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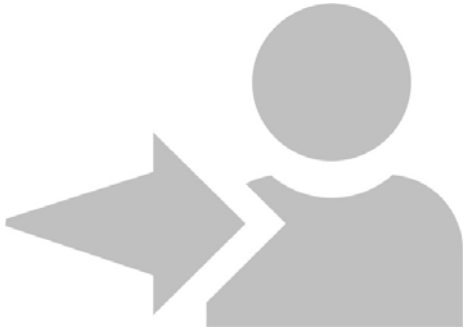
ACCESS
IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES OF GENERAL INTEREST - ORGANISATIONAL INNOVATIONS IN RURAL MOUNTAIN AREAS

Transnational Comparison Study of ACCESS Regions and Test Areas - Accessibility of Services of General Interest (SGI) in Rural Mountain Areas

(english short version)



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ACCESS- Lead Partner
Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für die Berggebiete (SAB)
(Swiss Center for Mountain Regions)
Thomas Egger / Peter Niederer
Seilerstrasse 4,
CH-3001 Bern
Tel.: +41 31 382 10 10
peter.niederer@sab.ch

Authors
Thomas Egger, Swiss Center for Mountain Regions, Berne
Peter Niederer, Swiss Center for Mountain Regions, Berne
Carina Stephan, University of Kaiserslautern (for Regionalverband Südlicher Oberrhein, Freiburg)
Marina Oliveri, Local Action Group Appenino Genovese, Genoa
Angela Rollando, Local Action Group Appenino Genovese, Genoa

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1. ACCESS: Introduction and Project Background

ACCESS[1] is an INTERREG IV B project developed in the framework of the Alpine Space Programme. It involves nine Project Partners from Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland. The partners have come together to improve the accessibility to services of general interest (SGI) in sparsely populated mountain regions.

1.1. Problems to be addressed

The maintenance of a spatially and socially equal accessibility to SGI is a core issue to the functionality of mountain areas and any regional development strategy both on a national as well as on a transnational level. Already in the third Cohesion Report of the European Commission, it is specified that the equality of access to basic facilities, essential services and knowledge for everyone, wherever they happen to live, is a key condition for territorial cohesion.

However the INTERREG III B project PUSEMOR[2] confirmed that sparsely populated areas in all alpine countries are facing difficulties to maintain existing services due to their poor profitability and due to the need to respond to new or changing needs of the local population. The ongoing territorial concentration of SGI leads to a vicious circle of further deterioration in the quality of provision which in turn causes a decreasing demand in the existing services. This process has many negative consequences for the affected regions. In fact the withdrawal of SGI causes a reduced functionality, competitiveness and a higher amount of motorised mobility in communities of sparsely populated areas. Furthermore it aggravates social inequalities – persons who do not dispose of a car, not having the knowledge to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) etc. face problems to reach services. Often these areas are characterised by important population losses and/or excessive ageing.

The main challenge for the concerned communities and regions is therefore the furthering of the access to demand-oriented and flexible SGI with innovative cooperation structures in order to capitalise best the potentials of sparsely populated areas. Mobility is an important issue in the whole framework. Contrary to a still widespread opinion this must not necessarily mean in every case physical transport of goods or persons but implies the promotion of integrated mobility systems (Report on the state of the Alps, Alpine Convention).

1.2. Objectives of the Project

The PUSEMOR project identified a major challenge and urgent need for action in the field of public transport and the accessibility of SGI. ACCESS therefore aims at improving the accessibility to SGI in sparsely populated mountain areas by finding

1) New forms of organisation of SGI (e.g. substitute stationary services with mobile ones, improving governance)
2) Using Information and Communication Technologies (e.g. broadband internet access) and
3) Fostering demand oriented, integrated mobility systems.

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

2 PUSEMOR – Public Services in Sparsely Populated Mountain Regions

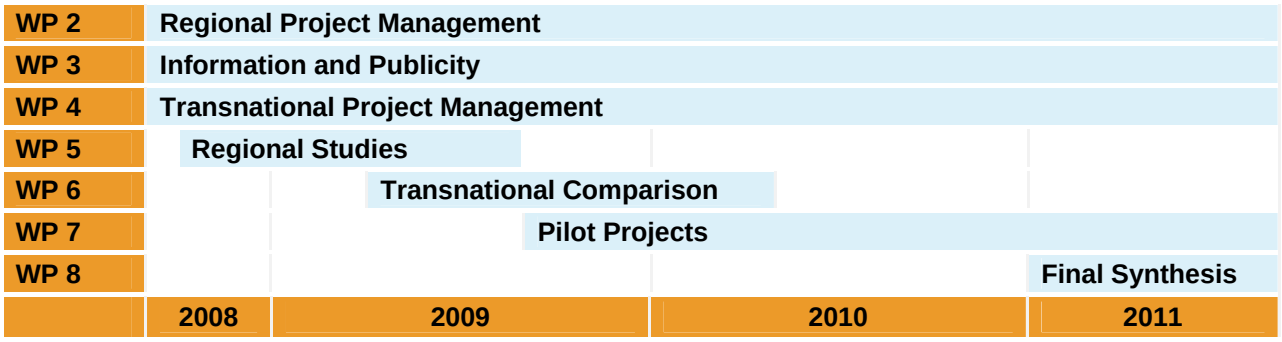
The project is guided by the following objectives:

- Improve the competitiveness and the quality of life in sparsely populated areas – as a precondition for maintaining and attracting new inhabitants and Small and Medium sized Enterprises s by making use of the potentials of these areas (environmental quality, heritage, culture).
- Develop models that will contribute to regional development and spatial planning, (e.g. efficient use of infrastructures, networks and cooperation between centres and rural areas).
- Mitigate social inequalities in the access of SGI and reduce environmental pollution.
- Test and apply various elements of the concept of governance in order to empower the population and to ensure that society owns the process.
- New approaches to providing services will be tested and put into practice in all Test Areas. They will be based on the demands of the local population and enterprises and be developed together with the service providers.

1.3. Work Packages and Time Schedule

ACCESS is structured along eight Work Packages (WP) with specifically defined objectives, activities and outputs. Figure 1 gives an overview on Work Package themes and time schedule, WP 6 will be described in detail in the following section. This report constitutes the final product of WP 6 (here: only a short version (excerpts)).

Figure 1: Work Packages and Time Schedule of the ACCESS project

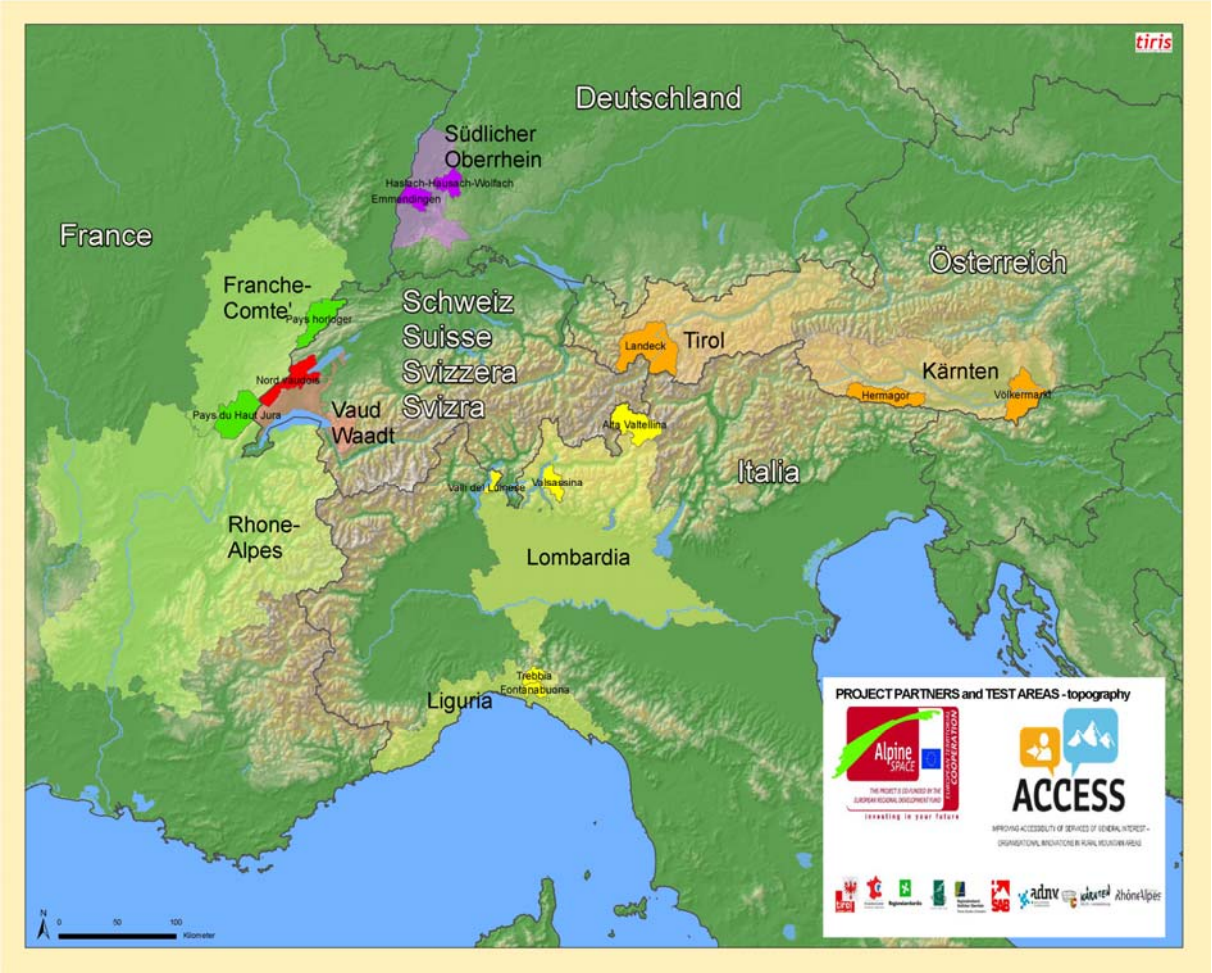


1.4. Overview on ACCESS Regions and Test Areas

The ACCESS-Team is constituted by partners from eight Regions on level of NUTS 2: The Austrian regions Kärnten and Tirol, the French regions Franche-Comté and Rhône-Alpes, the German region Südlicher Oberrhein, the Italian regions Genoa and Lombardia as well as the Swiss region Nord-Vaudois. With the exception of Lichtenstein and Slovenia, all Alpine Space countries are represented in the project: In the framework of the Regional Studies (WP 5) every Project Partner indicated one to three Test Ares within its Region (see Map 1).

The Test Areas are defined as functional areas on Level of NUTS 3 Regions or district-areas or regional administrations such as the “pays” in France. To draw a picture of the situation of public transport, the Test Areas a regional centre was attributed, which can be located inside or outside of the Test Area. The implementation of Pilot activities will be carried out in these Test Areas on a local or regional level.

Map 1: Overview on ACCESS Regions with Test Areas



Source: Bundesland Tirol represented by the Office of Regional Government of Tyrol, Department Spatial Planning and Statistics

Table 1: Important Parameters of the Test Areas

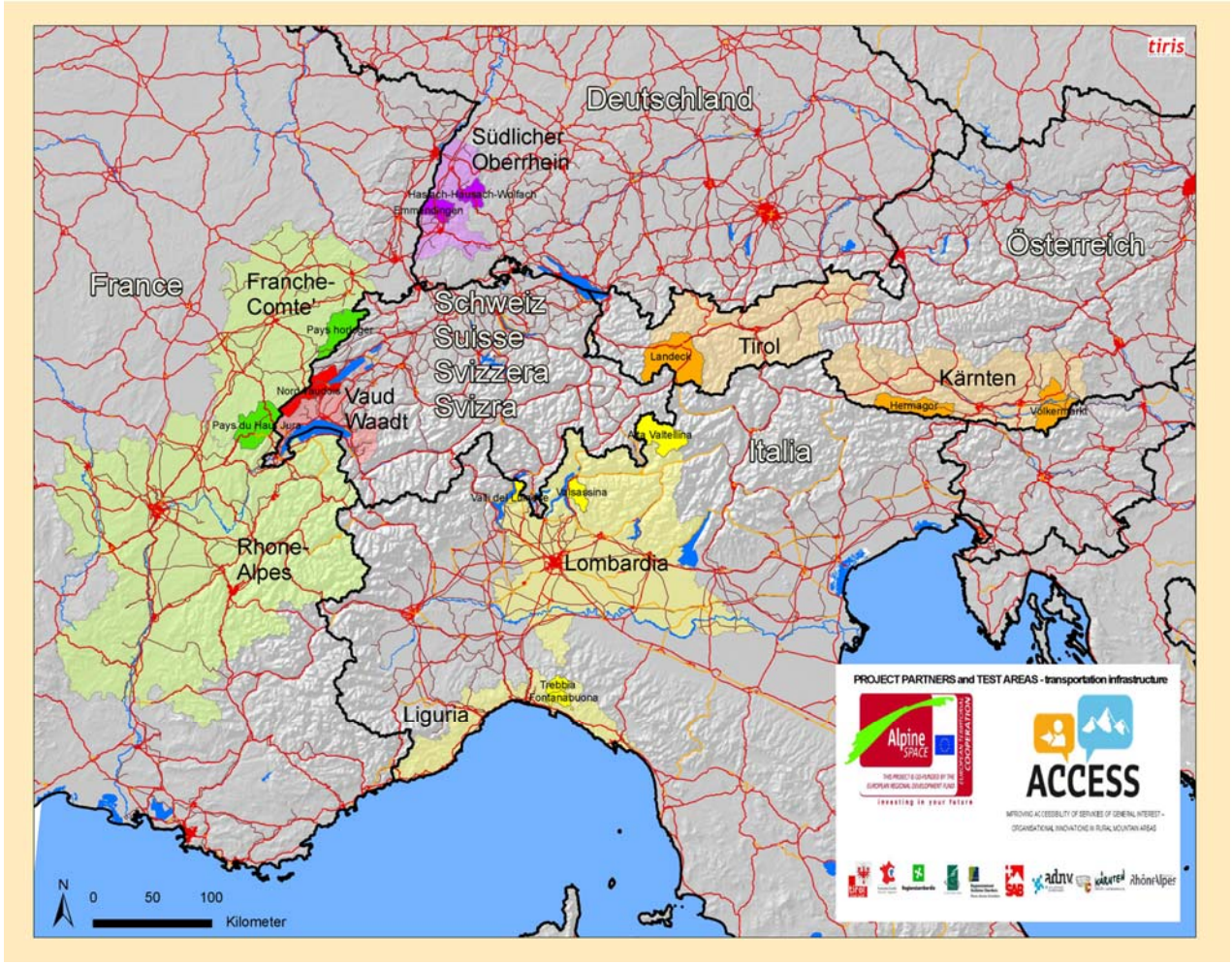
	Area (in sqkm)	Inhabitants of Test Area	Municipalities	Regional Centre of Test Area	Inhabitants of Regional Centre	Position of Regional Centre
Region Tirol (BLT)						
➢ Test Area Landeck	1.595	44.300	30	Landeck	7.700	Inside TA
Region Kärnten (BLC)						
➢ Test Area Hermagor	808	19.300	7	Hermagor	7.200	Inside TA
➢ Test Area Völkermarkt	907	43.100	13	Völkermarkt	11.400	Inside TA
Region Nord Vaudois (ADNV)						
➢ Test Area Nord Vaudois	539	70.300	80	Yverdon-les-bains	25.000	Inside TA
Region Südlicher Oberrhein (RVSO)						
➢ Test Area Emmendingen	404	117.800	18	Emmendingen	26.500	Inside TA
➢ Test Area Haslach-Hausach-Wolfach	363	37.100	10	Haslach-Hausach-Wolfach (3 centres)	18.000	Inside TA
Region Franche-Comté (RFC)						
➢ Test Area Horloger	760	42.600	78	Besançon	120.000	Outside TA
➢ Test Area Haut-Jura	962	51.700	66	St. Claude	12.300	Inside TA
Region Genoa (GAL)						
➢ Test Area Fontanabuona	220	22.800	13	Genoa	600.000	Outside TA
➢ Test Area Trebbia	213	6.600	9	Genoa	600.000	Outside TA
Region Lombardia (RLO)						
➢ Test Area Valli del Luinese	180	33.700	16	Varese	81.900	Outside TA
➢ Test Area Valsassina	369	32.900	28	Lecco	45.500	Outside TA
➢ Test Area Alta Valtellina	897	24.300	6	Sondrio	21.600	Outside TA

2. Transnational Comparison of SGI: Problems to solve

2.1. Public Transport

The map below (Map 2) shows the marginalisation of Access Areas within the main transport network of the Alpine Space.

Map 2: Overview on Setting of the Test Areas in the Main Transport Networks in Alpine Space



Source: Region of Tyrol represented by Office of Regional Government of Tyrol, Department Spatial Planning and Statistics

At the regional level, the situation of public transport is rather good in all Partner areas, even if there are particular differences based on the geographical conformation of the territory and on the rate of growth of the regions.

The provision of public transport is more expensive in the rural/mountain areas of the regions, especially in remote areas than in urban areas.

The main reasons of these difficulties are:

- Low demand connected with decrease of population: a problem common to all Project Partners.
- Lack of connections between bus lines and trains: especially in the Test Areas of Region Genoa and Region Franche-Comté.
- Lack of funds to dedicate to implement public transport in remote areas, because fund amounts are directly linked with the number of potential passengers.

The general aims of regional plans for public transport are:

- to improve road connections and infrastructures
- to maintain accessibility by train and make it more attractive
- to support intermodal transport
- to search for more flexibility
- to improve the quality of services

On the base of interviews with experts and stakeholders, data collection, transnational workshops and the analysis of statistical data (for details refer to the Regional Intermediate Reports on http://www.access-alpinespace.eu/?id=109) the problems encountered in the field of public transport can be summarised as follows (most concerned Partner Regions in Brackets):

- **Low Profitability:**

The cost structure and the financing issues are decisive when it comes to creating the offer of public transport services in areas of low population density, with dispersed settlements and a modestly developed tourism industry.

The problems are connected to less funding from the institutional bodies in rural areas, especially for new or improved public transport services, like on-demand buses or new rail connections or intermodal correspondences: Region Tirol, Region Genoa, Region Lombardia, Region Südlicher Oberrhein and to limited state funds to private companies: Region Kärnten, Region Tirol, Region Nord Vaudois.

- **Transport Chain, Modal Split:**

The lack of efficient coordination in the public transport schedules and the need to improve the interchange connections: park&ride, bus+bus, bus+rail is a widespread problem in all partner regions. People solve this problem by the use of private cars. That's why individual motorised traffic is by far the predominant means of transport which has unfortunately a very high impact on air pollution and noise.

In some cases there are few connections between remote areas and the main transport system of the region; in particular for trans-border commuters there are technical inadaptabilities of the rails and missing agreements between the countries (Region Nord Vaudois, Pays Horloger, Pays du Haut Jura).

Another problem is the consistency and coherence of information about the transport chain from the beginning to the end of the journey (Region Nord Vaudois). The combination of individual and flexible transport solutions for the stretch close to the place of residence and the possibility to coordinate public transport services for the further stretches becomes more and more important. (Region Tirol)

- **Integration in other SGI:**

Especially for people not having access to a private car, public transport is decisive to use of other SGI e.g. food shops. ICT on the other side can help public transport to be more efficient and innovative. Public transport, ICT and mountain food shops are closely linked.

- **Geographical Disparities:**

The geographical disparity between urban (lowlands) and mountain/remote (uplands) areas is a crucial problem: there are differences among countries connected with different socio-economic situations, but however, the lack of integration among lowlands and uplands is one of the most critical problems. The disparity is either political or topographic.

- **Infrastructures:**

In Italy, especially for remote areas of Region Genoa, there are some problems with infrastructures and above all with rail transport, that is quite deficient. Generally the railway network needs improvements, both from management and from infrastructural point of view. In remote area also quality and management of roads networks is insufficient and represent a barrier to public transport services.

- **Management and Governance:**

For some partner (Region Kärnten, Region Genoa), it's important to study or to improve joint "regional traffic concepts" with the affected local communities, to elaborate solutions and ensure sustainable financing of the transport offers, to bring commuters back to public transport and increase the split.

- **Users:**

Public transport is used above all by pupils, by elderly people, by commuters, by persons without a car and by tourists; in some remote areas public transport is increasingly concentrated on the transport of school children. Commuters often prefer individual motorised transport because it is more flexible and comfortable, even if more expensive. E.g. in the remote areas of Region Genoa, the introduction of public transport on demand was a failure due to the fact that elderly people prefer fewer scheduled connections than to call and to reserve a dedicated service. Moreover the lack of an adequate offer in public transport leads to social inequalities, because families, older people, teenagers have often not an appropriate access to mobility services (Region Nord Vaudois).

- **The Image of Public Transport:**

Public transport is often poorly used due to an unjustified image of slowness and filthiness (Region Nord Vaudois). This image contributes to a vicious circle: decreasing number of passengers- decreasing rentability- decreasing service quality - decreasing number of passengers.

2.2. Information and Communication Technologies

The following section clusters statements made by the Project Partners regarding main barriers and obstacles of ICT in their Test Areas on the base of a qualitative analysis:

- **Digital Divide; geographical/cultural:**

In some regions there are large uncovered areas for mobile phone, a low development of broadband internet connection and consequently a large part of population without internet access (Test Areas in Region Franche-Comté and Region Genoa). The lack of technical equipment (broadband internet connection, availability of computer, etc), the lack of computer literacy and an offer which doesn't meet the needs of the users is limiting the access to ICT (particularly true for internet in Test Area Landeck). The technical infrastructure supplied by the network providers to enable consumers to make use of ICT services is excellent in the central urban area and good in the rural areas. As far as the technical equipment of the users is concerned, there is still major need for improvement, with the availability of equipment depending on household income and the age of the members of a household (Test Area Landeck). Much more young people than elderly people have the skills required to make use of ICT services. The availability of ICT does not mean that the cultural barrier has been overcome. Many inhabitants of remote villages have still to benefit from the opportunities provided by the Web as a way to stay in touch with the outside world (e.g. by promoting handcrafted products or services for tourists) (particularly true for the Lombardia Test Areas).

- **Cooperation:**

One of the reasons causing the digital divide is the lack of innovative services able to enhance cooperation, efficiency and services of local authorities and bodies of (Genoa Test Areas).

- **Profitability:**

In remote areas the market dynamics have completely failed and only governmental service are still present due to the low profitability for private investments (Genoa Test Areas). In Carinthia the mobile internet providers take customers away from the conventional telephone networks. By losing the "cash cow" conventional networks become unprofitable, although they are considered more stable by users than private wireless networks.

- **Infrastructures:**

One of the reasons causing the digital gap is the lack of adapted infrastructures. (Genoa Test Areas) and the lack of technical equipment (broadband internet connection, availability of computers etc.) within private households restricts the access to ICT (Test Area of Landeck).

2.3. Everyday Needs

The following section clusters statements made by the Project Partners regarding main barriers and obstacles of food shops in their Test Areas on the base of a qualitative analysis:

- **Profitability:**

The problem of the low profitability of small shops in rural areas is a common problem among the partners; the small rural shops are strongly affected by the competition of the new shopping centres located in the outskirts of the city and, following the depopulation of peripheral areas,

many shops have closed down. The commercial offer has become concentrated in supermarkets which is weakening city centre offers of traditional shops, most of small villages are closing because of the low profitability which threatens the creation and the companies' buy-out.

The profitability of shops calls for a rising number of consumers per shop. In regions where a population decline can be expected, this problem is more accentuated (Test Area Landeck). In Region Südlicher Oberrhein the situation of the access to everyday needs is generally adequate, but the risk to lose small shops that fulfil everyday needs because of the declining population is very high.

For some partner the tourism is the driving force for everyday needs; in fact for Region Tirol the situation is strongly influenced by the brisk demand in the tourism industry and consequently the food retailing industry is well developed.

For Region Nord Vaudois 43 out of 80 municipalities have no food stores nor a bakery or butchery on their territory. Most of these municipalities have less than 300 inhabitants. Some retailers say that below a population of 1.000 inhabitants, they could not make a living. Small-sized grocer's shops focusing on local supply have reduced chances of economic success. Most people shop in supermarkets and discounters on their way to work or from work. Consumers have high standards in terms of product range, quality, freshness and prices. Alternative supply concepts such as internet shopping are not very popular in the sector of convenience goods (Test Area Tirol).

- **Management and Governance:**

The commercial sector in rural areas is essentially (and almost entirely) made up of very small family- or individually-run enterprises. Such very small enterprises are hampered by the lack of knowhow and vocational training (Genoa Test Areas).

Services are concentrated in big towns on the account of smaller towns, especially as far as social, children services and leisure equipments are concerned. In most cases the local authorities have no word to say on the maintenance of those services on their territory (Pays du Haut-Jura). With the closure of a shop a village loses also a meeting point that often played an important role in the social and community life of the municipality. Some municipalities have tried to find solutions in bundling different SGIs in one village centre with a grocery shop, the gymnastic and multi-services hall etc. (e.g. Ballaigues in Region Nord Vaudois)

- **Reachability:**

The geographical location of some rural areas is a problem for a lot of partners. It's very difficult to reach these areas by using local public transport: these areas are characterized by the phenomena of territorial marginalization, the ageing of the population and a scattered settlement pattern (Italian Test Areas). For consumers having a car, this phenomenon is not a real problem, but for those being too old for driving a car or not having the financial means, the situation gets more and more difficult (Region Nord Vaudois). Due to the spatial concentration of retail businesses in easily accessible favoured locations, the population has to travel long distances to buy convenience goods. The private car becomes indispensable for shopping. This is a problem for the group of "mobility losers" (elderly people, teenagers) in rural and peripheral areas and in those settlement areas and places close to the centres where there are no groceries (Test Area Landeck).

3. Conclusion of the Situation in the Test Areas

3.1. Synoptical Overview of ACCESS Test Areas

In following Table 2 presents a synoptic picture of SGI in the field of public transport, food shops, ICT in all Test Areas based on qualitative data collected in the Regional Intermendiate Reports, expertise of ACCESS Project Partners and the statistical indicators.

The dark blue cells in the table indicates in which Test Areas and in which field of SGI the ACCESS partnership intends to implement Pilot activities in order to improve the accessibility and to deepen the understanding of the factors of success.

Table 2: Qualitative Evaluation of Economic and SGI Situation in ACCESS TAs

Test Areas (TA)	Situation		
	Public Transport	ICT	Everyday Needs
TA Völkermarkt (Kärnten)	+	+ +	o
TA Hermagor (Kärnten)	+	+ +	o
TA Landeck (Tirol)	o	+ +	+
TA Valli del Luinese (Lombardia)	o	+	+
TA Valsassina (Lombardia)	-	o	+
TA Alta Valtellina (Lombardia)	-	-	+ +
TA Emmendingen (Südlicher Oberrhein)	+	+	o
TA Haslach-Hausach-Wolfach (Südlicher Oberrhein)	+	+	o
TA Horloger (Franche-Comté)	-	-	-
TA Haut-Jura (Franche-Comté)	-	o	o
TA Nord Vaudois (Nord-Vaudois)	o	+ +	o
TA Fontanabuona (Genoa)	o	-	o
TA Trebbia (Genoa)	o	- -	-

Legend				
very bad	bad	sufficient	good	very good
- -	-	o	+	+ +
presence of ACCESS Pilot Action				

These findings combined with the analysis of the barriers and hindrances (see long version of the Transnational Intermediate Report) illustrates that the readiness of government to invest into SGI, the availability of cost effective solutions (organisation and technology) and the image of a particular SGI have a more important influence on the accessibility and use of SGI than settlement patterns and proximity.

Therefore the ACCESS partnership is confirmed in its aim to improve the accessibility to SGI in sparsely populated mountain areas by finding new forms of organisation of SGI, using ICT and fostering demand oriented, integrated mobility systems.

3.2. Main Cathegories of SGI Accessibility Areas in Alpine Space

It must be noted that not all municipalities within the ACCESS Test Areas show the same trend and the same pattern. The economic development and the accessibility to SGI can heavily change within a few kilometres. However in order to get a realistic picture of the accessibility in the ACCESS Test Areas, the different qualitative and quantitative information has been clustered and categorised. During the elaboration of the Transnational Intermediate Report the partnership came up with the following types of accessibility.

a) Low Accessibility and Structural Problems

- Test Area Fontanabuona
- Test Area Trebbia

b) Low Accessibility and a positive Socioeconomic Development

- Test Area Valli del Luinese
- Test Area Valsassina
- Test Area Alta Valtellina
- Test Area Horloger

c) Medium Accessibility with positive Population Development and a stagnant Economy

- Test Area Nord Vaudois
- Test Area Haut Jura

d) Medium Accessibility with very disperse Settlement Structure

- Test Area Hermagor
- Test Area Völkermarkt

e) Good Accessibility with high Economic Development

- Test Area Landeck

f) Excellent Accessibility with high Population Development

- Test Area Emmendingen
- Test Area Haslach-Hausach-Wolfach

4. Recommendations and Outlook on Pilot Activities

4.1. Public Transport

Characteristic for the most Good Practice Examples in the field of public transport is the demand-oriented supply. In several countries the idea of temporary flexible systems on basis of calling by customers is widely used. A very promising approach of new forms of public transport are cooperation between public administration and transport companies on local or regional level as well as touristic companies (Public Private Partnership). However the main funding of public transport remains a fundamental task of municipalities or the regional administration. The fare of costumers cannot cover the costs. The main target groups are residents and tourists as well as pupils. The seasonal peak in the touristic demand can be partly answered by flexible transport systems.

Other offers are oriented towards the needs of young people such as night-busses or night-trains or by the needs of elderly people like call-transport service to health facilities or to the street market. Another target group of a mobility project are the employees of an enterprise, which can introduce buses or a car-sharing system with guaranteed parking space.

Starting from the lessons learnt and from the collected good practises, every ACCESS Project Partner tried to understand the opportunities in developing a definite Pilot activity on the own territory. Many Pilot activities will be located in the field of public transport, above all in touristic places. In non touristic, remote areas with low reachability, residents (e.g. elderly and young people) are in the centre of interest. Some Pilot activities will be especially dedicated to commuters.

The analysis of good practises in the field of public transport leads to some recommendations. The planned Pilot activities and involved Project Partners are listed below.

- To improve public transport it is necessary to create a well functioning link between mountain villages and urban centres, in order to achieve an integrated public transport system. It is necessary to support the creation of “regional traffic concepts” involving the affected local communities, to elaborate solutions and ensure sustainable financing of the transport offers, to bring commuters back to public transport and increase the modal split. A synchronized timetable is a necessary pre-condition to improve the user friendliness of public transports.
  - Region Kärnten: Project Centre of Mobility for Public Transport information
  - Region Genoa: Project Blu Card: Facilities aimed at helping the elderly use public transport in mountain areas
  - Region Genoa: Project Discobus: Facilities aimed at helping the young use public transport in mountain areas.

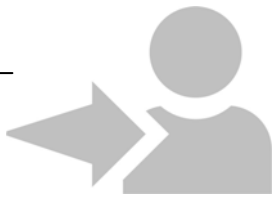
  Not only the internal mobility in the mountain areas should be improved, but also the connections with the regional and national centres. It should be easier for the people living outside of the mountain areas to reach them by public transport, so that their attractiveness and economic development can be improved.

- Intensify co-operation among regions with a view to improve connections in public transport within the Alps and beyond, and the public transport offers for tourists. Special attention has to be paid to cross border transports, especially for commuters.
  - Region Tirol: Project Regional Bus Oberes Gericht-Terra Raetica
  - Region Nord Vaudois: Project Car-sharing with support measures
  - Region Lombardia: Project Mobility manager for cross-border commuters (Valli del Luinese)
- Support the development of sustainable tourism to strengthen local economies and to maintain the local population. Offers in tourism need to be linked to public transport offers and vice versa.
  - Region Kärnten: Project Mobility Management in natural parks
  - Region Tirol: Project Development Nature Park Bus Kaunergrat
  - Region Nord Vaudois: Project Solar cells boat linking the coasts of the upper part of the lake of Neuchâtel
  - Region Lombardia Region: Project Mobility manager for tourism sector commuters (Alta Valtellina)
- Support the development of local industrial and craftsmanship in the mountain areas in order to maintain a favourable economic environment capable to avoid the dislocation of production plants. Public transport and mobility management (car-pooling, company buses, time planning) can play a decisive role, firstly by offering a good and cheaper reachability of the enterprises settled in the rural and mountain areas, secondly by reducing the environmental impact of commuting
  - Region Lombardia: Project Mobility manager for commuters Small and Medium sized Enterprises (Valsassina)
- Promote demand-oriented transport models involving local stakeholders and policy makers. Create permanent connections between local planning and regional-national levels to overcome the marginality of remote areas (Governance). Provide the necessary public finances to assure a good accessibility and guarantee the attractiveness of all territories (all ACCESS Projects).

4.2. Information and Communication Technologies

Information and Communication Technologies are mainly used the good practises as a transmitter or implementation tool for SGI such as the online-ordering of groceries. Another application is the electronic card to provide tourists with a quick and easy way to book and pay online for public transport, parking and events.

The analysis of good practises in the field of ICT leads to the following recommendations. The planned Pilot activities and involved Project Partners are listed below:



- To improve infrastructures by new technologies.
  - Region Franche-Comté: Projects Setting-up video-services (Pays Horloger as well as Pays du Haut Jura)
  - Region Südlicher Oberrhein: Projects Development of a local internet platform to facilitate online ordering and built-up delivery services for every day needs (Freiamt as well as Wolfach)
- To bridge the digital divide (geographical, cultural) through Information and Education.
  - Region Rhône-Alpes: Project Improving accessibility to SGI with the help of ICT
- To integrate the use of ICT in the national/ regional and provincial spatial policies; new technology have a strong potential to improve the attractiveness of remote areas. (applies to all ACCESS projects)

4.3. Everyday Needs

Based on the Examples of Good Practices, two patterns of projects for improving the situation of everyday needs can be deduced: On the one hand active citizens rebuilding a store in their municipality, because of their discontent with the lack of infrastructure. On the other hand owner-managed chain store companies with a high regional power in the food retail market developed new kinds of branch stores or services like a delivery service, additional to their regular offers. Good Practices in the field of everyday needs are mostly implemented on local level with one shop; only the delivery service of groceries can serve several municipalities.

Successful suppliers in the field of everyday needs often bundle several functions like administrative services, social services (for elderly people), health care, gasoline stations, cash delivery, post services or small restaurants.

With regard to the citizens' initiatives, the investments were very often raised by the residents in form of credits, in kind contributions and voluntary work. The success and the sustainability of the projects depend heavily on the support of the residents, which also must use the shop or service to make it sustain. The running costs of these small shops can be in most cases covered by the earnings, but not the basic investments.

In any case it is important to act before the supply infrastructure closes. Ideally the local authorities buy the premises, renovate it and rent it to a new shopkeeper.

The analysis of good practises in the field of everyday needs leads to the following recommendations.

The planned Pilot activities and involved Project Partners are listed below:

- To promote the offer of local mountain shops as an aspect of the regional tourism offer by inserting specific regulations in spatial policies, or the creation of touristic packages.
  - Region Nord Vaudois: Project Improving public transport combined with touristic needs
- To make the mountain shops more attractive by supporting the shopkeeper with public funds, dedicated to improve the quality of services.
  - Region Kärnten: Project support of retail traders,

- Region Tirol: Project Small Food Store Protection
- Region Genoa: Project Innovation related to the distribution network linked to small mountain shops
- Region Südlicher Oberrhein: Project Target group oriented marketing for local services (Freiamt as well as Wolfach)

➢ To establish local schemes mobilizes SGI operators.

- Region Rhône-Alpes: Project Improving ability of elected representatives and their staff to deal with SGI accessibility: database and training sessions implementation

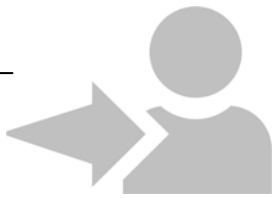
4.4. Sustainability of Pilot activities

The Pilot activities that will be implemented in the partner countries have some common points:

A **high degree of innovation**: eg. the combination of transport and other offers such as tourism, leisure, everyday needs.

The **participatory approach**: all Project Partner will involve all relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the pilot actions namely public bodies such as provinces, municipalities and above all the local population.

The **integration into the regional and national policies**: in all countries the general guidelines about SGI are at national level, but the regional, provincial and municipal planning is organized by the different territorial levels; therefore it is essential for every Project Partner to integrate these activities into the local planning agenda.



5. Short Description of Pilot Activities

The following Table 3 shows the Pilot Activities described in the Regional Intermediate Reports that the Project Parter intends implement in their Test Areas.

Table 3: Overview of Pilot Activities

Pilot Activities	SGI Themes			
	Public Transport	ICT	Everyday Needs	others
Centre of Mobility for Public Transport Information Region Kärnten, Austria	X			
Mobility Management in natural parks Region Kärnten , Austria	X			
Regional Transport in the Nockregion Region Kärnten, Austria	X			
Regional Bus Oberes Gericht- Terra Raetica Region Tirol, Austria	X			
Development Nature park Bus Kaunergrat Region Tirol, Austria	X			
Solar cells boat linking the coasts of the upper part of the lake of Neuchâtel Region Nord Vaudois , Switzerland	X			
Car-sharing with support measures Region Nord Vaudois , Switzerland	X			
Improving public transport combined with touristic needs, Region Nord Vaudois , Switzerland	X			
Blu Card: Facilities aimed at helping the elderly use Public Transport in mountain areas Region Genoa, Italy	X			
Discobus: Facilities aimed at helping the young use Public Transport in mountain areas Region Genoa, Italy	X			
Creation of a mobility manager for a mountain area: application to the case of cross-border commuters in Valli del Luinese Region Lombardia, Italy	X			
Creation of a mobility manager for a mountain area: application to the case of manufacturing commuters in Valsassina Region Lombardia, Italy	X			

Creation of a mobility manager for a mountain area: application to the case of tourism sector commuters in Alta Valtellina Region Lombardia , Italy	X			
Development of a local internet platform to facilitate online ordering and build-up delivery services for everyday needs in Freiamt (Test Area Emmendingen) Region Südlicher Oberrhein, Germany		X	X	
Development of a local internet platform to facilitate online ordering and build-up delivery services for everyday needs in Wolfach (Test Area Haslach-Hasach-Wolfach) Region Südlicher Oberrhein, Germany		X	X	
Improving accessibility to SGI with the help of ICT Region Rhône-Alpes, France		X		
Setting-up video-services in Pays Horloger Region Franche-Comté, France		X		
Setting-up video-services in Pays du Haut-Jura Region Franche-Comté , France		X		
Support of retail traders Region Kärnten, Austria			X	
Small Food Store Protection Region Tirol, Austria				
Innovation related to the distribution network linked to small mountain shops Region Genoa, Italy			X	
Target group oriented marketing for local services in Freiamt Region Südlicher Oberrhein, Germany			X	
Target group oriented marketing for local services in Wolfach Region Südlicher Oberrhein, Germany			X	
Improving ability of elected representatives and their staff to deal with SGI accessibility: database and training sessions implementation" Region Rhône-Alpes, France				X

The following short profiles will provide an overview about the Pilot activities (for more detailed description see Regional Intermediate Reports).

5.1. Pilot Activities regarding Public Transport

The Pilot activity **"Centre of Mobility for Public Transport information"** (Region Kärnten) foresees the establishment of a decentralized mobility service office; it has become necessary due to the increasing demand for information by the resident public as well as tourists, looking for uniform information on all types of mobility.

The Pilot activity **"Mobility management in natural parks"** (Region Kärnten) includes two areas: Weissensee and Dobratsch. In the first area the topic of the Activity is the commercial exploitation of parking space and soft mobility, using e-bike, e-car, combination of bicycle-water mobility (innovative lake-shuttle for bikers). In the second one the topic is the improvement of shuttles and also the connection among the villages in the valley and to the natural parks offers.

The Pilot activity **"Regional Transport in the Nockregion"** (Region Kärnten) has been decided by the 16 Municipalities which are members of the Regional Association Nockregion. The actions will regard the topic of timetable adjustments, use of synergies, adoption of alternative (demand-oriented) traffic models and eventually of a mobility centre.

The Pilot activity **"Solar cells boat linking the costs of the upper part of the lake of Neuchâtel"** (Region Nord Vaudois foresees the deployment of solar powered boats, that will be used by tourists and by residents; the service will connect the both sides of the lake, becoming a regular line of seasonal public transport.

The Pilot activity **"Car-sharing with support measures"** (Region Nord Vaudois) aims to establish a car-sharing site, especially for commuters and enterprises. The project idea is based on the experience of Vallée de Joux (good practice). The project intends to work closely with the enterprises: this allows increasing the chances to succeed in the car-sharing because commuters are sharing the same destination.

The Pilot activity **"Blu Card: Facilities in public transport for elderly people"** (Region Genoa) aims to improve SGI quality, having as specific targets the elderly living in mountain areas. The action wants to establish new managerial structures that may meet the current demand and the demand of elderly living people.

The Pilot activity **"Discobus: Facilities in in public transport for young people"** (Region Genoa) aims to improve SGI quality. The target group of this Activity are young people. The objective is to improve the quality of life in mountain areas and to try to convince young people to stay in this area, offering the same opportunities that have young people that live in urban areas.

The Pilot activity **"Creation of a mobility manager for a mountain area: application to the case of cross-border commuters in Valli del Luinese"** (Region Lombardia) aims to reduce the dependency on cars of frontalieri – the Italian cross-border commuters to Switzerland -, suggesting and promoting more environmentally friendly forms of transport, informing and motivating people to change their travelling behaviour, through the creation of a local expert on sustainable mobility strategies who will help in developing travel plans. The action will be done in cooperation with the Swiss government of the Cantone Ticino and it will benefit of a demand-oriented approach that will deal with many dispersed origins of the everyday travels done by the Italian workers. The travel plan will begin by gathering key information about frontalieri travel habits through a survey distributed. The findings of the survey will then be decisive for the choice of actions. Two Pilot activities with the same content than in Valli del Luinese will be implemented by (Region Lombardia) in **Valsassina respectively in Alta Valtellina.**

5.2. Pilot Activities regarding Information and Communication Technologies

The 2 Pilot activities **"Development of a local internet platform to facilitate online ordering and build-up delivery services for everyday needs in Freiamt (Test Area Emmendingen)"** and **Wolfach (Test Area Haslach-Hausach-Wolfach)"** (Region Südlicher Oberrhein) are demand-oriented projects that provide an option for a better provision of everyday needs. ICT will be used for providing better grocery supplies. By delivering groceries/supplies to the front door, it is getting easier for people with restricted mobility to purchase basic supplies and groceries. This not only helps people without individual transportation (i.e. without a car), but particularly women with children, teenagers, people with small incomes, elderly people or people with physical disabilities. The e-commerce is supplied by groceries, and in particular, regional products. This e-commerce will be operational in a rural area and not in a bigger city.

The Pilot activity **"Improving accessibility to SGI with the help of ICT"** (Region Rhône-Alpes) will support a call for projects (terre à CLIC) that Rhône-Alpes region is managing, aimed at well structured territorial organization to help them using ICT in an appropriate way when developing new activities.

The Pilot activities **"Setting-up video-services in Pays Horloger" and "Setting-up video-services in Pays du Haut-Jura"** (Region Franche-Comté) were defined from a committee set up in late 2008 with regional services providers in order to implement video-services in the region. The Test Areas will test the system before it is generalised for other territories. The use of ICT in the field of virtual meetings are not yet common. The technical solutions must be "open", i.e. to allow as many services as possible to use the video-services.

5.3. Pilot Activities regarding Everyday Needs

The Pilot activity **"Innovation related to the distribution network linked to small mountain shops"** (Region Genoa) will carry out a survey in order to identify new models and new strategies to improve the quality of services in mountain shops and disseminate their potentialities. It is necessary a characterisation of shops with potential demand and finding a new management system for shops which do not enjoy a sufficient demand. The Test Areas of the Pilot activity are the Fontanabuona and the Trebbia Valleys.

5.4. Combined Pilot Activities

The Pilot activities **"Target group oriented marketing for local services in Freiamt (Test Area Emmendingen)"** and **"Target group oriented marketing for local services in Wolfach (Test Area Haslach-Hausach-Wolfach)"** respond to the necessity of better publication and marketing of existing local services in order to make the resident population more aware of what goods are available in their proximity and to encourage the community to support local stores. The goal of the Pilot activities is to support the local shopkeepers in running their business. The Pilot activity **"Improving the ability of elected representatives and their staff to deal with SGI accessibility"** (Region Rhône-Alpes) aims to dissiminate methodologies based on participatory approach, in direct association with local population, to identify their needs in SGI.