Hence, it is necessary to save resources by searching for synergies. This can be reached by inter-municipal cooperation. Inter-municipal cooperation is an important approach of action but often also a 'hot potato' in the discussion on reforms at regional state and municipal level because, when implemented, it can result in a redistribution of responsibilities, tasks and finances. Bearing advantages but also disadvantages (as set out in section 5.2.2), inter-municipal cooperation is certainly not a panacea to remedy all the difficulties of all municipalities. But it can be a solution for a number of municipalities faced with said challenges. For them, inter-municipal cooperation for commercial location development (CLD) can be a means to hold existing or attract new companies to the area, to create job opportunities for locals, to sharpen a valley's profile, etc. Cooperation means pooling financial and human resources enabling municipalities to provide companies with location and marketing services and including them in regional development efforts. But this requires municipalities to take on inter-municipal thinking and working, to make economic use of local resources, as well as to involve the inhabitants in the location's development, fostering their participation in decisions that immediately affect them, therewith strengthening their feeling of belonging and identification with the area.

How municipalities can engage jointly with other municipalities and which steps they need to take to realize inter-municipal CLD is set out in chapter 5. The compact version of the Guidelines (find the full version of the Guidelines on the CD in the back of this publication) describes individual working steps, tasks to be carried out and aims pursued; it also provides indications and suggestions for inter-municipal processes of strategy development. Further, the Guidelines explain in single subchapters the working steps of the joint process, giving municipalities a hand to jointly steer their

commercial/industrial development in a strategic and future-oriented way. Chapter 2 summarizes the main findings and outputs of the project. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the pursued working structure of the COMUNIS project, indicating the inter-relation of working steps and pointing to individual activities and outputs. The COMUNIS pilot areas are introduced in chapter 4, giving an overview of the location profile of the municipalities and valleys, presenting the analysis and activities carried out and giving a future outlook.

2. Summary: Project results

2.1. Main findings

Experiences from the work in and with the pilot areas aimed at fostering inter-municipal commercial location development (CLD) led the COMUNIS partnership to the following findings:

- Inter-municipal CLD is to be understood as a long and continuous process.
- A close coordination between all partners involved is required to realize the joint initiative.
- There are no universally valid and easily transferable solutions.
- Economic and social conditions in the Alpine Space are heterogeneous, legal framework conditions are diverse.
- Options for action strongly depend on specific stakeholder constellation – trust is a main prerequisite for cooperation.

The size of the playing field of the municipalities for a suitable and possible solution is determined by the following parameters:

- the general needs and necessities of the municipalities, and particularly their demands concerning the cooperation for joint commercial location development;
- the legal and administrative framing conditions determining what municipalities are allowed to get off the ground;
- the “carrying capacity” of the basis of trust between the acting/involved persons/mayors defining the cooperation options that actually can be realized jointly.

2.2. Outputs

The project has resulted in the provision of the following outputs:

- Definition of the cooperation process
 - Procedure for devising and implementing inter-municipal CLD
 - From detailed situation analysis to adequate problem-solving
- Installation of management structures in selected pilot areas
- Guidelines on Commercial Location Development (chapter 5):
 - Process description, options for action, methods, tools, examples
- Knowledge management:
 - Information exchange via Wikipedia, LinkedIn, Slideshare, specialized and “cloud” platforms
 - Exchange between “inter-municipalities” in so-called “tandems”.

3. Work packages

3.1. Work package scheme and activities

In order to fulfill the task defined within the COMUNIS project and reach the objective of enhancing inter-municipal cooperation, project partners divided the project into seven inter-related work packages (WP). Each work package was led by a project partner supported by the other partners with contributions and inputs. The WP-structure is set out in Figure 1.

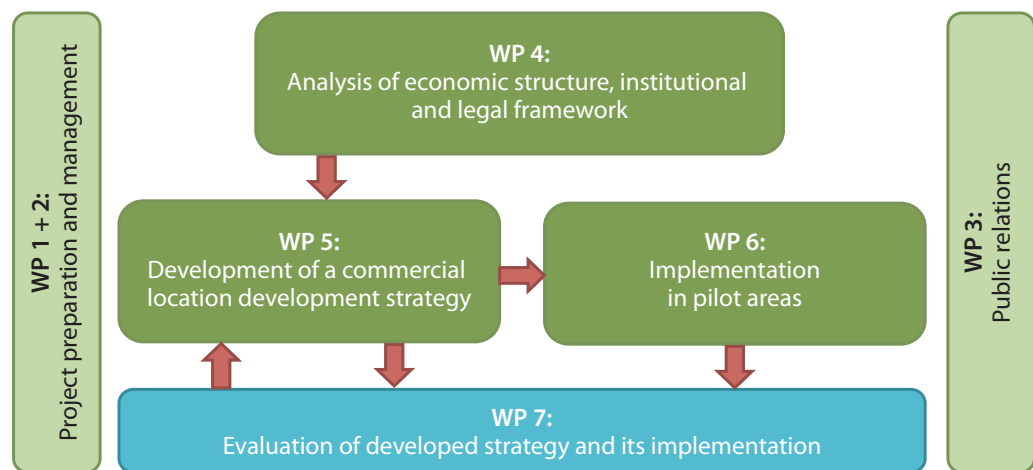


Figure 1: Inter-relation of the seven work packages (WP).

WP 1 & 2 – Project Management

In WP 1 a binding document which describes the project and gives detailed information on the work plan and financial figures has been established. It also contains all the most important information concerning the project's aims, strategy, activities and partnership. Further, the Lead Partner and the ERDF Partner have established with the project partners the division of the mutual responsibilities in a partnership agreement. The Lead Partner and the ERDF Partner share the responsibility for the proper setting up of reports about the project, whereby the ERDF-LP bears the responsibility for the financial part and the Lead Partner the main responsibility for the part related to project activities. Both closely co-operate and co-ordinate any project-related activity and ensure a professional management of the project. This is part of WP 2.

WP 3 – Information & Publicity

With the aim to sensitize municipalities, businesses and regional stakeholders for inter-municipal cooperation for commercial location development, COMUNIS carried out a number of communication activities (logo, project homepage, information brochure, newsletters, press releases). For the most part, these were made available in the four Alpine languages (German, French, Italian, Slovene) and English, to reach in particular local actors of inter-municipal cooperation and make project contents accessible for a broad readership.

At theme-relevant meetings and conferences at regional as well as international level (e.g. Swiss Research Market Regiosuisse, Alpine Convention Working Group “Demography and Employment”, etc.) partners represented the project and introduced the developed methodology, selected pilot activities, and final project results.

WP 4 – Examination

In a context of global competition, municipalities and regions need to share a common vision of the potential of their territory and have to know key factors driving economic and social development. WP 4 aims at developing a common understanding of these key drivers and identifying success factors in CLD via a common analysis of the pilot areas including the perception of local stakeholders. However, countries and regions have many differences and characteristics in terms of location conditions, policy and legal framework conditions. Thus, the COMUNIS team attempted to examine and compare the regions by means of an analysis tool. The project partners agreed that the method Balanced Scorecard (BSC) adequately fitted the project’s research and analysis needs. The WP is the base for all further WPs.

WP 5 – Development

The primary objective of work package (WP) 5 was to provide guidelines for initiating, planning, and implementing strategic commercial location development (CLD) on the inter-municipal level. To this end, WP 5 compiled instruments, tools and methods that can be applied in the various working phases of a CLD development process: Context – Analysis – Development – Implementation – Evaluation. For instance, the guidelines describe diverse methods of location analysis and options for business surveys, or they give

hints concerning inter-municipal cooperation in the framework of workshops or field trips.

Furthermore, the guidelines describe singular measures as well as comprehensive models for action of CLD, which were derived from the analysis of practice examples and literature research. The comprehensive models mentioned focus on land use management, promotion and communication, and provision of business support services.

In the subsequent WP 6 (see below), different organizational structures were developed and applied in the project's pilot regions in order to implement the models for action or singular measures respectively. The practical experiences of the pilot regions were systematically analysed and used to refine the approaches.

Additionally – with respect to the approach of commercial land use management – WP 5 developed and presented instruments for analyzing and comparing costs and benefits as well as environmental impacts of land development options.

WP 6 – Implementation

Within this WP, pilot initiatives were established and tested. The project partners specified concrete objectives of implementation in their pilot areas following the inter-municipal cooperation process and general milestones. WP 6 needed results of all prior WPs and the experiences made during the implementation process of CLD structures posed an essential input to the following WP 7 and provided practical content for the information and communication activities (WP 3).

WP 7 – Evaluation and Adaptation

Considering the inter-municipal objective of the project, the work package aims at evaluating the project development and implementation of the project strategy including the adaptation of the strategy on CLD. In order to assess the success of the project it is important to consider the impact it has had on the local level. This work package is the basis for the project prosecution also after the end of the activities. The evaluation and adaptation activities could create the conditions for transforming the knowledge management into concrete tools.

4. The pilot areas

The partnership brought together local, regional, and national entities belonging both to the private and to the public sector: institutions of higher education, regional development agencies as well as state bodies, private research institutions and municipal administrations. Being able to mobilize a broad range of skills covering both the field of theoretical knowledge and the field of practical experience played a crucial role for the acceptance and implementation of the project.

A network of observers (included in Figure 2) supported the general aim of the project. In particular, the observers engaged in the innovative approach of cooperation and contributed to the adoption of strategies of CLD and to its operational implementation. Both project partners and observers worked in selected areas (Figure 2), which are presented in the subsequent paragraphs, to test and implement the so-called strategy for CLD.

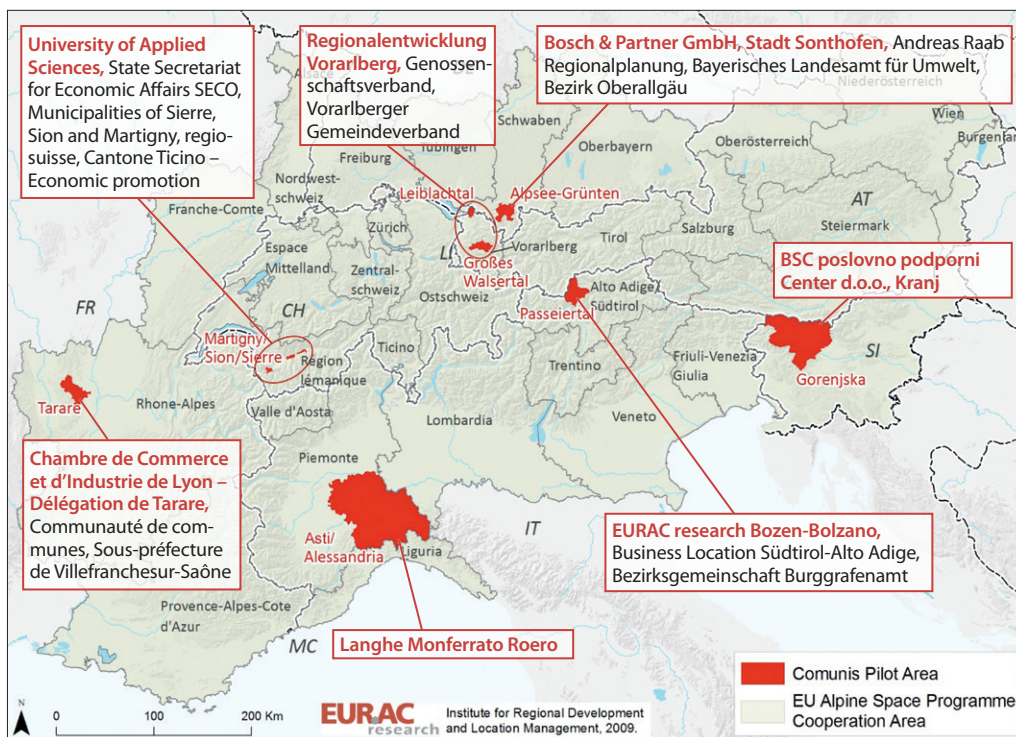


Figure 2: Map of the Alpine Space Programme area indicating the COMUNIS pilot areas and responsible project partners and involved observers.

4.1. Municipalities of Martigny, Sion, Sierre (Canton of Valais, Switzerland)

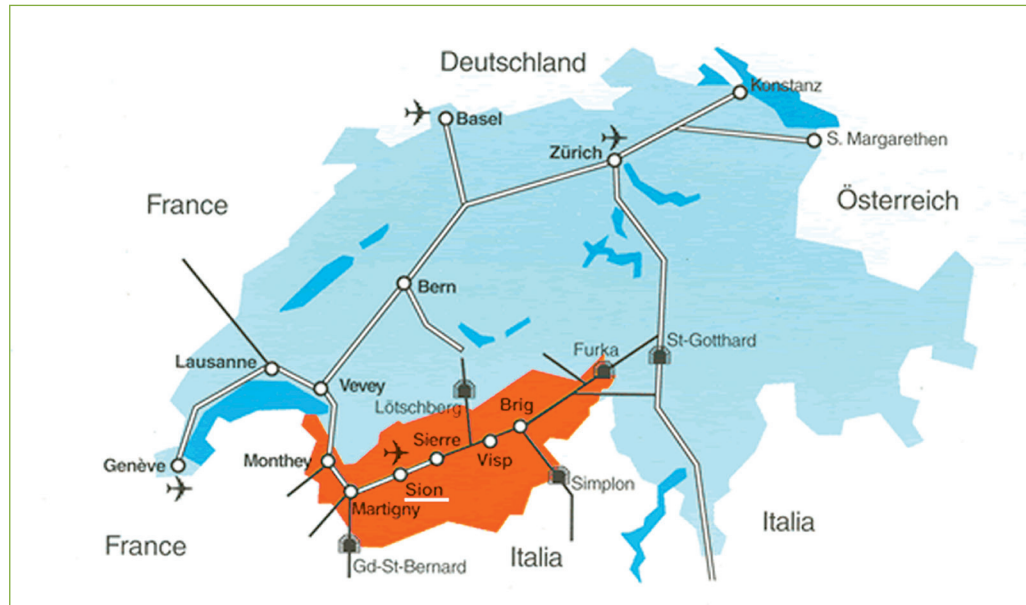


Figure 3: The three pilot cities in Valais, Switzerland

The city of Sion has become the main center of a modern urban area of tens of thousands of residents, bolstered by the growth of two other centers, in close relationship, Martigny and Sierre. The axis Martigny-Sion-Sierre is a driving force for the entire township. The town of Sion is very attractive to residents, public and parapublic institutions and small and medium enterprises (SME). However, its territorial development is uncoordinated. Between 1990 and 2010, urban sprawl observed in recent decades has been confirmed. This trend, particularly in the periphery, on large territories with low densities, led to deadlock in the mobility and generates important emissions. The main issue is to increase the attractiveness and quality of life of the region and thus, those of the township as a whole. The challenge is to curb urban sprawl by bringing together the framework conditions for the reception in a compact scope, of new residents and new jobs with a goal of planning in the medium term. This is one of the objectives referred to in the review of the “Plan d’aménagement des zones”, currently underway. The cantonal project of industrial ecology supports this effort for rationalization of resource consumption.

Sion:

1.185,1 inhabitants/km²

The industry of Sion consists of small and medium-sized enterprises. The best represented activities are the ones bound to the manufacturing of mechanical and electronic devices to the watchmaker's shop and to the micro-mechanics. The City of Sion also possesses a very interesting industrial fabric in the medical domain. In synergy with the "AggloSion" and "Rhône 3" projects, the service for economic promotion of the city wish to apply the concept of industrial ecology in order to improve both the environmental quality and the quality of the economic zone.

Sierre:

786,4 inhabitants/km²

Sierre knew a rather early industrialization in continuation of the creation of an aluminum factory (Alusuisse), at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, the twenty last years were marked by a strong diversification of industrial fabric. Many companies in semi-industrial matter developed in the wake of Alusuisse (became Alcan) and evolve in sectors like automation, the precision mechanics, the manufacture of half-finished products. The authorities are now seeking to reduce waste generated by these small industries and to coordinate regional development and infrastructure development of urban public transport.

Martigny:

646,5 inhabitants/km²

Martigny offers strong research capabilities in areas such as health care, biotechnology, micro-engineering, sensor technology, new materials and environmental technology. The municipality of Martigny develops for several years an ambitious energy policy, centered on the development of the renewable energies, the energy efficiency and the raising awareness of the citizens to the problem of the sustainable development. To reach there, the municipality of Martigny settled a vision: "Energy City". For the development of this vision, the city works in close collaboration with the distributing company of local energy and with the Energy and Municipal Research Center.

Analysis

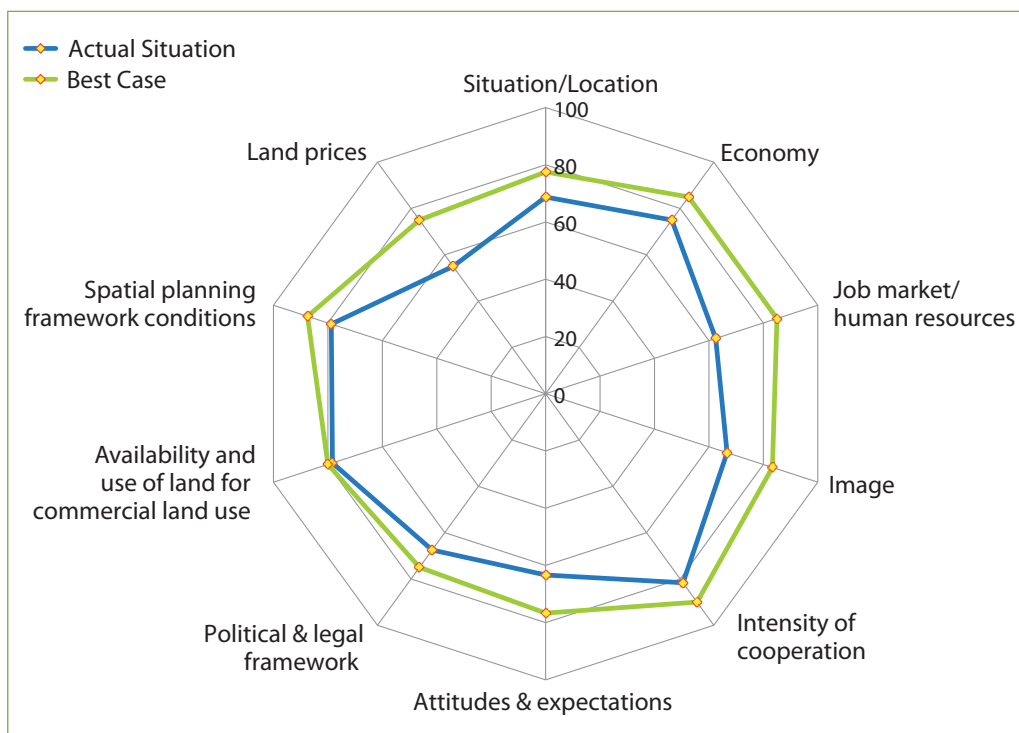


Figure 4: Balanced Scorecard for the town of Sierre

Table 1: Starting points for the implementation

	Location profile	Inter-municipal cooperation	Commercial land use management
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimize the consumption of energy. Develop the local valorization of co- and under-products. Decrease the production of waste. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster exchange between public authorities, industries and research institutes. Sensitize the political authorities to the concept of industrial ecology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect an integrated planning of the territory. Support a mix and a complementarity of activities within the industrial zones.

Activities

Industrial ecology

- Support of businesses concerning the management of raw materials and energy
- Turning discharges into production factors
- Possible municipal initiatives
 - Analysis of material/energy flows
 - Establishment of working groups and network

Figure 5: Strategy of development in Sierre and activities

Results achieved

As part of the Interreg project COMUNIS and of the cantonal project ECHO, the Antenna Valais Romand, the University of Applied Sciences of Western Switzerland Valais and the University of Lausanne have organized an international meeting to present examples of best practices on a new vision of regional development taking into account the economic and environmental performance of companies. To summarize, this is to involve environmental, energy and economic aspects in a sustainable vision of territorial development, in short the potential of industrial ecology and to integrate the expected trends in this field. The symposium «Nouvelles modalités du développement des territoires – Performances environnementales des entreprises» took place on the 19 and 20 January 2012 in Sion. Considering its span, the organization of an international symposium with presentation of case studies from Switzerland and abroad and the record of the colloquium proceedings is the main pilot action of the partner University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland (hereafter HES-SO Valais) for COMUNIS. However, other results have to be mentioned here e.g. the personalized visits of the principal generators of flow in the areas, participative workshop for the companies, the catalogs of incoming and outgoing resource flows, energetic collaborations between companies, economic breakfasts and a territorial diagnosis.

Assessment of the implementation

Due to a schedule incompatibility of the decision-makers, the choice of the final program has been reached with delay. The Antenna Valais Romand (Business Network) is indeed in undergoing restructuration. Not only had

that restructuration an impact on the status of implementation of the business concept, but also on the basic conditions of implementation: The association “Regional Development of Valais Romand» being the project director of ECHO, mission of the Council of State, the speaker for the implementation were no longer the cities of Sierre, Sion and Martigny but the Antenna with its reflection on the topic of industrial ecology for the Valais romand. Nevertheless, the objective of implementation – communicate, sensitize and form in industrial ecology – has been reached.

Outlook

The strategy will continue beyond the end of the project COMUNIS. It will be implemented in Sion and precised in Martigny. Having hosted the pilot project of industrial ecology, the town of Sierre is more advanced and will soon begin the third phase of its action plan, namely the sustainable management of business parks.

HES-SO Valais and project partner Langhe Monferrato Roero Società Consortile (LAMORO) formed a tandem region. In doing so the two pilot regions share their experiences in joint strategic development of commercial sites with particular attention for energetic management. They believe that the sharing of experiences and knowledge is of outmost importance to ensure the ongoing development of good practices in the field of industrial ecology. Potential partners interested in joining the tandem region after completion of the project COMUNIS in order to work up the gained experience and to question new developments are invited to contact:

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Sonia Abluton, sonia@lamoro.it

4.2. Alpsee-Grünten (Bavaria, Germany)

Main characteristics

The Alpsee-Grünten area is beautifully surrounded by the Allgäuer Alps and crossed by the two rivers Iller and Ostrach. It is known for its high quality of living as environmental quality and leisure facilities are excellent in this area. Due to its scenery and landscape, the area also is a popular tourist destination in winter and summer times. The city of Sonthofen, which has been awarded Alpine town of the year in 2005, is Germany's most southern city and the district town and hub of the district administration Oberallgäu. Like Sonthofen, Immenstadt is also a mid-size town and both are therefore the centers of the region equipped with respective functions: place of work, medical services, shopping location, secondary schools. One major challenge of the area is preparing for the closure of two stations of German Bundeswehr in Sonthofen according to the current stationing concept. At the end of the decade, two barracks with a total surface of 33 ha) will be available for civil use and development.

From the very beginning of the project two cities (Sonthofen, Immenstadt) and three villages (Blaichach, Burgberg, Rettenberg) participated in the joint development of the Alpsee-Grünten region. Functionally, the municipalities are closely linked with each other. However, the city of Immenstadt withdrew from the project in August 2011. But the remaining four municipalities further committed themselves to establishing a joint CLD concept in the Alpsee-Grünten region. Presumably, the cooperation will be extended, since the municipalities of Fischen, Bad Hindelang, Ofterschwang and Bolsterlang already expressed their concrete interest in promoting common CLD policies.

Analysis

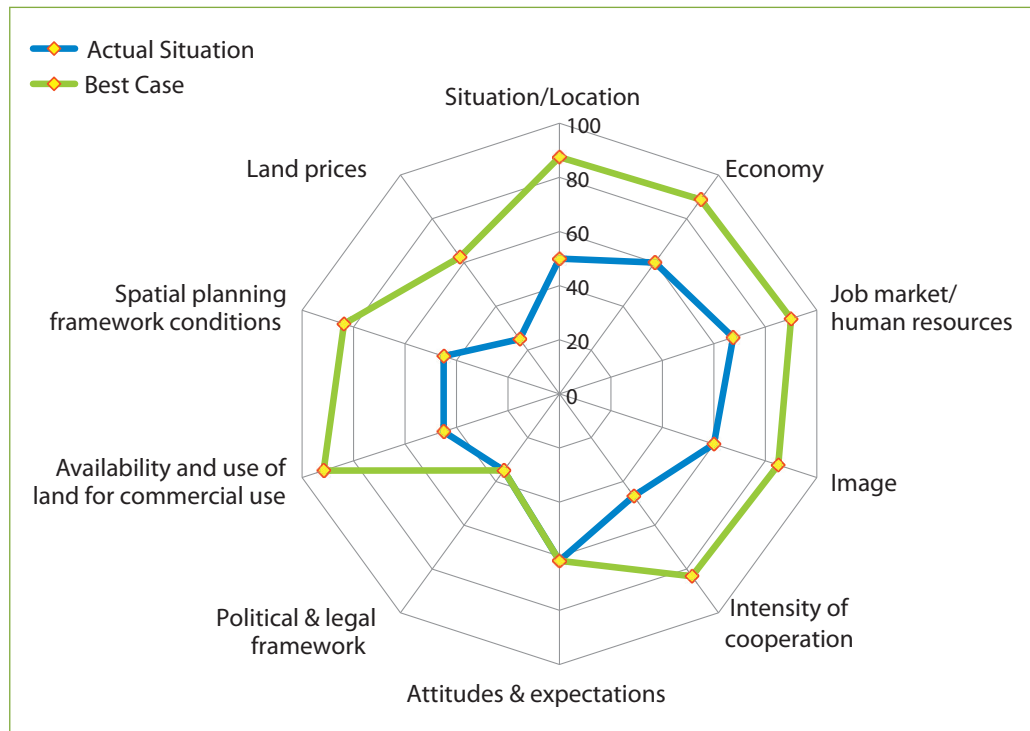


Figure 6: Balanced Scorecard for the pilot area Alpsee-Grünten

The city of Sonthofen and the region “Südliches Oberallgäu” have hardly any land available for commercial site development due to natural restrictions (flood protection, topography etc.) and land owners’ missing willingness to sell. High land prices and a currently low supply of commercial sites reflect this situation. The few remaining areas are highly competed for by diverse utilization demands such as commerce, agriculture, water supply, infrastructural facilities, traffic, as well as recreation/tourism. So far, the municipalities developed commercial areas individually and in a rather uncoordinated way. The prevailing strategy was a supply-oriented provision of land, linked to high financial expenditure and risk. Model calculations of costs and benefits for existing and planned commercial areas within the COMUNIS project have shown that commercial site development in the region “Südliches Oberallgäu” is barely profitable for the municipalities.

Activities

Strategy development

The central aim of the participating municipalities is the creation of a common economic area in the region “Südliches Oberallgäu”, within which sustainable and favorable framework conditions for economic development shall be established. Existing close inter-linkages shall be used and further strengthened, financial and administrative resources shall be pooled, while competition between the municipalities, e.g. for businesses, workplaces or inhabitants shall be avoided. Regardless of municipality borders, local companies shall be secured, and jobs shall be maintained and new ones created within the perimeter of the common economic area. In times of demographic change, this is a basic prerequisite to keep and attract young people in the region, so that existing infrastructure can be utilized to its capacity and municipal services can be provided also in the future.

For reaching these aims, the eight municipalities strive for a common commercial land use management. In contrast to “traditional” practices of commercial land development in the region, the installation of common commercial land use management facilitates a coordinated and concerted development, prevents competition between the municipalities as well as mal-developments. Through cooperation, the municipalities overcome or reduce the disadvantages of municipal competition, such as high costs and risks for developing commercial land, long land storage times with all related negative impacts, but also landscape consumption. They inter-municipally divide commercial spatial functions and strategically coordinate land supply and land demand. Furthermore, the municipalities focus on providing optimal framework conditions and land offers suited to the needs of local companies in particular, as business settlements are generally characterized to a large extent by business relocations within the region. In short, the municipalities jointly provide commercial land with a strong orientation to demand in terms of timeliness, quantity and – in particular – quality. Considering the closure of the military barracks at the end of the decade, the common commercial land use management will also provide the opportunity to strategically steer the conversion of the former military areas as concerns commercial development.

Implementation

The city of Sonthofen as well as the other municipalities from the region „Südliches Oberallgäu“ are planning to implement the common commercial land use management by founding a special purpose association (SPA) according to paragraph §17 ff Komm ZG (law on inter-municipal cooperation in Bavaria). With its foundation, the members will transfer certain tasks and related competences to the SPA. The general coordination of commercial development in the region will be the main task of the SPA. Concerning the development of particular commercial sites, the SPA will have the role to buy or to acquire the option of suitable sites, to develop, market and sell them. It is agreed that only areas above a certain minimum size (> 1 ha) are relevant, while land stock developments on a smaller scale will fall to the respective municipalities. The arising costs for running the SPA, acquiring, developing, and marketing land as well as the revenues from land sale and trade tax will be distributed according to a pre-determined allocation key. The content of the cooperation is set out in the association statute.

Results achieved

Since the beginning of the project in autumn 2009 intensive preparation work has been carried out in common meetings with the mayors and responsible administrative officers of the five municipalities as well as representatives from the district authority Oberallgäu and external experts. After the withdrawal of the city of Immenstadt in August 2011 sincere interest in a common cooperation for CLD has been expressed by the municipalities Bad Hindelang, Bolsterlang, Fischen and Ofterschwang. Therefore, the mayors and the responsible administrative officers have been from then on integrated in the further preparations. Within the framework of the common development work, among other things, the common goals and objectives have been clarified, the framework conditions of possible areas for a development have been analyzed and assessed as well as a concrete and suitable CLD model has been developed. Finally a draft statute has been elaborated for the special purpose association “Südliches Oberallgäu“.

Assessment of the implementation

In the framework of eleven workshops (fifteen to 20 participants), a field trip, and further events for local stakeholders (up to 100 participants), the requirements for the association were clarified and the association statute

was developed with the support of lawyers. The association statute defines the organizational structure, the tasks and the financing of the association and also ensures a fair sharing of costs, risks and benefits between the partners. Within the preamble of the statute the aim to reduce mutual competition for companies has also been formulated. Due to the withdrawal of one municipality at a late point in time and the entry of new partner municipalities some parts of the already existing draft statute had to be revised again and clarified with the new partners. This resulted in a high requirement for extra work and thus, has led to a delay in the implementation process. Although big efforts were necessary to develop the statute, it is the basis for a foresighted, demand-oriented and concerted land use management within the region. Since the cooperation possibly expands to the southern parts of the district Oberallgäu, it is now feasible to develop a common economic area and to secure and create new workplaces within the region. Furthermore, the cooperation enables an economical use of land. However, since one municipality from the region left the cooperation, there still exists mutual competition for companies. This may lead to a situation where companies are able to exert downward pressure on land prices. Consequently, the basis for negotiation becomes more difficult for the municipalities. During the whole implementation process it was always difficult to overcome the parochial thinking of some municipalities and to gain their trust and conviction to implement a long lasting and reliable cooperation for CLD.

Outlook

A consistent statute proposal for the foundation of the special purpose association has been developed by the mayors of the municipalities with the support of external experts. The draft association statute will probably be discussed and adopted by the respective municipal councils in autumn 2012. Thus, it is expected to found the special purpose association at the end of 2012.

4.3. Tarare region (Greater Lyon, France)

CCIL-Délégation de Tarare focused the cooperation issues on the three Communautés de communes presented below. The three others Communauté de Communes of the circumscription were also involved in action in a certain extent, depending to the actions engaged within the framework of COMUNIS.

The three Communautés de communes are Pays de Tarare (CCPT), Pays de L'Arbresle (CCPA) and Pays d'Amplepuis/Thizy (CCPAT) :

- *Size*: Total size: 608 km², respectively: 197 km²; 184 km²; 227 km²
- *Total population*: 79500, respectively: 23000; 35500; 21000. The population is in constant growth (1 % to 2 % per year) except for the CCPAT which the population decreases since 20 years.
- *Unemployment rate*: Average = 8.5 % with high discrepancies within the area. CCPT has the higher rate (10.1 %) and CCPA the lowest (6.2 %)
- *Human capital*: Rather low qualified workforce, high degree of corporate culture.
- *Main field of activities*: Textile industry, food processing, construction (including wood industry), Health industry. There is to note that businesses are mainly sub-contractors.
- *Businesses associations*: 3 association of industrial and services companies, 3 associations of retailers and craft businesses.

The pilot region gathers three test regions, three “Communautés de communes”: Tarare, L'Arbresle and Amplepuis/Thizy. The three test regions have similar topographic characteristics and are rural areas. Nevertheless their proximity to Lyon affects somehow the economic activity and their dynamism.

At the end of 2012 will open a highway (A89) which will link the South West of France (Bordeaux) to Geneva (Switzerland). This highway will cross the area from west to east. The A89 is thus a source of new project and full of hope for the areas in terms of economic development and attractiveness of new businesses. The area of L'Arbresle is the closest to Lyon, and benefits from its dynamism. The area of Amplepuis/Thizy is rural and the most distant from Lyon. The area is quite attractive and dynamic by itself. The area of Tarare has to gain with the proximity to Lyon offered by the arrival of the highway (A89). The local authorities in partnership with the “Département

du Rhône” and the consular chambers are developed an important project of a new business park. Within an area of study about 4700 ha on several municipalities the SMADEOR (special purpose association) aim at the study of the modalities/terms of the realization of a business park (between 100 and 200 ha) close to the tollbooth of East Tarare (A89).

The analysis with the Balance Score card and the local authorities highlighted the following main challenges and opportunities:

- Arrival the motorway “A89, Bordeaux- Geneva” end 2012: great opportunity for the attractiveness and economic development of the area.
- Establishment of new business parks: to answer the endogenous and exogenous needs and demands.
- Demographic issues and Brain drain: balance the demography and maintain and attract population.
- Dynamism of rural areas
- Image deficit: high discrepancies of the image within the area partly due to its industrial past, despite pleasant living conditions.
- Low level of cooperation and partnership between groups of municipalities and public & private stakeholders.

Activities and strategies

The main ambition is to foster and improve the relationship with the local partners. So that the groups of municipalities would be able to cooperate and have a better understanding of their common actions, we pointed the focus on territorial/location marketing. Such focus appeared as appropriate to promote the area at a greater scale and offer better conditions for the establishment of businesses and active population.

The activity of CCIL within the framework of COMUNIS is divided in three main actions detailed below:

1. Hosting policy

Participants

Four Communauté de Communes, over 20 municipalities directly involved in the project as “villages d’accueil” (hosting villages).

Governance

A steering committee, (including CCIL-Délégation de Tarare) composed by elected representatives and project managers in the area.

Three working groups

Economic (related to businesses (and associations), entrepreneurs etc.); Marketing and communication; “life concept” (*Projet de vie*).

Objectives

The “welcome” policy is part of an economic development strategy aiming at keeping the population within the area and intends to detect, attract and support the establishment of new active population (e.g. labor force, entrepreneurs). The concept is based on:

- An interactive internet platform for promotion and networking;
- The support of economic projects: notably through technical support and their establishment in business incubators, telecommuting centers, etc.
- Voluntary municipalities so called “Villages d’accueil” in which the local population is involved.

Progresses and/or achievements

The steering committee and the project are operational since April/May 2011. The first outcomes are coming.

2. Promotion of the area (Production of two brochures)

Participants

CCIL-Délégation de Tarare; six Communautés de Communes, ADERLY

Governance:

CCIL-Délégation de Tarare and the Communauté de communes are contributing and validating the concept.

Objectives

Promote the area from the regional to national (even international) level. We aim to promote the area under various aspects as the quality of life, strong economic activities, facilities (land and premises) adapted to needs of businesses.

Progresses and/or achievements

Both of the brochures are published and were very welcome by local private and public stakeholders.

3. Cooperation/partnership, animation:

Participants

Communautés de Communes and/or Businesses and Businesses associations

Objectives

Support businesses and businesses associations in their development with specific actions for pooling of resources; develop better services in line with local policies, foster public and private partnership through common and concerted project.

Progresses and/or achievements

Ongoing processes. Three local associations decided to pool resources and hired a person for the animation and coordination of their activities. Documentation about the economic perspective of the area, shared by local stakeholders will be published by summer 2012.

4.4. Gorenjska (Slovenia)

Main characteristics

In the region Gorenjska the project included two bordering countryside small local communities; Šenčur and Cerklje na Gorenjskem with 128 km², 15.555 inhabitants and 1.346 small and medium sized companies.

Due to proximity of national airport, national capital Ljubljana and closeness to intersection of Pan European corridors V and X, and highway that connect Austria, Slovenia and Croatia, both local communities are in entrepreneurial sense quite vivid and have a promising development potential. The long term plan for international high speed rail from capital city Ljubljana to Austria will additionally increase the favourable development position of both local communities. The pilot area is 80 ha of land which is part of national airport area with 800 ha.

Results achieved

In Slovenia there is almost no tradition of the joint municipal cooperation in the field of inter-municipal commercial sites. On the other hand we have good practices in cooperation between local communities that are con-

tractual or only project based. Therefore, due to tradition we have decided to use project and agreement based approach for development of business zone Brnik where CLD process and BSC approach showed very good and interesting results.

Zone Brnik will eventually cover 80 ha and due to different specific issues (national airport on the border with zone, different ownership (state, local community, private ownership), coordination between local and national level in planning, environment issues, issue of possible overlapping of the tasks and responsibilities, limitations of usage of business land due to nearby airport and protected agriculture land, etc.) we believe that the area has significant potential to start the “real” inter-municipal cooperation in the development of joint zone. Several specific issues that are of vital importance for Zone Brnik were tackled and resolved within the project (e.g. recapture of forest areas, environmental assessment with specific view regarding the airport, putting the business zone and airport in the area, plan how to use infrastructure in the area). The mentioned extensive studies were the basis and preconditions for the intensive discussions between the Airport, local communities, the project partner BSC Kranj (development agency) and external experts how to start the joint cooperation. At the final stage of the project, long- and short-term goals and the level of involvement of the local communities, the airport and BSC Kranj in the development of a joint zone were proposed and discussed.

A special letter of intent will be signed within the timeline of the COMUNIS project to confirm the joint willingness of local communities to work on short-term goals.

Future expectations

On the basis of the signed letter of intent a special coordination group will be established in which representatives from both local communities, Airport and BSC Kranj will take part. The coordination group, according to legal possibilities and competences of the partners, steer the implementation activities which are connected to the development of the business zone Brnik.

4.5. Passeiertal (Autonomous Province of Bolzano-South Tyrol, Italy)

Main characteristics

In the Autonomous Province of Bolzano - South Tyrol, the project was carried out in the Passeier Valley and municipality Tirol (Passeiertal und Gemeinde Dorf Tirol; hereafter called Passeiertal). This narrow side valley is located north of Meran, bordering the Ötz Valley (Austria) via the Timseljoch mountain pass and the Wipp Valley on South Tyrolean side via the Jaufen mountain pass.

The pilot area Passeiertal comprises six municipalities with a population of about 13.000 inhabitants, more than 4.500 households and more than 1.500 registered companies. It stretches over ca. 25 km, the surface is ca. 376 km² with a varying degree of permanent settlement conditioned by the mountainous topography (Table 2).

Accessibility of the Passeiertal is difficult and limited. The main road for all traffic is winding and narrow. Access to the valley via the mountain passes is restricted for heavy traffic leading to high traffic volume in and around the city center of Meran through which to enter the valley. Ca. 3.000 people commute within the pilot area or outside (e.g. to the economic center Meran); 12.000–15.000 cars per day; 10 % heavy traffic; 1.164 motorcycles on 16.08.2011¹ drove towards or across the mountain pass Jaufenpass; 808 motorcycles on 16.08.2011 drove towards or across the mountain pass Timseljoch) (ASTAT, 2011a). The situation leads to congestion especially at peak times and is a source of noise pollution in many of the pilot area's villages.

The local economy is mainly based on small-scale industrial and manufacturing companies (in particular construction, crafts) and tourism (e.g. Moos in Passeier/Moso in Passiria is a so-called Alpine Pearl²). Ca. 95 % of companies have between one and nine employees. Inter-municipal cooperation (IMC) has already reached a good level (joint administrative units, business association, etc.) and there is the willingness to expand and deepen the cooperation.

1 To show tourism and traffic data for summer peak season in Italy, one commonly refers to 15 August, a holiday in Italy. Since on 15 August 2011 the weather was bad, the data of 16 August was selected.

2 <http://www.alpine-pearls.com/en/>

Table 2: Overview of the municipalities of the pilot area Passeiertal (Astat 2010, 2011).

Municipality	Surface (km ²)	Per- manent settle- ment ³ (% of surface)	Sea level (meter above sea level)	Inhabi- tants (2011)	Number of companies (2010)	
					total	of which industrial
Dorf Tirol	25,61	3,50	323–2.998 m Center: 594 m	2.465 (2010)	390	275
Kuens	1,63	22,15	400–1.100 m Center: 592 m	414	41	18
Moos in Passeier (i. P.)	193,52	0,72	774 - 3.480 m Center: 1.007 m	2.168 (2010)	286	139
Riffian	35,94	2,49	504 m	1.346	153	78
St. Leonhard i. P.	89,02	3,66	450–2.746 m Center: 689 m	3.532	376	217
St. Martin i. P.	29,99	4,15	457–2.868 m Center: 598 m	3.160	282	181
Total	375,71			12.918	1.528	908

Inter-municipal commercial land use management

Due to the topography in the Passeiertal, the valley's municipalities have always had little land available for the development of commercial zones than in the plain for example. Only around 0,7 to 4,1 % of the municipalities' surface is permanent settlement area³ (22,15 % in the municipality of Kuens), which is competed for by various land use interests (housing, transport infrastructure, agriculture, commercial/industrial zones, tourism/recreation, etc.) (see Table 2).

Having realized this unfavorable situation, two of the six municipalities have jointly developed a commercial zone aimed at sustainably using the land available for CLD already in the 1960s and 1970s. The zone lots were allocated to companies from both municipalities in a balanced way accord-

3 Permanent settlement (Dauersiedlungsgebiet/territorio insediativo) comprises all areas that are in principal available for permanent settlement, including the areas which have already been developed (erschlossen/utilizzato) as well as those which are possible to develop (erschließbar/utilizzabile). ASTAT – Landesinstitut für Statistik of the Autonomous Province Bolzano – South Tyrol.

ing to the companies' objectives and number of employees. Conversely in the other municipalities, small commercial areas, hosting one or two companies, are scattered across the municipal grounds and as small in surface as about 600–700 m². This practice results in the municipalities having between one and ten commercial/industrial/crafts zones⁴ per community. However, usually, the business settlement also occurred on a case by case basis without following a specific local or regional economic strategy taking into account local resources and synergies.

Foundation of the *Konsortium Passeier Wirtschaft* (Syndicate Passeier Economy) in 2005 aimed at promoting the Passeier valley's economy, in general, and at promoting, in particular, activities of the participating companies to enhance their efficiency and competitiveness in the region. The initiative *Holz Passeier* (Wood Passeier), started in the framework of the *Konsortium*, has contributed to shaping the area's economic profile and to increasing its renownedness as location for wood-processing on a regional level.

Results

In general, the framework conditions and the political objectives for the future development on inter-municipal level of the pilot area Passeiertal reflect the EU's priorities set for the year 2020 (green growth for functional areas and green jobs; use of renewable energy resources). They are also in line with the objectives and strategies of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano-South Tyrol (strengthen IMC using joint structures; preserve mountain municipalities jeopardized by emigration; reach CO₂-neutrality; increase regional added value) and mirror the objectives of the agency Business Location Südtirol-Alto Adige (to set economic focus in small regions to develop functional areas; limit further land use development for commercial/industrial purposes), which is responsible for business settlement and location marketing in South Tyrol.

The aims at inter-municipal level in the Passeiertal are:

- Strategic use of (available) commercial resources for future business settlements.
- Increase regional added value by closing regional economic cycles.
- Increase the distribution and use of renewable energy sources.

⁴ The municipalities' urban land use plans can be consulted on the homepage of the Spatial Development department of the Autonomous Province Bolzano – South Tyrol.

- Increase quality of life level to hold population and workers.
- Integrate regional strengths in location marketing activities.

Considering that and based on the location profile, three possible development paths were identified: the expansion of the wood sector and its inter-relation with other sectors, the increased production and use of renewable energies (e.g. hydropower, biomass), and the integration of tourism and agriculture.

The field of action “wood” was looked at in more detail (Figure 7). Due to existing cooperation and organization of businesses and forest owners in the wood sector and a dominance of wood manufacturing businesses, it is an objective to further valorize that sector in the Passeiertal⁵. Possible target-aimed measures for the inter-municipal cooperation and cooperation between companies are:

- Invest in design of innovative objects (e.g. furniture, toys, public/private construction, etc.).
- International competitions to attract external innovations (architects, designers, planners) and attention towards the area.
- Install a new or extend the existing saw-mill in the valley to process and store local wood.
- Identify and settle businesses and services that are missing in the local value chain wood to attain a higher processing degree (e.g. biomass (fuel-wood) as a raw material for renewable energy).
- Follow the idea of creating a “wood world” in the valley to sensitize the population and visitors for local wood and to present the wood’s various uses (e.g. also in public or private buildings).
- Use existing working groups of forest owners and entrepreneurs to follow up on these activities.

Taking into account already existing structures of cooperation between municipalities and between businesses, the developed strategy (the chosen development path) will be implemented with local stakeholders by making recommendations for organizational structures and rules which regulate the cooperation.

⁵ Structured evaluation of the results of the Workshop “Quo Vadis Passeiertal?” held 03.02.2012 at EURAC Bozen/Bolzano.

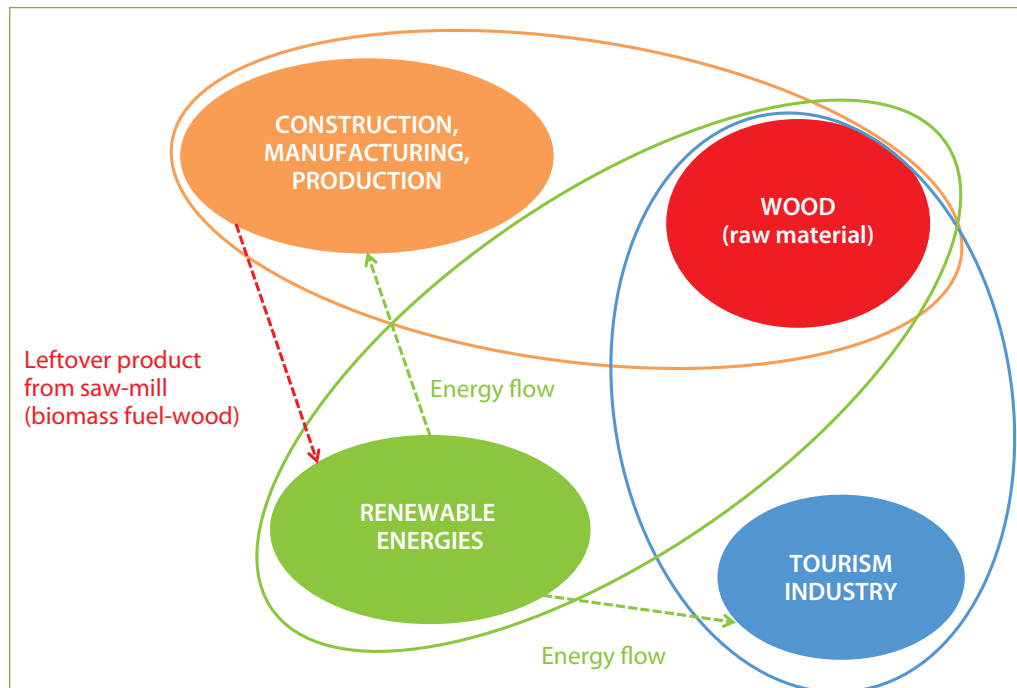


Figure 7: Selected regional potentials (sector-related) and their interrelation: possibilities for increased cooperation in the Passeiartal.

Recommendations

Other fields of action were identified for which recommendations have been developed: In general, the formation of regional value-added partnerships that integrate both economic actors as well as public/administrative stakeholders is suggested for all fields of action. Launching an inter-municipal cooperation campaign informing on the advantages and disadvantages of IMC can help abandon prejudices among the population against cooperation across municipal borders. It is suggested to regularly carry out business surveys to oversee land demand for commercial purposes in all municipalities. Offering incentives for the use of abandoned existing industrial/commercial structures can favour the revalorization of vacant and unfinished buildings. Initiate a discussion in the companies on inter-business logistics to improve the accessibility and mobility for commuters and contribute to coordinating traffic in the valley. The extension of inter-municipal and inter-agency cooperation in training and secondary school education should be followed up to sensitize young people for craftsman's trade and other vocations as well as to preserve traditional professions and production methods.

4.6. Municipalities of Nizza Monferrato, Canelli, and Calamandrana (Asti Province, Italy)

The pilot areas

The Local Development Agency LAMORO is carrying on the implementation of two pilot projects in different territorial areas: the Vadò Industrial Area (Municipality of Moncalieri, in the Province of Turin) and the Industrial Area crossing the three neighbouring municipalities of Nizza Monferrato, Calamandrana and Canelli (in the Province of Asti).

The Vadò Industrial Area Consortium was born in 1970s (officially in 1979) to manage the transformation of a large agricultural area into an industrial site; it was created, concurrently with the beginning of an urban transformation intervention, as an instrumental authority issued by the owners of productive areas, with the mission of facilitating administration, management and coordinated development of the Vadò area.

Currently, the Vadò Industrial Area Consortium oversees a territory of about 1.500.000 m² (including 1.100.000 m² of Moncalieri and 400.000 m² of Trofarello), in which there are 130 companies. Their fields of activity vary enormously, showing that this area does not have a dominant productive sector. These are some of the sectors involved: creativity, engineering consulting, technologies to product new cars, vehicles and consumer products, components for household appliances, design and construction of moulds for the transport industry, robotics, design and production of information and technology (IT) systems, publishing, printing and graphic design, chemistry, clothing, etc.

Regarding the area in the Province of Asti there was a specific research interest for the axis that connects the three municipalities involved: Nizza Monferrato, Calamandrana and Canelli.

Two different sectors characterize the area: the agricultural production with a strong predominance of wine production and the activities in the mechanics sector linked to wine production.

The activities implemented

Concerning the pilot project developed in Nizza Monferrato, Calamandran and Canelli, attempts have been made to promoting the experimentation of collaboration between companies placed on the pilot area, encouraging the sensitivity of businessmen to energy issues, with the following purposes:

- to develop the currently settled economic activities, increasing their competitiveness;
- to enhance areas aimed at commercial/production activities from the environmental point of view;
- to encourage the inter-municipal production system with a view to sustainable development and reduction in consumption and energy cost.

In this context, the municipalities are meant to promote the aggregation of private individuals with a common interest: in this way, the municipalities become guarantors and heir of a social energy responsibility and create the conditions for making the industrial area more attractive. Some intervention guidelines have been proposed to the municipalities and by mutual consent, it has been decided to pursue a first concrete result through the formation – on the reference territorial area and created by the companies themselves – of spontaneous purchasing groups of energy resources. The purpose of this initiative is to produce a consistent critical mass in terms of consumption able to create a contractual power to support lower purchasing costs of electricity.

In this type of action, the municipalities play the role of aggregating actors, encouraging inter-municipal collaboration and adhesion. By the end of the project, the companies interested in creating a spontaneous purchasing group will be contacted to allow the sustainability of actions even at the end of the European funding.

Concerning the pilot project developed in the Industrial Area of Moncalieri, the settled companies' characteristics have been analysed and their perception about some public services for the productive areas, in a view of improving the services themselves and increasing the attractiveness of the area. Furthermore, the specific focus on energy measures adopted by the companies of the productive area has allowed to establish possible energy saving and production policies at a local level.

5. Guidelines for inter-municipal commercial location development (CLD)

5.1. Introduction

The guidelines aim to provide support to municipalities and regions on their way to develop and position themselves as a sustainable commercial location – jointly with other municipalities. The following compact version of the guidelines firstly provides **hints and suggestions for inter-municipal processes of strategy development**. Subsequently, the guidelines explain the **working steps** of the inter-municipal development process in individual chapters. The inner structure of these chapters is set up according to the following pattern: They generally start with a description of the respective working step, of the tasks to be carried out and the aims pursued, and a proposal concerning the persons and organizations possibly to be involved into the process. The subsequent parts present selected components of CLD, or they describe possible options for action and issues to be considered in the process. The accompanying CD to this publication contains the complete version of the guidelines, including practice examples of methods, approaches and strategies.

5.2. Inter-municipal cooperation process on CLD – Overview

5.2.1. Inter-municipal cooperation

Inter-municipal cooperation primarily is a question of mutual trust between the municipalities participating in the joint process. Only if it is a serious issue to all participants to overcome parish-pump thinking, a continuous and open discussion may evolve and possibly lead to stable and binding forms of cooperation. Existing ties and linkages between the municipalities are a good starting point for cooperation. So is the awareness of the strong interdependencies of economy, labor market and population development across municipal borders.

The feasible scope of the cooperation strongly depends on the degree of commitment that the participating municipalities can achieve. The munici-

palities shall always be conscious of the intensity of cooperation they want and of the degree of engagement they can gain political consensus for.

COMUNIS findings

Concerning the development and improvement of entire territories, inter-municipal cooperation appears to be part of a general evolution within modern societies. This refers to a broad array of fields, ranging from the quality of living for local residents, environment and landscape quality, tourism attractiveness, to economic development.

The joint development process shall

- strengthen the existing basis of trust between the municipalities,
- foster the communication between the partners, and
- make the inter-municipal perspective of development processes a matter of course.

Thus it is of high importance that the municipalities take all working steps of the process together within joint events. Thereby it is possible to integrate the different viewpoints and perspectives of the municipalities, and to discuss and outweigh alternative options. Step-by-step, the participants jointly elaborate their individual and tailor-made solution. The integrative process facilitates maximum support for and identification with inter-municipal development strategy.

The group of persons to be involved into the process may be composed differently for the individual working steps. In addition to political decision-makers and opinion-formers, it is generally advisable to involve professional organizations from the fields of spatial planning and regional development. Furthermore, representatives of the local or regional business community are relevant partners in the development process. Yet insofar as the process consists of political negotiations and agreements, these shall take place in the sheltered surroundings of an own working group. The chapters describing the working steps contain short notes concerning the composition of the strategy development group.

It proved helpful or even necessary to let external experts accompany and steer the development process. Inter alia, the process management in the framework of inter-municipal CLD has to take the tasks of:

- giving concrete expertise and specific impetus (e. g. in the framework of field trips),
- preparing information and conducting additional analysis,
- consequently fixing achieved interim results and milestones, and
- bringing about binding resolutions and decisions.

Hints for a successful development process

- Jointly and individually: jointly developed individual solutions are viable; an open process encourages communication and mutual trust.
- External process management: specific and concrete inputs bring forward the development process; binding agreements and milestones ensure the further development.
- Learning from others: think outside the box; explore and discuss existing solution models and case studies (field trips).

5.2.2. Pros and cons of inter-municipal CLD

In most cases, cooperation in the field of economic promotion – more precisely business settlement, provision of commercial/industrial zones – aims at achieving higher economic benefits for all participating municipalities, to increase the municipal tax revenue and creating improved conditions for local businesses and employees (RAUCH et al. 2001: 78). But the advantages gained by an inter-municipal approach to CLD go beyond serving only economic purposes.

Especially in mountain areas, where land is an even scarcer resource than in the plain due to topographic reasons, an inter-municipal approach to CLD is the essential step to sustainably use and preserve the landscape, to counteract outmigration, and to preserve decentralized work places. Besides, as complex and lengthy process, inter-municipal CLD concerns not only the people living and working in the area but also public and private institutions, the legal and spatial planning framework conditions as well as the natural environment (MATSCHEK 2011: 92).

Arguments exist both in favor of as well as against inter-municipal cooperation. However, it shall be pointed out that the advantages and changes outweigh the disadvantages and risks.

Table 3: Advantages and chances.

Finances	Reduce costs and contribute to steering and reducing the utilization of land for commercial purposes.
	Facilitate the access to sponsorship if regional financial incentives are provided only if initiatives are planned as cooperative or within regional project partnerships.
	Enhance the possibilities to organize and finance professional location marketing.
Administration	Divide tasks to deal with the growing complexity of municipal duties and responsibilities.
	Draw on experts and specialists from other municipalities when encountering the challenge of (new) communal tasks.
Competition	Represent the region as strong and innovative economic location and as one entity on the regional (respectively national and international) level.
	Avoid competition among municipalities for businesses and inhabitants by finding a regional consensus and designing a regional economic strategy.
	Increase the chances for new business settlements from within the area and from outside by speak with one voice as a region (instead of multiple voices from individual municipalities).
	Offer a location in the greater area (not necessarily on own municipal grounds) with the most advantageous location factors for the settlement of an interested business instead of losing the business to a competing region.
	Participation in inter-municipal CLD of municipalities which do not have suitable areas on their own (e. g. due to topographic reasons).
	Improve infrastructure of locations and accessibility to regional infrastructure.
Employment	Preservation of work places by means of strategic planning and administration of commercial areas in the region.
	Preservation of decentralized work places, particularly of SMEs.
	Offer alternative work places for people employed in agriculture.
	Promote cooperation of enterprises and educational institutions.

Demographic development	Alleviate the out-migration (and the natural decline of the population) by increasing the region's attractiveness as a place to work and to live.
	Cooperation and identification with the area to foster the motivation to stay.

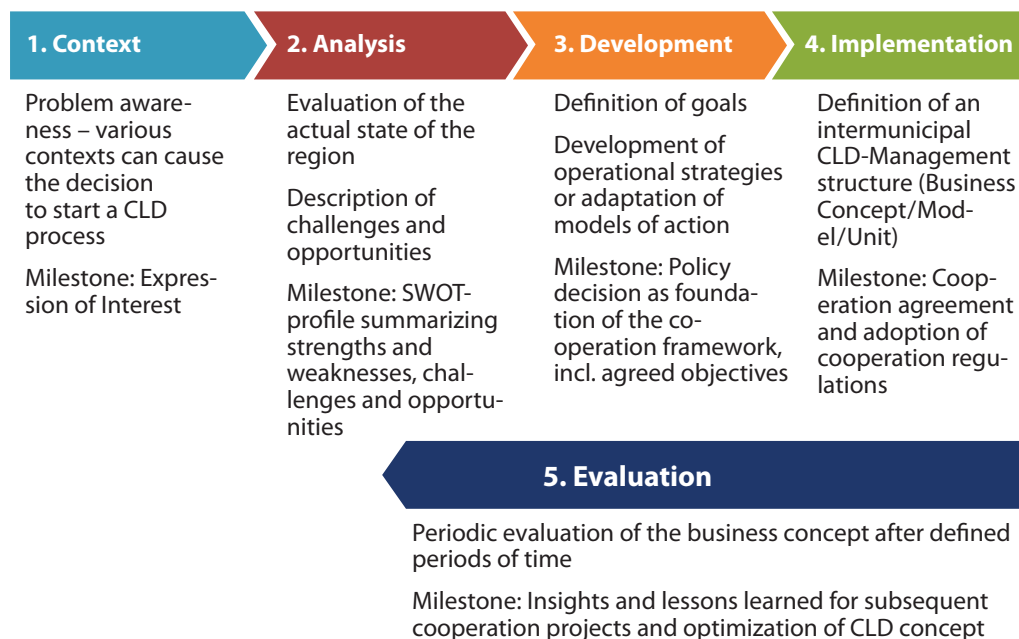
Table 4: Disadvantages and risks (Rauch et al. 2001, Wirth 2005, Biwald n.d.)

Finances	CLD is related to municipal budgets – when cooperating, municipalities may be obliged to disclose municipal finances (and other information) to the partners.
Administration	Establishing and ‘cultivating’ inter-municipal CLD is a laborious and lengthy process.
	Personnel changes within the partnership can lead to problems (e. g. disagreement, motivation change, etc.) and complicate or terminate the process.
	Redistributing or changing responsibility of tasks resulting from a cooperation can slowly lead to a loss of autonomy and significance which is perceived by municipalities as a threat to their existence.
Competition	Limited decision-making freedom of single partners: cooperation requires compromises and mutual agreement.
	Perceived fear or threat of municipal mergers (especially smaller municipalities).

5.2.3. Cooperation process

The cooperation process as described in the COMUNIS project comprises five work stages (cf. Figure 8). It starts with a municipality or region recognizing and becoming aware of its distinctive challenges (“context description”). In the next step a detailed situation analysis is conducted aimed at identifying both obstacles to development as well as local potentials, challenges and opportunities (“Analysis”). On this basis, the following step called “development” sets goals and priorities and suggests possible solutions. The appropriate organizational structure, the distribution of costs, benefits and responsibilities as well as linkages to existing levels of management in the municipalities form the contents of the “implementation” step. The fifth step, accompanying the process, concerns the “evaluation” of the process implementation.

Figure 8: Visualization of inter-municipal cooperation process based on the BSC-method.



5.3. Step 1: Context

At the beginning of a process of inter-municipal commercial location development stands less a working step in the strict sense but rather a realization: The traditional patterns of municipal development do not work anymore or do no longer appear promising for the future. Municipal development cannot be continued goal-oriented and in a meaningful way along the existing guiding principles and within the existing structures.

A main cause of these changes is to be found in macroeconomic developments and an increasing interdependence and competition at the global, national and regional level. For instance, the on-going metropolization leads to an out-migration of businesses, jobs and population from rural areas and intensifies demographic change there. Growing mobility fosters the development of long-range commuting; rural municipalities are becoming “dormitories” of urban areas.

Regularly, these and other developments concern adjacent municipalities in a similar way. Individual municipalities only have limited financial and human capabilities to lead the policy discussion and develop strategic solutions for the future development. Instead of acting independently, they will often only have the capability to react to the most urgent developments in the short term.

Based on these recognitions, the maybe still diffuse awareness arises that changes of the strategic lines in the municipalities are necessary to enable creative and goal-oriented development. Municipalities also begin to realize that inter-municipal cooperation may be a required integral part of new strategic lines to address current deficiencies. The cooperation across municipal boundaries can create new room for maneuver.

Aims and results of the working step

In a qualitative assessment, the persons responsible in the municipalities assess their current starting position and state major problem areas. The municipalities clarify their motivation for the inter-municipal approach to commercial location development. They figure out, which partners shall be involved in the process.

Once local decision makers are convinced to cooperate and decided that commercial location development will be carried out in an inter-municipal framework, it is essential that the participating parties start consolidating the cooperation process. In line with the principles of project management, a road map shall be agreed determining the timeframe of the process steps, a meeting schedule, as well as the milestones of cooperation.

Involvement

Main actors of inter-municipal commercial location development processes are the municipalities themselves, represented by mayors and persons from municipal administrations. Ideally, these are also the promoters of cooperation in order to create and enduringly ensure project involvement and a broad acceptance by the population. The role of promoters can also be pursued by one/several other stakeholders. Additionally, and depending on the regional framework conditions, the business community or regional administration units may be involved in the process in an early stage.

What:

Qualitative appraisal of the current development situation
Clarification that municipalities are motivated for cooperation
Consolidation of cooperation process; fixing of process steps, time schedule, milestones

Who:

Mayors and representatives of municipal administration, possibly supported by external experts; if required, complemented by representatives of the business community or the regional administration

How:

Workshop, talk of mayors

Milestone:

Expression of Interest

5.3.1. Exemplary problem situations

Municipalities or groups of municipalities may be confronted with a singular or a combination of the following exemplary problem situations. These can be the actual starting point to address their future development in an inter-municipal cooperation.

5.3.1.1. Land for development

- Scarcity of land: land for development is scarce, and the low availability of land limits municipal development options
- Excess of land for commercial purposes: Over-development of recent years lead to an over-supply of commercial areas; the costs for investment, maintenance and debt service burden the municipality
- Land prices: Municipal competition lead to a below-cost price level; high land prices limit the municipal options to govern land use development

5.3.1.2. Image and perception

- No regional image: The region lacks an image and does not have unique local proposition⁶.
- Negative image: The region suffers from a negative image for historic, economic, political, social, and environmental reasons.
- Selective image: A strong image exists, e.g. concerning leisure and tourism, but it does not cover commercial aspects.

5.3.1.3. Framework conditions for businesses in municipal responsibility

- Human capital/work force: The educational level of the workforce does not meet the demand of enterprises.
- Regional added value: The insufficient use of endogenous resources leads to incomplete product and service chains and results in a low local or regional added value.
- Infrastructure: Modern infrastructures being crucial for economic competitiveness are underdeveloped.

5.4. Step 2: Analysis

The second step is devoted to accurately assessing the specific situation of the inter-municipal location. During this phase, the municipalities lay the foundation for rationally developing a sustainable and goal-oriented solution for their region. In order to get a sound overview of the current situation, the municipalities thoroughly analyze their location. Among other things, such analysis should reveal the region-specific characteristics, local settlement policies and overall framework conditions to identify strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats as well as to determine the concrete need for action. Evidently, also positive characteristics and unique local propositions shall be covered. Soft location factors increasingly play an important role for the internal and external presentation of a location.

This location analysis may take place on two different levels:

- Firstly, a *general location analysis* covering a wide range of subjects is carried out for sketching a comprehensive picture of the location in total.

⁶ Unique local proposition (ULP) is the unique feature of a location that distinctively distinguishes it from others.

- Secondly, *detailed analyses* of identified core problem areas shall complement the picture. This is recommended, for example, to determine companies' demand for municipal offers and services (e.g. demand for commercial space, support for settlement and expansion procedures, etc.).

Aims and results of the working step

The municipalities have jointly carried out a general analysis of the inter-municipal economic location and verified it by additional detailed analysis if required. They have jointly discussed and assessed the examination results pointing out strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats; they have documented the result in a precise SWOT-profile for the inter-municipal location.

Involvement

Involved in this working step are usually as well the mayors and municipal administration of the relevant departments (e.g. head of economic, head of construction department, etc.), economic actors, economic promoters as well as external advisors and various experts. Including these actors and stakeholders in the analysis phase makes it possible to understand and portray the situation in the various areas with the relevant expert knowledge.

What:

Identification of the specific characteristics of the location and relevant framework conditions

Identification of strengths and weaknesses

Identification of challenges and opportunities

Who:

Mayors and representatives of municipal administration, possibly supported by external experts; if required, complemented by representatives of the business community or the regional administration

How:

Desktop research for collecting original information

Workshops with local and regional stakeholders for assessing the analysis results, for defining challenges and opportunities, and for elaborating a SWOT-profile

Milestone:

SWOT-profile summarizing strengths and weaknesses, challenges and opportunities

5.4.1. Methods and tools

5.4.1.1. General Location Analysis

For this purpose, the municipalities can refer to the COMUNIS adaption of the so-called Balanced Score Card (BSC)⁷. Three core fields of commercial location development and their respective field of action shall be analyzed:

- **Location profile:** situation and location; economy; job market, human resources; image.
- **Inter-municipal cooperation:** intensity of existing cooperation; attitudes and expectations of stakeholders; political and legal framework conditions.
- **Commercial land use management:** availability and use of land; spatial framework conditions; land prices.

The fields of action are sub-divided into a number of indicators or criteria, which are described on the basis of quantitative and qualitative information. According to the situation in the region, this information is assessed on a scale from 0 to 100 (0 = worst situation, 100 = optimal situation). This evaluation is carried out in exchange with respective stakeholders and experts. Afterwards, the points for several criteria are aggregated to one value for a field of action. Next to evaluating the status quo, stakeholders also set target values to determine possible development paths to be taken.

⁷ The BSC is a strategic performance management tool used for securing the quality of an organization or structure, and can also be applied in the framework of regional development processes. It aims at providing a fair overview of the performance and efficiency of a single structure or organization.

Table 5: Example of the BSC-method used in COMUNIS

Quality of land and premises				
0	25	50	75	100
No infrastructure, bad quality of land and premises because there are no investments. Supply does not match the needs at all.	Brownfields, former industrial site and pollution that are difficult to reconvert (too high investment required e.g.). Low level of supply matching the basic needs.	The land is basically equipped but it needs to be improved/enhanced. Lack of investments. Supply matching the basic needs.	Appropriately equipped (infrastructure, roads, etc.) Diversified types of land and premises. Supply matching the needs.	Very well equipped land (power/gas supply, broadband). Proximity of convenient infrastructures and services. Supply optimally matching the needs.

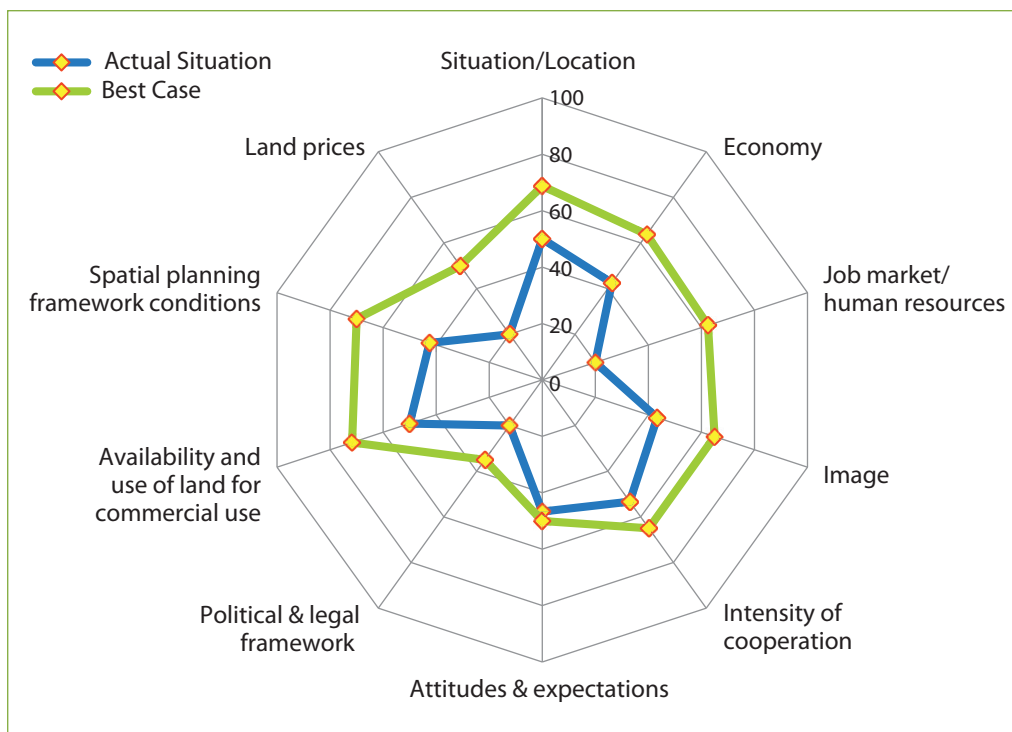


Figure 9: Exemplary Balanced Scorecard

A comprehensive graphical overview combines the results concerning the three core fields and the respective fields of action and thus represents the results of the evaluation. The overview contains both, the status quo (Actual situation – blue line) of the example region as well as the visions and objectives (Best case – green line) set by the region. Obviously, actions are foremost required in the field of “Job market/human resources” and concerning “Land prices”.

The detailed methodology of the BSC adaptation of COMUNIS is contained in the complete version of the guidelines which can be found on the CD enclosed in this publication. Furthermore, the following methods are presented there:

- Cost-Utility-Analysis
- CERISE REVAIT (CDEIF)
- The “SEREC” model

5.4.1.2. Detailed analyses of main development issues

Additionally to the general location analysis, more specific methods for gathering and evaluating information may be implemented for analyzing:

- Supply and demand:
 - Municipal supply: Inter-municipal analysis of the provision of commercial land; Real estate management assisted by electronic data processing
 - Requirements and expectations: Company surveys; Marketing oriented demand analysis tools
- (Regional) Image Analysis
- Analysis of value chains and supply chains
- Material Flow Analysis

Detailed descriptions and examples are contained in the complete version of the guidelines which can be found on the CD enclosed in this publication.

Please note:

The majority of the demand for commercial areas (80–90%) originates from local or regional enterprises. Thus it is essential for municipalities to maintain an intensive communication with local and regional enterprises, in order to know their demand, both in terms of quantity and quality, in an early stage and to have the possibility to take the actions necessary to keep them in the region.

5.4.1.3. Challenges and opportunities

Basing on the results of the general location analysis and of possible detailed analyses, municipalities shall be used to define challenges and opportunities of the region. In a systematic approach, solutions for the most problematic issues shall be found by clarifying

- Which factors advance or impede the development of the location?
- How can negative developments be changed for the positive?
- Which positive and negative effects will occur when a challenge is addressed?

Supplementary, an evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) can be conducted.

Table 6: Exemplary SWOT matrix in the context of CLD

Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal factors determining commercial location Present factors	Internal factors determining commercial location Present factors
Example questions to ask to determine strengths? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the competitive advantages of our location? • What are capabilities of our management structure, institutions, people etc.? • What do we do better than anyone else? • What is unique? • What do our clients see as our strengths? 	Example questions to ask to determine strengths? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could we improve in the commercial location development and management? • What should we avoid? • What are people in your region/ market/area likely to see as weaknesses? Own known vulnerabilities? • What factors increase investment or lose our revenues? Gaps in capabilities? Financials?
How to apply strengths in the strategy? FOCUS	How to apply weaknesses in the strategy? UNDERSTAND

Opportunities	Threats
External Future factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What good opportunities can we spot? • What interesting trends are we aware of? • Market developments? • Competitors' vulnerabilities? • Industry or lifestyle trends? • Technology development and innovation trends? • Global influences? • Information and research? • Partnerships, agencies, distribution? • Seasonal, weather, fashion influences? 	External Future factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What obstacles do we face? • What are our competitors doing? • Are legislation, standards, ... likely to changing? • Is changing technology threatening our position? • Do you have bad debt or cash-flow problems? • Could any of weaknesses seriously threaten our business? • Political effects? • Environmental effects? • Global Economy? Market demand? Employment market? • Seasonality, weather effects?
How to apply opportunity in the strategy? TAKE THE ADVANTAGE	How to apply threats in the strategy? MINIMIZE OR ELIMINATE

More detailed descriptions concerning the SWOT-Analysis and the analysis of challenges and opportunities are also contained in the complete digital version of the guidelines in this publication.

5.5. Phase 3: Development

In the step “Development”, the municipalities basically have to answer two questions.

1) Which goals do we want to achieve in cooperation?

As a result of the analysis, the municipalities identified fields where action is needed. Considering these fields, the municipalities specify the actual tasks or actions required to change the current situation or on-going developments. The municipalities weigh the different action requirements; they agree on common targets and determine priority actions they intend to undertake. Wherever possible, they set quantitative target values together.

2) How do we want to achieve these goals?

This serves as starting point for the definition of concrete measures or packages of measures. Municipalities may decide to focus on the joint implementation of specific actions to meet identified needs. Step by step they concretize their solution by selecting concrete measures for overcoming the development challenges on the inter-municipal level. To pave the way for the organizational implementation of measures, the human and financial resources, expertise and structures available to municipalities must be investigated.

Please note:

A broad political anchoring of the process is necessary and should be introduced during this step, at the latest, i.e. the local government bodies are to be integrated into the process and the democratic legitimacy for the further implementation of the process must be ensured. The persons responsible in the municipalities have to take care about the following issues:

- How to present the strategy/the measures to the council?
- How to organize decision-making in the council?
- How to inform the public?

Aims and results of the working step

The municipalities have defined and agreed on common goals and tasks. They have further agreed on various measures or packages of measures with which they intend to achieve the defined goals. They also set up a time and project plan for implementation. In a principle decision the individual municipalities have reinforced their will of common organizational and structural implementation of the concept.

Involvement

Due to the inclusion of all regional stakeholders in the process in the previous stages of problem identification and analysis, the phase “development” can be carried out by the “main carriers” of the inter-municipal commercial location development together in a rather flexible and effective working group. This includes especially **mayors, economic and planning officers** of the municipality as well as **business representatives** (e.g. chairman of the trade association or similar). Often it is advisable to take support by targeted advice from **external experts** (e.g. regional or project manager etc.).

What:

- Definition of common goals and prioritized actions
- Definition of measures or bundles of measures to be implemented

Who:

Mayors and representatives of municipal administration, possibly supported by external experts; if required, complemented by representatives of the business community or the regional administration

How:

Workshops with local and regional stakeholders for developing common goals, for defining prioritized actions, and for defining the measures to be taken

Milestone:

- Policy decision: The municipalities commit themselves to common goals as a foundation for the further inter-municipal cooperation.
- Joint declaration of all mayors confirming the agreements taken.

5.5.1. Measures and models

5.5.1.1. Singular measures

The following list gives an overview of possible functions or activities which the municipalities could implement jointly, according to their needs:

Land use management

- Land use planning, site designation: The municipalities share the responsibility to set up land use plans and to designate commercial sites.
- Market analysis and monitoring of supply and demand of commercial sites: municipalities systematically analyze the market availability of commercial sites in the region (including brownfields) and record them by type, size, ownership and price. Additionally, they record all direct queries for commercial land and support potential clients during their location search. They regularly analyze the short and medium term needs of regional enterprises concerning quality and quantity.

- Coordination of commercial land supply: the municipalities find and propose the most suitable location solutions for particular companies while ensuring an efficient land policy.
- Land stock/land purchase: The municipalities secure an optimal portfolio of commercial land available considering various time periods: immediately, in short term (6–12 months), in medium term (1–2 years) and in long term over 2 years. The size of the land reserve is linked to the demand of local and regional enterprises identified in demand surveys.
- Communication to land owners: The municipalities are in touch with land owners and install a management of relations and contacts.
- Land pricing: The municipalities lead the regional location, investment and land pricing policy.
- Land (re-)activation and land recycling: The municipalities promote and support the re-activation of brownfields (e.g. abandoned industrial, military or other facilities).
- Land marketing: The municipalities take the necessary measures for the promotion of the commercial sites.
- Registration in real estate databases: The municipalities select the most popular real estate databases for commercial sites and register the joint sites.
- Valuation and selection of land to be included into the cooperation: The municipalities evaluate potential new land areas following a cost-benefit and environmental analysis.

Promotion and communication

- Communication of a general marketing strategy, mission statement („Leitbild“): The municipalities develop a general marketing strategy and formulate a mission statement for the region.
- Development of a clear location profile: The municipalities elaborate a clear location profile, i.e. an overview of the economic sectors and employment options of the region as well as of indicators concerning demography, society and human resources.
- Create and strengthen regional identity and image: The municipalities create and strengthen the regional identity and image. They clearly define a positive image and marketing strategy of the region.
- Branding, development of a trademark for regional products: The municipalities develop a regional image associated with regional products.

- External communication: The municipalities develop clear communication targets in particular for outward communication.
- Visual identity: The municipalities develop and design a corporate identity.
- Commercials and advertisement: The municipalities produce a standardized design for advertising which is applied for individual purposes and media (e.g. web adverts, business magazines, billboards etc.).
- Web site/Web presentation: The municipalities undertake all steps necessary for developing and managing a web presentation.
- Edit and publish promotion materials: The municipalities edit and publish basic classical promotion material.
- Organizing business meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions: The municipalities organize business meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions.
- Participation at trade fairs and conferences: The municipalities participate in specialized trade fairs.
- Business contacts and networks: The municipalities foster and maintain direct business contacts and networks within the region, organize business talks, workshops and platforms for businesses, etc.
- B2B-Communication: The municipalities establish platforms for interaction among companies within the particular region such as business club, web-based social networks and groups, etc.
- Information of resident population: The municipalities communicate to and inform the resident population, e.g. by means of press releases, media presentations.

Business support services

- One Stop Agency of CLD: The municipalities provide at one place the whole package of support services needed for allocating new or relocating existing companies in inter-municipal location. Alternatively they provide one professional contact point providing contacts to specialized services or consultants (e.g. lawyers, tax consultants, business consultants).
- Location or real estate advice/allocation: The municipalities are able to assist and provide potential clients with all relevant information he/she might need during his allocation decision-making process. The municipalities review all potential sites and undertake comparative analyses among different options within the inter-municipal location.

- Organization, coordination of and support for administrative procedures (legal advice): The municipalities take over intermediation services and necessary legal and administration procedures used for real estate trade activities.
- Settlement support and assistance: The municipalities offer an additional range of technical services supporting the clients during their reallocation or settlement. The services will be provided by sub-contractors.
- Start up support and assistance: The municipalities provide start-up support and assistance services to potential entrepreneurs, start-ups and young companies from the inter-municipal location as well as from the region.
- Business incubator: The municipalities set up and manage a business incubator.
- Support for SMEs: The municipalities provide access to a network of external experts and consultants to carry out more advanced consulting or provide mentoring and coaching to jointly address certain problems.
- Procurement of business successors: The municipalities take all tasks related to the procurement of business succession, which usually includes supporting the transition of management, ownership and resolving the tax issues.
- Information platform & knowledge transfer (science-business): The municipalities establish linkages with R&D centers and universities in order to facilitate transfer of know-how to local companies.
- Interface b2g (business-government): The municipalities establish close working relations with the local administration.
- Interface b2b: The municipalities promote cooperation and facilitate linkages between businesses, which lead to better performance or value added (e.g. value chains).
- Financial support: The municipalities develop a portfolio of financial instruments and provide access or consultancy concerning these instruments.
- Location information and analysis: The municipalities develop standard set of indicators, which shall further on be monitored and published on a regular basis.

Other activities

- (Public) utility Infrastructure: The municipalities develop infrastructures directly relevant for businesses, such as ICT (broad band connection, mobile web, conference or training centers etc.), access road network, water supply, sewage and waste water treatment, solid waste management, decentralized energy supply options, public lightening, etc. They also develop public infrastructures such as community meeting places, inter-municipal building yards, etc.
- Other public social infrastructures and services: The municipalities develop social infrastructures such as local amenity centers, social and medical institutions, cultural and educational facilities, leisure and recreational facilities.
- Development concepts and strategic plans: The municipalities represent a main driving-force of socio-economic development in a particular territory. They monitor trends, needs and developments within the region and in competitive regions.
- Strategic management and monitoring of consistency: The municipalities evaluate and guard the compliance with strategic goals of the territory as well as district or even national spatial or horizontal policies.
- Formulation of goals and strategies: The municipalities are familiar with the daily and strategic needs of the businesses. They consider these aspects in policy formulation, administration and planning.
- Development of fields of competence: The municipalities identify core fields of competences of the business in the areas, which have the potential to grow, and address, develop and promote these fields of competence.

5.5.1.2. Models of inter-municipal CLD

In the framework of COMUNIS, three general models of action for inter-municipal CLD are proposed: land use management, promotion and communication and the provision of business support services. These models describe different types of measures that local authorities may adopt for proactively and comprehensively approaching challenges in the field of commerce, trade and industry at inter-municipal level. The models of action can help municipalities to look at their situation and development from a broad perspective. It may be appropriate and necessary to combine these models to take account of the specific situation of a region or municipality, as it often happens in the practice of inter-municipal development.

Land use management

Impetus for a consistent inter-municipal land use management can be given by very different situations: limited availability of usable land, high land prices, difficult ownership conditions, regional land surplus as a result of misguided development policies and unused brownfield sites, just to name a few. Depending on local capabilities, the solutions can considerably vary in scope⁸.

Let us consider the provision of land for instance: a number of municipalities can get together to plan, design, develop and market an **inter-municipal business park** to offer local businesses a chance of relocation and expansion or even to attract new companies from outside.

With the same objective, as part of a coordinated **inter-municipal commercial site policy**, land supply can be tailor-made to meet different business needs, thereby being strongly demand-oriented. The municipalities involved are required to divide tasks in a geographically sensible way, prioritize their goals for future commercial development and jointly develop sites for manufacturing, services and trade to be located in the as most suitable identified areas.

Going a step further, municipalities may decide to adopt a **joint urban development policy**, which can be worthwhile in some spatial contexts. In that case the involved municipalities would develop a coordinated urban planning and development strategy and common objectives that take into account all necessary urban functions of an area including, for example, housing, transport, social and recreational infrastructure – in addition to industry and commerce. The “land-use management” model may include the preparation and possibly the realization of concrete building projects.

COMUNIS findings

Land use management is a key challenge. In this respect, commercial development requires an inter-municipal strategy at the level of coherent economic territories. Single municipalities often are not able to effectively answer the needs of economic dynamics.

8 For practice examples of inter-municipal tools for steering spatial development see for example: Raab, A. (2011): Räumliche Entwicklungen interkommunal steuern – Interkommunale Kooperation – ein bedarfsgerechtes Steuerungsinstrument für räumliche Entwicklungen auf kleinräumiger Ebene. ibidem-Verlag, Stuttgart, 472 S.

Promotion and communication

In the field of CLD, promotion and communication activities are usually aimed at retaining local businesses in the region and attracting new business from outside. A location (municipality, region, etc.) can undertake various actions to communicate its location advantages, and thus influence the attitudes and expectations of relevant stakeholders. Within the inter-municipal location, it is important to maintain close contacts with individual enterprises and business networks, to inform the public about development processes and actively promote their public engagement. The overall aim is to convey a clear regional identity and a positive image, which can manifest itself, for example, also in a special brand for regional products. A well-defined location profile and a clear development model or guiding principles are also essential for the outward communication and can be meaningfully conveyed, for example, through a website, advertising campaigns and trade shows. The success of the measures depends primarily on how far it is possible to create and cultivate personal contacts with decision-makers, to address the desired target groups and to trigger positive multiplier effects for the location (GUBLER & MÖLLER 2006).

COMUNIS makes a distinction between the following two approaches: a joint **marketing of commercial areas**, intended as a stand-alone action or as part of joint land use management activities, can contribute to bring together supply and demand and to promote the settlement of companies in the area (see above). The **location marketing** approach goes a step further and enables a municipality or a region to use its own image as a tool for responding to exogenous impulses or difficulties. The location marketing is based on a holistic view of the site, which includes its specific strengths and weaknesses. The participating municipalities develop a common inter-municipal marketing model and a clear location profile and establish the region as “brand on the market” in the medium- to long-term.

COMUNIS findings

Ideally, the location image shall be broadly accepted and perceived similarly inside and outside the region. To strengthen the internal identification, the local population may be integrated into the image development process.

Business support services

Companies increasingly consider the availability of a good range of business services offered by municipalities and regions as an important location factor. The offer may include measures and activities such as municipal support during administrative procedures, financial incentives, relocation management, succession management or incentives for the education and vocational training of workers. At a higher level, the municipalities of a region can work together to introduce a **general trade and industry support scheme** to ensure a coordinated and coherent regional economic development. Widening the perspective allows considering regional value added chains and business cycles, and targeted measures can be adopted to foster their growth. At the same time, inter-municipal cooperation enables sharing expertise and resources, thus paving the way for common long-term economic and political visions. Municipalities can also opt for individual economic support schemes for single companies or specific target groups, which may include:

- subsidies,
- credit or investment grants, but also
- remission of fees or deferment of payment, etc.

Other forms of support can include:

- the establishment of a business settlement agency as a one-stop agency,
- administrative support for new businesses or
- support to start-up companies through coaching, mentoring or the provision of business incubators.

Consulting services offered to companies may also have a strong content focus and for example aim at promoting the implementation of an Industrial Ecology concept. In that case, municipalities encourage companies to coordinate material and energy cycles with each other and to re-use recyclables and residual amounts of energy within these local “circuits”. Municipalities are primarily in charge of carrying out the preliminary analysis and to establish and support networks and working groups involving administration, economy and external advisers.

5.6. Phase 4: Implementation

The fourth step of the process deals with transforming the strategy into organizational structures and regulations. The duties, competences, and responsibilities of each participating municipality are further specified and stipulated in an adequate cooperation agreement.

In general, it can be assumed that a professionally managed inter-municipal CLD policy requires a permanent structure. Depending on which objectives and business model were selected, creating a new entity may be necessary. In other cases, however, it might be possible to “retrofit” existing structures and make them suitable for carrying out the new tasks. In all cases, it is important that the joint structure and decision-making process reflect the inter-municipal nature of the cooperation.

In addition to the management structure, in this step municipalities define also the necessary regulations for cooperation. These include, for example, arrangements on the sharing of costs and revenues, voting and participation rights, the preparation of statutes and articles of association where applicable, the agreement on a joint development strategy, the adaptation of spatial and land use planning instruments to the new policy mechanism, etc.

The selected form of cooperation has influence on the steering abilities, costs, control, transparency, flexibility and exertion of influence of the joint discharge of duties (LUMMERSTORFER 2006). As inter-municipal cooperation in the framework of CLD regularly affects spatial planning (land management, infrastructure planning, etc.), financial and human resources management etc., forms of cooperation tend to be (legally) binding or have a formalized organization structure, and are concluded correspondingly⁹. The advantage of a contractually agreed cooperation lies in its reliability and predictability (FRICK & HOKKELER 2008).

Aims and results of the working step

The aim is building structures and regulations facilitating efficient procedures, i.e. which have the necessary know-how, authorization and funding. The municipalities create a management structure (i. e. a “business unit” in case of installing a new institutional structure, a “business model” in case of the further development of existing structures, or a “business concept”).

⁹ The statutes of organizational forms of cooperation differ among states.

They adopt the regulations for setting up the management structure and for regulating the scope and intensity of the cooperation.

Involvement

This working step focuses on political negotiations and agreements of the concrete contents of the inter-municipal cooperation. For this purpose, a sheltered and confidential framework is required. Thus it is advisable to only involve **mayors, administrative staff** of the corresponding departments (e.g. economic officer, planning officer etc.), and representatives of possible other cooperation partners into the process. **External consultants** and **experts** may take a supporting role.

For finally founding an inter-municipal management structure and for adopting the respective regulations, decisions of the respective municipal councils will regularly be necessary

What:

Creation of a (permanent) management structure

Elaboration of the inter-municipal agreement of cooperation (statutes, regulations)

Who:

Mayors and representatives of municipal administration, possibly supported by external experts; municipal councils will regularly need to be involved for adopting the regulations

How:

Workshops with mayors and representatives of municipal administration, eventually complemented by representatives of higher-level administrative bodies.

Milestone:

Adoption of the statutes, regulations of cooperation.

5.6.1. Considerations

Considering the wide scope of activities and actions possible in the context of CLD, it is rather evident that there is no all-in-one device suitable for every purpose, fitting to the requirements of all regions and to all purposes. Additionally, every region or inter-municipal cooperation has specific requirements and necessities. So, custom-made individual solutions are needed.

When planning to establish a permanent management structure in order to coordinate and manage an inter-municipal cooperation on CLD, several aspects have to be considered. At first, the municipalities have to determine the exact scope of tasks which the management structure has to fulfill. The scope of tasks regularly will consist of a selection of the tasks described in chap. 5.5.1. In accordance to the properties, functions, or areas of activities that shall be assigned to the management structure, the legal form and regulatory contents have to be selected or developed respectively. The legal form that inter-municipal cooperation takes depends partly on the municipal functions performed. The joint performance of simple tasks with limited financial and legal implications requires only weakly formalized arrangements. Such cooperation in practice often takes the form of handshake agreements. Contractual forms under private or public law are often used for the joint management of functions, including the delegation of a function to one of the local governments involved, and the buying and selling of services among local governments.

In the context of inter-municipal CLD, the formal requirements will vary widely. Municipalities willing to cooperate in the field of land use management will regularly need to take legal forms of a high liability, as the municipalities will jointly fulfill cost intensive or otherwise sensitive tasks as the purchase of land and soil, the designation of commercial sites in land use plans, or the development of the required technical infrastructures. The legal implications of a joint regional marketing in contrast may be remarkably lower.

Additional to the scope of tasks that shall be assigned to the management structure, also general organizational and financial issues have to be considered.

Please note:

A cooperation agreement should in any case record:

- the participating parties;
- the purpose and scope of the cooperation;
- legal and organizational details to set the rules;
- a distribution key for expenditures and revenues;
- an exit procedure for when a cooperation partner leaves the project (conflict solution mechanism).

5.6.1.1. Organizational issues

Composition of cooperation

Firstly, it has to be clarified, which different types of partners will be included in the partnership. In many cases, the cooperation will be formed by municipalities. But in accordance to the targets of the cooperation, it may be necessary to also include other types of partners, for instance higher-level administrative structures (district, region), financial institutions (banks), companies and business associations, or land owners.

Capacities available for the management structure:

Depending on the tasks assigned to the management structure, and – among other things – on its degree of independence from the municipalities, the partnership has to decide on the financial and personnel resources provided to the management structure. For instance, it has to be clarified, if a one-stop-agency or contact person shall be continuously available, or if the work of the management structure is only of periodic character.

Level of influence on the management structure

In many cases, there will be different levels of decision making in the context of the inter-municipal commercial location development. Normally, a management board will be in charge of dealing with current businesses. Fundamental decisions concerning e.g. the policy of the cooperation or decisions of a larger economic scale will be taken by an assembly composed by the responsible persons of governments or councils of participating municipalities. When founding the management structure, the partners shall

- clearly regulate the responsibilities for decision making between the management board and assembly of (founding) members;
- make sure that decision making is regulated in a reasonable way; basically, all partners need to have a fair influence on the decision making process. The key for dividing voting rights between the partners may follow the size of the municipalities in terms of area or population, or it may follow the amount of financial or spatial resources made available for the cooperation.

Communication, coordination, management

It may also be helpful that the statutes of management structure clearly regulate the principles of internal communication and coordination, i. e. the time frame for inviting to meetings, regular information on the activities of the management structure etc.

5.6.1.2. Financial issues

Concerning financial issues all models base on mechanisms of sharing costs, and sometimes also the financial benefits, of the joint activities of the municipalities. These financial issues generally have to be resolved between the cooperating municipalities. The following cost categories may arise, depending on the scope of cooperation:

- Operational costs for the management structure: The municipalities share the costs for jointly running the management structure. Related costs may comprise loans, small investments in technical infrastructure, interest fees, overhead costs etc.
- Costs for the completion of continuous tasks: The municipalities share the costs for promotion and communication, commercial site marketing, business support services etc. Related costs may comprise loans, the production of publications and material, costs for the participation in trade fairs, costs for external experts etc.
- Costs for joint investments: The municipalities share the costs for jointly developing commercial sites, public infrastructures etc. Related costs may comprise planning costs, e. g. for land use planning, technical designs etc. as well as investment costs for land purchase, construction, engineering, equipment etc.
- Direct revenues: The municipalities share revenues resulting e. g. from land sale, taxes, lease and rent.

The resolution for a specific legal form may be supported by carrying out a feasibility study including a cost-benefit analysis before the foundation of a management structure. Thereby, possible investment costs and operational costs as well as possible revenues and refinancing periods shall be made transparent. The study may also result in a proposal for a specific distribution key for sharing costs and revenues among the participating municipalities, which may be defined according to:

- the investment of the single municipality,
- the share of inhabitants,
- the area of the municipality,
- political agreements of the municipalities.

5.6.2. Cost-benefit analysis, Environmental assessment

In the framework of the step „Implementation“, also comparative analyses of development options may be carried out. This may comprise cost-benefit analysis and environmental assessments, which may help to step-by-step approach the „ideal“ solution for a specific region. The complete digital version of the guidelines contains detailed proposals for carrying out cost-benefit analysis and environmental assessments.

5.7. Phase 5: Evaluation

After a management structure has been installed in Phase 4 Implementation and the inter-municipal co-operation is in place, it is the purpose of Phase 5 Evaluation to regularly analyze the work of the management structure and its activities and actions realized. The evaluation shall make sure that the goals (milestones) are achieved in the planned time frame or that financing is checked, corrected, and optimized (HOLLBACH-GRÖMIG et al. 2005: 46). Insights and lessons learned are then taken into consideration for optimizing the co-operation and strategy, and – if required – for reorienting the management structure and its initiatives.

When carrying out the evaluation, it generally is advisable to attach importance to transparency and sincerity of the process. For instance, this comprises a clear definition of the purpose and content of the evaluation. It also

comprises a transparent approach of identifying the information included and of the rules applied for evaluation, i. e. the indicators and targets used in the evaluation. As a matter of course, the evaluation has to be carried out in an impartial and precise manner, and the results of the evaluation shall be accessible to all participants and relevant stakeholders¹⁰.

Aims and results of the working step

The evaluation process of the inter-municipal CLD is carried out in a regular rhythm of e.g. two to three years. It shall deliver information and knowledge required for the further development of the management structure and its initiatives. It is to say that the purpose of the evaluation is limited to generating this knowledge and information. The decision-making concerning the adaptation and a possible reorientation of the management structure remains in the responsibility of the participating municipalities or actors.

Involvement

An evaluation generally should be carried out following a participative approach. A consequent integration of the relevant stakeholders and actors//actor groups into the process fosters the implementation of the results and conclusions of the evaluation (HÖCK & KRIER 2008). Only if evaluation results are regarded as commonly elaborated and agreed, the recommendations given have a chance to actually be implemented. Evaluation shall be understood as a process of joint learning, where stakeholders can look at structures and activities from different angles in order to identify unused potentials and options for optimization.

Main stakeholders to be included into the process thus are mayors and representatives of the municipal administration (business support office, planning and building office) as well as representatives of the local business community. Preferably, the evaluation process should be carried out by external experts that are independent from local or regional personal relations.

10 For an extensive description of methodological and formal requirements cf.: EC – EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES 2006: Evaluation methods for the European Union's external assistance – guidelines for geographic and thematic evaluations. Volume 2, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxemburg, 47 p.

What:

Creation of a (permanent) management structure
Elaboration of the inter-municipal agreement of cooperation (statutes, regulations)

Who:

Independent external experts conducting the evaluation process, mayors and representatives of municipal administration participating in the process

How:

Interviews with mayors and representatives of municipal administration, and subsequent workshops for discussion of results and possible measures

Milestone:

Evaluation report including recommendations for optimization of strategy and management structure

5.8. Evaluation approach

In the context of inter-municipal CLD, the evaluation method is required to integrate and evaluate information on the following aspects:

- Process of developing and implementing CLD on the inter-municipal level, concerning the interaction between the participants and the actual implementation of measures and activities;
- Relevance of the solution, i. e. the model and the content of the inter-municipal cooperation, concerning the objectives set for economic and social development in the region;
- Impacts and effects of the action for instance on the regional economy, inter-municipal relations, land uses and environment, regional image etc., as a comparison of the current situation to the situation and an earlier point in time;
- Efficiency in terms of costs and benefits of the solution as well as its environmental and other impacts;
- Constraints and problems encountered when implementing the management structure and activities in the context of the CLD strategy;

- Strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats encountered when implementing the management structure and activities in the context of the CLD strategy;

In order to generate recommendations for enhancing the CLD management structure and initiatives, the evaluation method developed and applied in COMUNIS is strongly related and refers to the methods used in Phase 2 Analysis. With view to providing a coherent approach transferable to different regional contexts, and with the aim to consider the criteria mentioned above in an easy applicable way, it picks up the structure of the BSC analysis and combines it with the contents of a SWOT analysis. Basing on a description of the specific objectives and measures taken, each field of activity identified (cf. 5.4.1.1) can be evaluated in terms of goal achievements, difficulties and limits, according to a scheme inspired by the SWOT analysis.

A detailed description of the use of the evaluation matrix and a digital version of the matrix are included in the accompanying CD.

Table 7: COMUNIS Evaluation Scheme

Field of Activity	Measure Process	Model of CLD Category	Goal Achievement Success	Difficulties Limits	Positive Impact Perspectives
Location					
Situation/Location <i>Objective, State of implementation</i>					
Economy					
Image					
Inter-Municipal Cooperation					
Intensity of Cooperation					
Attitudes and Expectations					
Political and Legal Framework					
Commercial Land-Use Management					
Availability of Land for Industrial Use					
Framework Conditions					
Land Prices					

6. Appraisal of information exchange in the pilot regions: Facts – Evaluation – Lessons Learnt

6.1. Introduction

Action 3 of Work Package 6 Implementation (section 3.1) foresees that: “All partners inseminate the process by their realistic appraisal on how information exchange takes place in the pilot regions.” A factsheet was designed and filled by most project partners (PP). It allowed to identify the partners and groups involved inside and outside the regions, the channels and tools used as well as the types of events organized. The participants were also asked to evaluate the information exchange in the pilot regions and between PP. Finally they described what they learned about information exchange during the project. The regional factsheets can be found in the download sections of the project homepage www.comunis.eu and of www.regiosuisse.ch.

The results are summarized hereunder.

6.2. Facts

6.2.1. Participants

Participants to the work of the pilot regions can be separated into two groups. First the pilot regions' stakeholders which were Municipal councils, Inter-municipal cooperation institutions, Regional Managements, Business Associations, Chambers of Commerce, Clusters Organizations, Banks and obviously Enterprises. Some other participants were also invited to bring their expertise: Administration at higher level, Experts, Consulting Companies, Schools and Universities and National Alpine Space Program's (ASP) Contact Points.

6.2.2. Groups created or involved

Pilot regions created following groups to develop their projects: Steering Committee/Board of trustees, Economic Committee and Working groups.

They involved their regional bodies, i.e. their Regional Assembly and their Regional Council.

They also mentioned the group of the Project Partners, which met regularly and held informal contacts, as well as the transnational tandems of pilot regions.

6.2.3. Channels used or created

The PP worked with a combination of different channels for their information exchange using voice, prints and digital media:

1. Media: newspapers, radio, television
2. Stakeholders' channels: flyer, municipal brochure, PP's information magazine, mailing lists
3. COMUNIS own channels:
 - online project management tool (t-point),
 - mailing lists of Project and Observing Partners as well as a broader list of Dissemination Partners
 - Web page www.comunis.eu
 - Prints
 - Newsletter
4. In order to complete and facilitate the information and knowledge exchange within and between the pilot regions as well as with the public in general, the PP designed and implemented an “innovation and entrepreneurship” network/platform, which benefits from developments made in the context of the knowledge management platform of *regiosuisse*, the Swiss Network Unit for Regional Development. The platform contains following elements:
 - Presence on *regiosuisse* platform through a Project sheet (http://rapport.planval.ch/ext_project/ext_project_detail.php?projectID=127&languageID=4) and documents in the download space (<http://www.regiosuisse.ch/download/spezialthemen/comunis>)
 - Subgroup of *regiosuisse* “Public regional Management” group on LinkedIn (http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=3203646&trk=hb_side_g)
 - Interventions on several other groups on LinkedIn: Urban Planning Group, European Union Regional and Rural Development Participants, InterReg, MaVille, Territorial Marketing, Urban Planning Group, Young Professionals in Local Development

- Interventions on well frequented Web 2.0 platforms like Wikipedia (Inter-municipal land use planning, Gestione strategica di insediamenti di PMI), slideshare (www.slideshare.net/Commercial_Land_Planning)
 - Upload of the main publications on Google Books (<https://books.google.com>)
5. ASP channels: Groups on Linkedin (Alpine Space communication network) and Facebook (EU & Alpine space).

6.2.4. Tools

COMUNIS delivered information through its website, two project presentation leaflets, six newsletters, the dissemination of the developed BSC-Tool and its *Guidelines on Commercial Location Development* (on CD in this publication), a Synthesis Booklet, and a Final Publication (document at hand).

For their information exchange, the Pilot Regions used presentations/conferences, prints, press articles, an electronic database, PP's intranet, information e-mails, newsletters, minutes, Web pages of the Pilot Region and PP. Social networks were also used as Viadeo, Linkedin or Rezonance.

6.2.5. Types of events

Pilot regions organized a lot of meetings, as well face-to-face as on distance using telephone calls, telephone conferencing through Skype etc. They organized group meetings like workshops (local and regional), roundtables and seminars like the International Symposium on Industrial Ecology, on 19–20 January 2012 in Sion. Project Partners participated to several seminars, organized in the Pilot Regions and by the Alpine Space Program. Some pilot regions organized field trips or excursions.

6.3. Evaluation

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><i>In general</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct contact enables fruitful discussions • Use of existing channels and mailing lists to disseminate information • Continuous overview of activities in different pilot areas • Online maintenance of contacts and data/information facilitate work processes • Knowledge/network platforms, ensure the sustainability of COMUNIS project activities • Defined roadmap leads to concrete results within defined milestones <p><i>In the pilot regions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings are still the best way to communicate valuable information to local stakeholders (private and public, elected representatives and project managers) • Excursions to already working practice can eliminate the feeling of being only a forerunner • Dissemination of news articles about the COMUNIS project in the regular publication of own local brochure • Leverage of mass amounts of information into a cohesive database 	<p><i>In general</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept of “commercial location development” not commonly used/ well-known in the English language (recommendation to use more/promote the national translations) • Little knowledge of the possible sources of information, somehow there is a huge amount of potential sources and few resources or time to explore it and assimilate it. • Individual pre-information of involved actors is time consuming • Tendency to prefer online/digital over personal communication • On a transnational level: language barriers and communication problems • Partially low utilization of the extranet (technical support for websites, extranet etc.) • Loss of interest in project website when not updated regularly with relevant and appropriate content • Excessive duration of data validation <p><i>In the pilot regions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediary outputs of the process kept in the working group, because it's difficult to inform not involved parties on these outputs, lack of background information • Little use of TANDEM work • The frame of a European project isn't really known to local stakeholders, they are likely to think that it is too theoretical and inefficient

Opportunities	Threats and challenges
<p><i>In general</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further intensification of cooperation between the organizations and institutions involved in or relevant to the process • Increased use of existing media channels • Increased linkage with similar initiatives • Potential lifelong knowledge acquisition • Mutual exchange of involved actors • Internet networking platforms facilitate direct exchange, real time information management and knowledge transfer • Automation allows more efficient work processes <p><i>In the pilot regions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast and agreed direct process • TANDEM work should be used as a tool to improve the flow of information • When facing losses of incomes and short budget flexibility, the public stake-holders are looking for new ways of finding information, financial means and resources. Thus, they are likely to think about new partnerships and finding good practices around • Local stakeholders are developing more and more interest for European examples concerning CLD and economic development in general 	<p><i>In general</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamism and fresh information: websites with updated contents, blog, more intensive use of social networks. Internet is moving fast! • Loss of information due to the complicated process (repeated entry needed) or technical problems like electronic attacks such as viruses, hackers, Trojans • Changes in software platforms and technology <p><i>In the pilot regions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political tensions especially in election time/period prevent people to work efficiently <p><i>Challenges</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting all actors together at all dates • Keep the actors at the same level of information • Informing and keep politic forces up to date the right way

6.4. Lessons learnt

As in every cooperation one must notice that project stakeholders have different **perceptions** and/or **expectations** concerning the project. Therefore every participant needs to understand the others' points of view, which can be reached through dialogue and with mental flexibility. In a project like COMUNIS, not all actors perceive the immediate need of action. It is thus difficult to foster and entertain their motivation. Theory¹¹ tells that the key drivers to entertain motivation are to allow participants to **contribute** to the project and **grow**, be it intellectually, socially, politically or economically. In the political point of view it is important to take into account wish of reelection as well as personal changes after the elections themselves.

At the beginning of the project it is fundamental to reach a common understanding between all stakeholders. Common, clear and transparent **objectives and ground rules**, i.e. for decision making processes and problems' resolutions should be defined in a participative way. Not only municipal decision makers but also NGOs, enterprises, opinion leaders and different citizens' groups should be included in the negotiation. An official written agreement should be elaborated and applied.

Project partners mentioned three key success factors for a good information and knowledge transfer during the project, which confirms the theory¹². They first mention **trust**, especially between participating mayors and municipalities but obviously between all project participants. The second factor is **openness** to sharing information. The third one is **richness of interaction**. Theory also mentions **positive previous experience**, which facilitates motivation to participate to a new cooperation's project.

At last participants outlined the need for the pilot regions to have a project **promoter** who has an adequate network in order to promote the initiative.

11 Clayton P. Alderfer, ERG-Theory (Existence – Relatedness – Growth)

12 Managing Knowledge, Georg von Krogh and Johan Roos, SAGE Publications, 1996

7. Further project documentation

7.1. Final Project Conference Presentations

The presentations held at the occasion of the Final Conference (held on 8 March 2012 at the European Academy Bolzano-Bozen, Italy) can be downloaded from the COMUNIS website on <http://www.comunis.eu> > Downloads > COMUNIS Final Conference Presentations.

Hereunder are listed the speakers, their affiliation and the presentation titles:

v. Andrian-Werburg, Stefan & Steurer, Peter: **CLD Guidelines and Process**
Bosch & Partner GmbH & Regionalentwicklung Vorarlberg (COMUNIS Partner Consortium)

Gärber, Martha: **BLS Business Location Südtirol – Alto Adige**
BLS Business Location Südtirol – Alto Adige, Bolzano (Italy)

Haberfellner, Christian: **Gemeindeentwicklung in alpinen Regionen**
E2M Research Group, Innsbruck (Austria)

Perruchoud-Massy, Marie-Françoise: **Project Introduction**
University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland – Institute for Tourism (COMUNIS Partner Consortium)

Redlich, Sina: **COMUNIS and the Alpine Space**
Alpine Space Programme – Joint Technical Secretariat

Steurer, Peter: **PSG/Project and Location Association Großwalsertal**
Regionalentwicklung Vorarlberg (COMUNIS Partner Consortium)

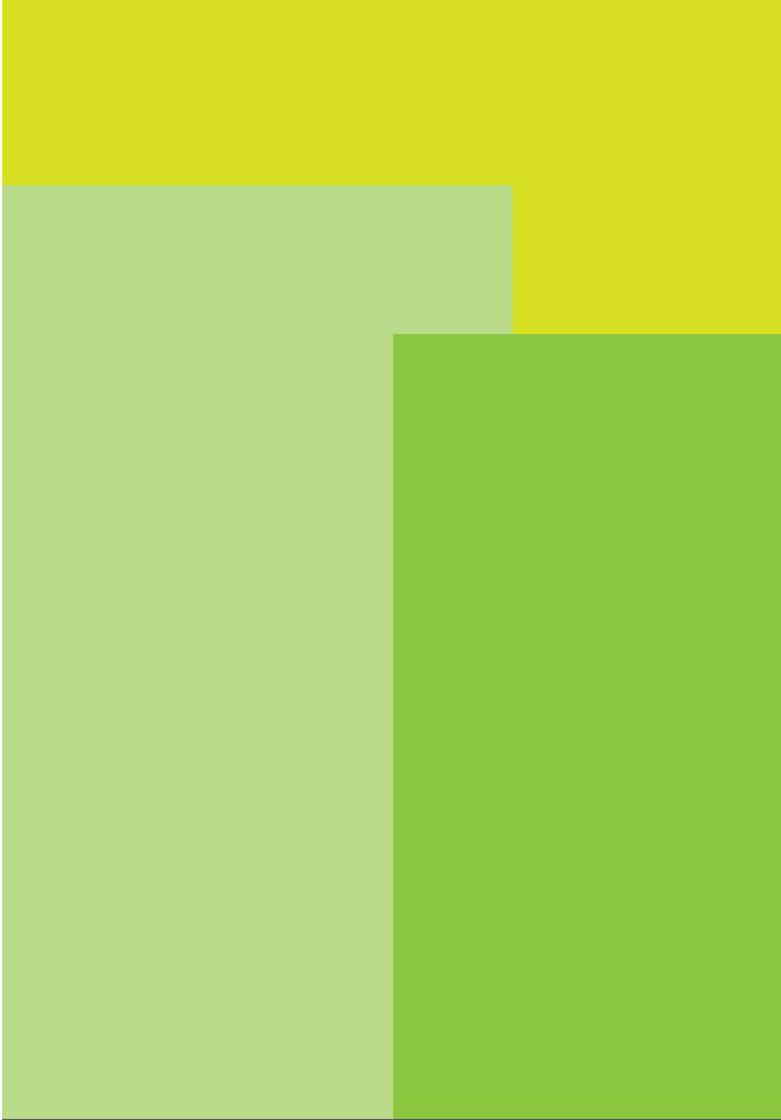
Stumm, Nathalie: **Industrial Ecology in the Valais**
University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland – Institute for Tourism (COMUNIS Partner Consortium)

Viazzo, Pier Paolo: **Demographic Viability**
President of the Working Group Demography and Employment

Weidlich, Fritz: **Gewerbebezweckverband Südliches Oberallgäu**
Stadt Sonthofen (COMUNIS Partner Consortium)

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