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List of abbreviations

BL	Bundesland
CAP	Common agriculture policy
FOSD-CH	Swiss federal office of spatial development
GAL	Group of Local Action "Appennino Genovese"
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IREALP	Research Institute for the Ecology and the Economy Applied to the Alpine Areas (Italy)
OECD	Organisation for economic cooperation and development
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RMO	Regionsmanagement Osttirol
RVSO	Regionalverband Südlicher Oberrhein
SAB	Swiss center for mountain regions
SGI	Services of general interest
WP	Work Package

Executive Summary

In 2004 the Swiss federal office of spatial development (FOSD-CH) mandated the Swiss centre for mountain areas (SAB) to set up a project in the framework of the Interreg IIIB Alpine Space Programme with a focus on public services (or services of general interest) in sparsely populated areas in the Alps. The reasons for starting such a project are manifold. In sparsely populated areas services are very often economically not viable because of a weak operating grade, high costs of maintenance, remoteness, difficult topography etc. As a consequence private entrepreneurs are reluctant to become active in such areas and in the course of market liberalisation and decreasing public funds public services have an insecure existence. However public services are a locational key factor, they attract new inhabitants and jobs and assure a decentralised settlement structure. Furthermore they also contribute to social cohesion and the conservation of a regional identity. The PUSEMOR project (Public Services in Sparsely Populated Mountain Regions) is a strategic project, aiming on the one hand at developing pilot projects in sparsely populated areas of the alpine arc and on the other hand to make political recommendations in order to hold and maintain public services in these areas. The project's duration was from January 2005 to June 2007 and the following countries of the alpine arc participated: Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia and Switzerland.

The two main achievements of the project are:

- 1) around 30 pilot projects in different fields of public services were developed in rural or mountain areas all over the Alps.
- 2) The situation of public services in the six partner states were thoroughly analysed and a list of recommendations has been gathered.

Within the framework of the project, emphasis was laid on the following services:

- public transport and roads
- health services
- education and personal training
- telecommunications: broadband Internet, radio and television
- every day needs: post offices, shops, restaurants, etc

One of the lessons learnt from the PUSEMOR project was the fact that the conditions of services above all depend on socio-economic and spatial characteristics. In touristic and periurban areas the offer in public services is in general satisfactory. In contrast to this, remote areas face in general the following problems with regard to public services:

- the service is demanded but not yet available in the region (eg. broadband internet or kindergardens).
- the service is available but poorely used by the local population (eg. shops, public transport) due to inappropriate opening hours, schedules etc.

- By reason of a bad rentability, the service is likely to disappear or to be integrated in greater units (merging of administrative services, health services). These changes are not necessarily negative. However it is very important to mention that public services have to be accessible equally without any restrictions to gender or financial possibilities.

In the current context, characterised by a thorough liberalisation process, growing opportunities of information and communication technologies (ICT), a massive increase of individual car traffic and an ageing population, communal and regional bodies are challenged to find new innovative solutions in order to hold and maintain services in sparsely populated areas. This report is meant as a supporting document for political decision makers and regional planners confronted with questions of public services in peripheral areas. It contains a diversity of strategies and measures such as intercommunal cooperation and the search for multisectoral synergies. Recommendations for different sectors are listed in the annex of this document. The project has also shown that the sensibilisation and the empowerment of the population is of paramount importance. Public services in sparsely populated areas are not only an economy matter, they are as well vital for social cohesion, regional identity, equality and a solidary society. It is thus important to promote their use, and to regularly inform the public via the media on the role of such services in rural areas. As far as the providers are concerned, whether they are voluntary or not, they must adapt their offer to the user's needs, in this respect also new forms of governance are challenged. For this reason public services in sparsely populated areas should have a much more prominent role in the agenda of the European Union.

1 Introduction

This report is the final report of the Interreg III B project PUSEMOR (stands for public services in sparsely populated mountain regions). This report resumes all the work done during the period January 2005 until June 2007 and is a synthesis of the Regional Intermediate Reports (February 2006), the Transnational Intermediate Report (November 2006) and the pilot projects Progress Report of the project partners (February 2007).

Chapter 1 presents a short description of the project and the partners involved. Chapter 2 resumes the situation of the public services or services of general interest¹ in alpine areas. Chapter 3 presents the 30 pilot projects implemented in the test areas. On the basis of these results and of several exchanges of experiences, recommendations on the political and on the project level are made in chapter 4, in order to help regions to improve the situation of public services in remote areas.

1.1 *PUSEMOR: Project background*

In today's mobile society and economy, the provision with public services is a locational key factor. Topographical features and frequently low population density mean that the public services in Alpine regions generally cover only a part of their costs. Market liberalisation and other factors threaten to reduce the availability of some services even further. New supply strategies are required to improve the quality and accessibility of public services while reducing costs.

In order to find innovative solutions to maintain the public services in sparsely populated areas, the FOSD-CH (Swiss Federal Office of Spatial Development) gave 2004 the mandate to the SAB (Swiss Center for mountain regions) to set up an european project on this thematic.

1.2 *Goals of the project*

The project PUSEMOR aims at developing sustainable strategies and innovative solutions to improve the provision of public services in sparsely populated mountain regions. This with the ambition to grade up these regions both as economic places and as places of residence.

To reach these goals, the project has both an analytical and a strategic / political dimension. The analysis aims at gathering existing knowledge from the various regions involved, combining it in a methodical way and expanding it in specific areas. The strategic dimension is concerned with the formulation of implementation ready concepts and pilot projects to improve provision of public services in sparsely populated areas.

¹ The project PUSEMOR concentrated on the implementation of pilot projects and did not spend much time on the theoretical background of the thematic. Therefore, both expressions „public services“ and „services of general interest“ are used in the same manner in this report.

1.3 Project management

Partners from all six larger Alpine countries (Austria, Switzerland, Germany, France, Italy and Slovenia) take part in the PUSEMOR project. Each one is representing one or two regional team (see table 2).

The SAB is responsible for the technical lead while the financial lead is under the responsibility of Regione Lombardia and IREALP (Istituto di Ricerca per l'Ecologia ed Economia Applicate alle Aree Alpine).

The project started in January 2005 and ends in September 07 and is co-financed by funds of the Alpine Space Programm (Interreg IIIB).

Concerning the detail of the project management, the following table shows the division in 9 workpackages (WP) and the respective responsible partners.

Table 1: Workpackages and lead partners

Work Package	Content	Lead partner
WP 1	Transnational project preparation activities	SAB
WP 2	Transnational project management	SAB/Regione Lombardia / IREALP
WP3	Project management on the national/regional level	Each partner
WP4	Information and dissemination	Regione Lombardia/IREALP
WP5	Regional studies	Slovenia
WP6	Transnational comparison	Regionalverband Südlicher Oberrhein and Bundesland Tirol (maps)
WP7	Pilot projects	Bundesland Kärnten
WP8	Final report and final conference	SAB
WP9	Dissemination of results	Regione Lombardia/IREALP

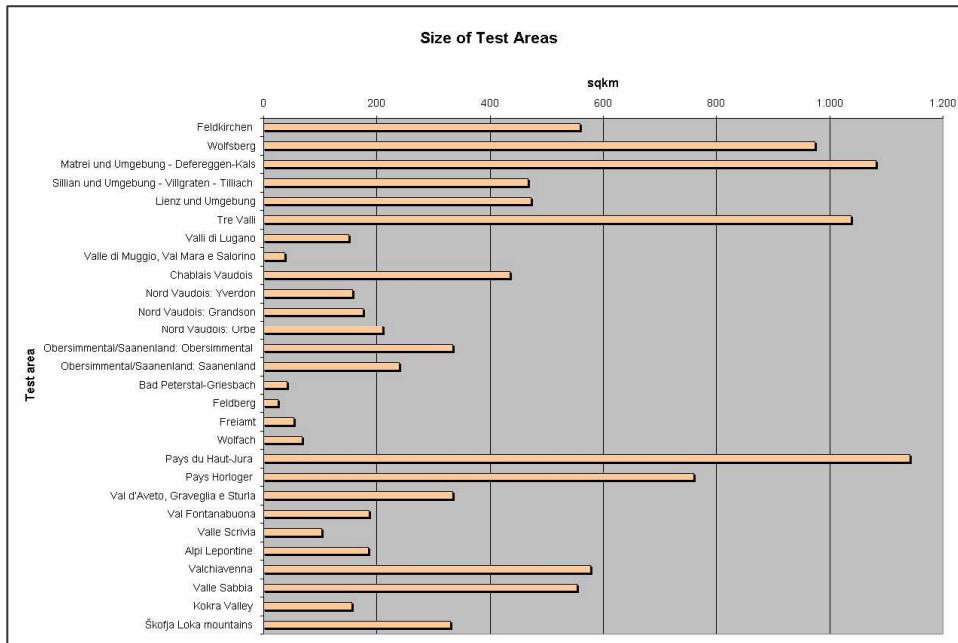
Table 2: Test areas

Land	Test area	Partner (regional team)
Italy	Val Chiavenna, Valle Sabbia, Alpi Lepontine	Regione Lombardia and IREALP
	Remote areas of Alta Valle Scrivia, Val d'Aveto, Graveglia e Sturla, Val Fontanabuona	GAL Appenino Genovese
France	Pays du Haut-Jura, Pays Horloger	Région Franche-Comté
Switzerland	Region Nord vaudois, Region Chablais vaudois, Region Obersimmental-Saanenland	Team Western Switzerland : Canton of Vaud and of Bern
	Tre Valli, Valli di Lugano, Valle di Muggio, Val Mara e Salorino	Canton Ticino
Germany	Bad Peterstal-Griesbach, Feldberg, Freiamt, Wolfach	Regionalverband Südlicher Oberrhein
Austria	Planungsverband Matri und Umgebung-Deferegggen-Kals Planungsverband Sillian und Umgebung-Villgraten-Tilliach Planungsverband Lienz und Umgebung	Bundesland Tirol
	Feldkirchen, Wolfsberg	Bundesland Kärnten
Slovenia	Skofja Loka Mountains, Kokra Valley	BSC Kranj

All test areas have been examined according to the following criteria: size of the test area, density of population, evolution of the population and demography.

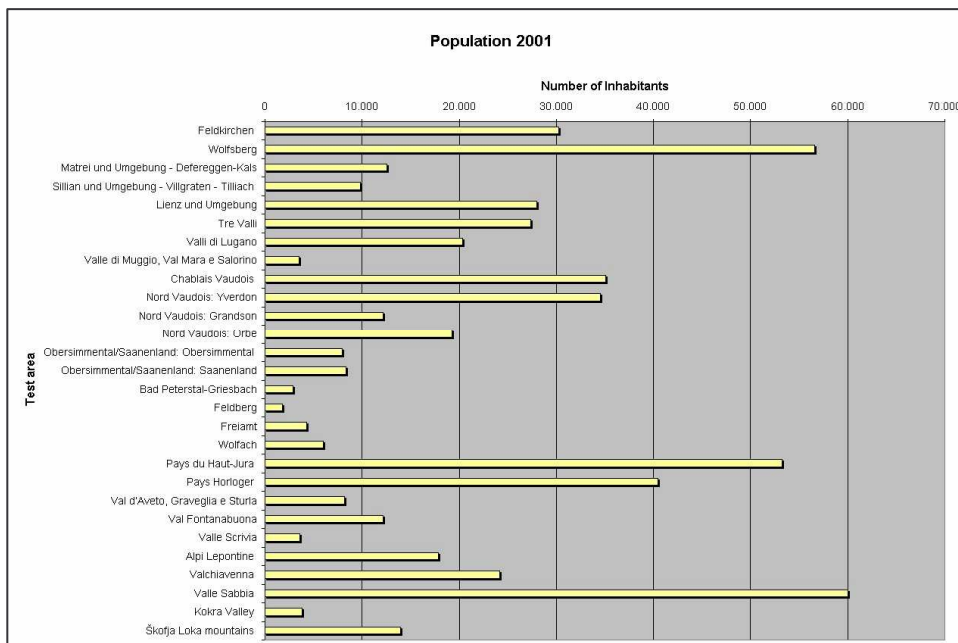
Size of the test area (fig. 2): The test areas Wolfsberg, Planungsverband Matri und Umgebung-Deferegggen-Kals, Tre Valli, Pays du Haut-Jura and Pays Horloger belong to the larger test areas with an extent of more than 750 sqkm. The smallest test area is Feldberg with a surface of 25 sqkm.

Fig. 2: Size of test areas



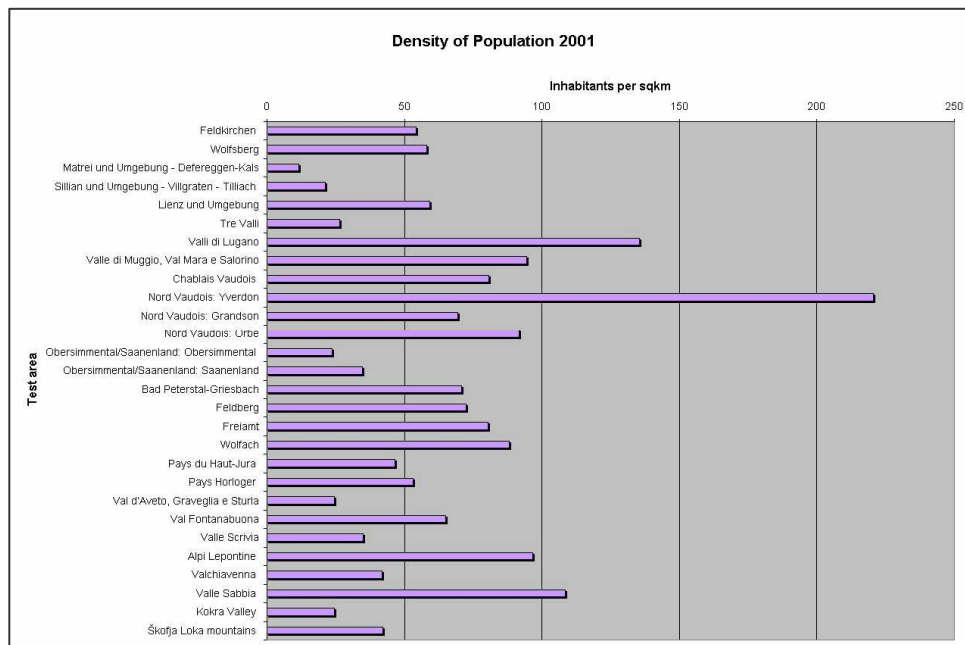
Population (fig. 3): To the group of smaller test areas with less than 5'000 inhabitants belong Valle di Muggio/Val Mara e Salorino, Bad Peterstal-Griesbach, Feldberg, Freiamt, Valle Scrivia and Kokra Valley. The most populated test area is Valle Sabbia with 60'000 inhabitants.

Fig. 3: Population of the test Areas 2001



Density of population (fig. 4): Since PUSEMOR is dealing with sparsely populated areas, this feature is of special interest. Figure 4 reveals that the test areas Valli di Lugano, Yverdon and Valle Sabbia have more than 100 inhabitants per sqkm and are therefore not sparsely populated. In fact these test areas include small towns (Yverdon) or their outskirts (Lugano, Brescia).

Fig. 4: Density of population 2001

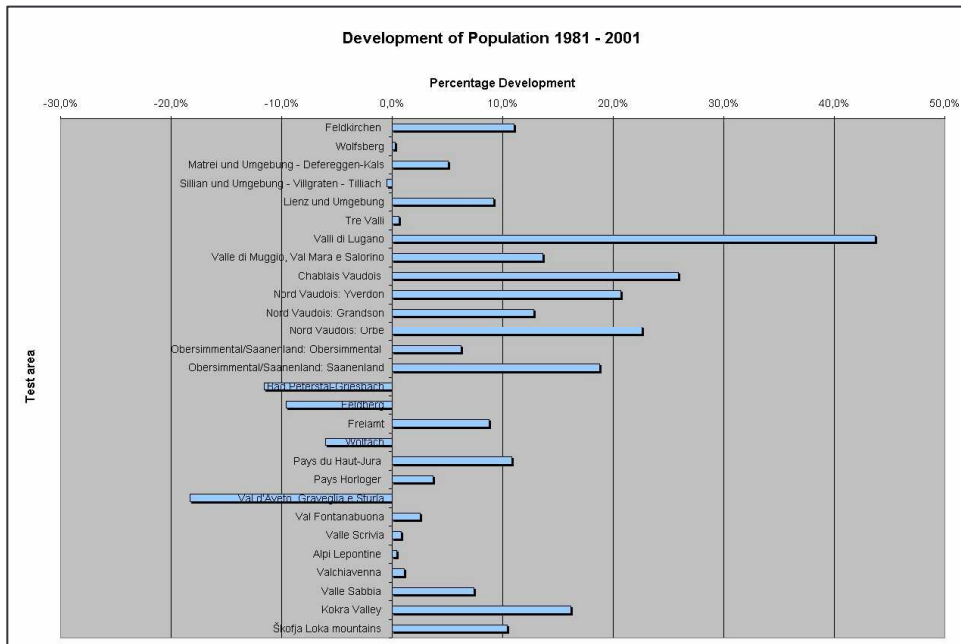


In contrast, the test areas Planungsverband Matrei und Umgebung-Deferegggen-Kals, Planungsverband Sillian und Umgebung-Villgraten-Tiliach, Obersimmental, Val D'Aveto/Graveglia e Sturla and Kokra Valley are very sparsely populated **with less than 25 inhabitants per sqkm**. Except from Val d'Aveto /Graveglia e Sturla and Kokra Valley, these test areas represent high mountain areas coined by great share of unproductive and inhabited land.

The majority of test areas have a density of population **between seventy and eighty inhabitants per sqkm** and can therefore be described as sparsely populated.

Evolution of the population (fig. 5): With a growth rate of about 15% the test areas Valli di Lugano, Chablais vaudois, Yverdon, Orbe, Saenenland and Kokra Valley show a very positive development of population since 1981. Contrary to this the test areas Planungsverband Sillian und Umgebung-Villgraten-Tiliach, Bad Peterstal-Griesbach, Feldberg, Wolfach and Val d'Aveto/Graveglia e Sturla are affected by a significant decrease of population in the same timespan.

Fig. 5: Development of population 1981-2001



Forecast:

Based on statistical data the following trends in the population dynamic can be calculated for the next 20 years.

Stagnation or decrease:

- Wolfsberg: - 7 % until the year 2021,
- Feldkirchen: - 2 % until the year 2021,
- Bad Peterstal-Griesbach: - 9.4 % until the year 2025,
- Feldberg: - 10.0 % until the year 2025,
- Freiamt: - 3.3 % until the year 2025,
- Wolfach: - 2.9 % until the year 2025.

Increase (mostly generated by migration):

- Chablais Vaudois + 6'000 inhabitants until the year 2020
- Nord Vaudois and its districts until the year 2020 : Yverdon: + 8'000 inhabitants, Orbe: + 4'000 inhabitants, Grandson: + 1'700 inhabitants
- Freiamt will presumably have a further slightly increasing population
- Regione Lombardia + 1.3 % overall annual growth until the year 2010.

2.2 Methodology

The aim of the WP5 and WP6 was to draw a picture of the situation of the public services in the test areas. In order to do a comparative analysis, the different test areas are classified according to socioeconomic and geographical criteria. Secondly, a specific set of services are examined in detail within the test areas.

2.2.1 Different types of test areas

The test areas differ considerably by topography, size, remoteness, socioeconomic structure etc. Indeed, we assume that the situation of the public services is not the same in touristic areas, in remote areas or in periurban areas. In order to do a comparative analysis and to elaborate strategies in the field of service provision a common classification is required.

According to that, the test areas are divided into four different types of areas².

- Agrarian or peripheral areas: This type of area is defined by the predominance of the agricultural sector and the remoteness from a main transport network. Further indicators are a decreasing number or stagnation of population and lacking infrastructures.
- Tourism areas: Tourism is the predominant sector and the involved towns and villages are therefore characterised by a great number of overnight stays and greater share of jobs in service sector. Further characteristics are an oscillating number of population or a very seasonal utilisation of infrastructures.
- (Former) industrial areas: Within these areas currently or in the recent past the secondary sector has or had great relevance. Typical characteristics are the increase of an ageing population while the total number of inhabitants is actually stagnating or decreasing.
- Periurban (commuter) areas: Mostly due to local deficits of job opportunities the periurban areas are coined by a great or a very great share of commuters working in centres or agglomerations. These areas are characterised by an increasing population, inadequate infrastructures and negative effects on natural resources caused by urban sprawl and an increasing use of private cars.

Due to the complexity of such a classification including several hybrid forms amongst the test areas, entries for more than one spatial type of area were possible. Therefore the test areas were classified as follows – with the mentioned limitation.

² See FOSD-CH, report of the spatial development, Bern, 2005, p.26-27

Table 3: Types of rural areas

Test Areas	Agrarian (or peripheral) Areas	Tourism Areas	(Former) Industrial Areas	Periurban (commuter) Areas
Feldkirchen		x		x
Wolfsberg			x	x
Planungsverband Matriei und Umgebung – Deferegggen-Kals	x	x		
Planungsverband Sillian und Umgebung – Villgraten-Tilliach	x			
Planungsverband Lienz und Umgebung			x	x
Tre Valli	x			
Valli di Lugano				x
Valli di Muggio / Val Mara e Salorino				x
Chablais Vaudois		x		x
Nord Vaudois			x	x
Obersimmental / Saanenland	x	x		
Bad Peterstal-Griesbach		x	x	
Feldberg		x		
Freiamt				x
Wolfach		x	x	
Pays du Haut-Jura		x	x	
Pays Horloger				x
Val d’Aveto / Graveglia e Sturla	x			
Val Fontanabuona	x		x	
Valle Scrivia			x	
Alpi Lepontine		x		x
Valchiavenna		x		
Valle Sabbia			x	x
Kokra Valley				x
Škofja Loka mountains			x	x

2.2.2 Public services selected for analysis

For the analysis of the situation of the public services, the PUSEMOR partners decided to concentrate on following public services:

Table 4: Public services in focus

Domains	Public services in focus
Transport	Individual transport (quality of roads) Public transport (buses and railways)
Public administration	Local and regional administration offices Police
Health care / Care for elderly	Physicians generalists or specialists Hospitals, pharmacies, health care centers, homes for elderly Services for the elderly
Child care / education	Kindergartens and child care services Schools (primary, secondary) Opportunities for professional and personal training
Telecommunications	Tv and radio Broadband connection, internet access
Every day needs	Food and non-food stores Postal services and banking (cash dispenser) Fuel Personal services (hairdresser, etc.)

To get a clear picture of the status of public services, different approaches such as interviews with key persons and experts, questionnaires, surveys and statistical analysis have been carried out mainly in summer 2005. Every partner followed an approach which was best adapted to the conditions within the test areas. For detailed results and the methodology used in each test area please refer to the regional reports³.

In addition, a collection of “best practices” has been carried out. In all participating countries various projects for the improvement of public services do already exist. In WP 5, around 50 such projects were collected and analysed by all PUSEMOR partners. This transnational exchange on existing “best practices” was helpful as a pool of ideas for the formulation of new, innovative solutions (content of WP7). A list of the best practices is available in the annex and the detail of each one is available on www.pusemor.net

³ The regional reports and the transnational reports are available on the internet site www.pusemor.net

2.3 Results of the transnational comparison

The transnational comparison revealed that public services in the different test areas are in general concerned by 3 different phenomena :

- the service is demanded but **not yet available in the region**. For example, broadband connection, internet access or kindergardens.
- the service **is available but poorly used** by the local population or by the PME's. Especially local grocery shops and regional trains. These providers have therefore severe problems of profitability. The service is not used, because it doesn't correspond to the actual needs of the population (inappropriate opening hours, too long travel time, bad connections, etc.) and because of the increasing use of private cars and the existence of other offers in the region (big shopping center e.g.).
- the service is **available but threatened to disappear in the near future due to liberalisation, privatisation**, etc. (e.g. local administration, health services, etc.).

The following table (table 5) shows the situation, the past and the future trend of each service in each test area. The different colors assess the actual (2005) situation of the public services.

- Red : very problematic
- Orange : problematic
- Light green : no problems
- Green : good
- Grey : no assessment

The arrows ↗ show the evolution in the last five years and the future trend.

The notes (*1) give more explanation about the situation in each test area and refer to the table 6.

Table 5: Assessment of the situation of public services

Comparison – Assessment of Services Considering Accessibility and Quality of Services for all Standard User Groups			Domains of Public Services																	
Country	Region	Test Area	Transport			Public Administration			Health Care / Care for Elderly			Child Care / Education / Culture			Telecommunication			Every Day Needs		
			Last Five Years	Current Situation	Future Trend	Last Five Years	Current Situation	Future Trend	Last Five Years	Current Situation	Future Trend	Last five years	Current situation	Future trend	Last five years	Current situation	Future trend	Last five years	Current situation	Future trend
AT – Austria	Kärnten	Feldkirchen *1	↘	*3	↘	→		→	→	*4	↘	→		↘	→		↗	→		↘
		Wolfsberg *2	↘	*3	↘	→		→	→	*4	↘	→		↘	↗		↗	→		↘
	Tirol	Osttirol / Bezirk Lienz	↘	*1	→	→		→	↗		→	→	*2	→	↗	*3	↗	↗		→
CH – Switzerland	Ticino	Tre Valli	↗		↘*1	↗		↘*1	→		→	→		→	↗		→	↗		↘
		Valli di Lugano	↗		↘*1	↗		↘*1	→		→	↗		→	↗		→	↗		↘
		Valle di Muggio, Val Mara e Salorino	→		↘*1	↘		↘*1	→		↗	→		↘*2	→		→	↘		↘
	Vaud	Chablais Vaudois		*1	↘			↘		*2	→		*3	→		*4	→		*5	↘
		Nord Vaudois			↘			↘		*2	→		*3	→			→		*5	↘
	Bern	Obersimmental / Saanenland	→	*1	↘	→		↘	→	*2	↘	→		↘	↗	*4	→	→	*5	↘

DE – Germany	Region Südlicher Oberrhein	Bad Peterstal-Griesbach			↘			→			↘			→			→			↘	
		Feldberg			↘			→			↘			→			→			→	
		Freiamt			↘			→			→			↘			→			↘	
		Wolfach			↘			→			↘			↘			→			↘	
FR – France	Franche-Comté	Pays du Haut-Jura							*1					*2							
		Pays du Horloger *3						→			→			↗			→				
IT – Italy	Liguria	Val d'Aveto, Graveglia e Sturla	↗		*1	→	→		↗	→	*2	↘	↗	*3	→	↘	*4	↗	→	→	
		Val Fontanabuona	→			→	→		↗	↗	*5	↘	→		→	↘		↗	→	→	
		Valle Scrivia	↘			→	→		↗	→		↘	→	→		→	→	↗	→	→	
	Lombardia	Alpi Lepontine				→			↗		*1	→			*2	→			↗		→
		Valchiavenna				→			↗			→			*2	→			↗		→
		Valle Sabbia				→			↗			→			*2	→			↗		→
SLO – Slovenia	Gorenjska	Kokra Valley *1	↘			↘	→		→	→		↘	→		→	→	→	→	→	↘	
		Škofja Loka mountains *2	↘			↘	→		→	→		↘	→		→	→	→	→	→	↘	

Table 6: Notes about table 5

Notes – Comparison – Assessment of Services		
Country	Region	Asterisks
AT – Austria	Kärnten	<p>*1: Here: Assessment by Private users; very different statements of <u>SME Assessment</u>: Very Problematic in detail: Bus and railway services, police services, shopping facilities, post offices and gas stations; Problematic in detail: District administration, child care services, opportunities for professional training, internet/ICT networks and banking services</p> <p>*2: Here: Assessment by Private users; very different statements of <u>SME Assessment</u>: Very Problematic in detail: Railway services and opportunities for professional training; Problematic in detail: Local administration, police, retail, internet/ICT networks and childcare services</p> <p>*3: Problematic in detail: Bus and esp. railway services (Wolfsberg: Quality of railway services very problematic) also in general problematic: current and future financing in transport, esp. children’s transport to school</p> <p>*4: On average: Services for the elderly were assessed better than health care services</p>
	Tirol	<p>*1: Problematic in detail: Quality of public transport services</p> <p>*2: In general: Currently no major problems except for accessibility of high educational institutions</p> <p>*3: In general: Currently no major problems except for quality of Internet and accessibility of High-speed Internet</p>
CH – Switzerland	Ticino	<p>*1: Depending on political decisions of governments of Ticino and of Switzerland</p> <p>*2: Depending on local administrations decisions</p>
	Vaud and Bern (=Team Western Switzerland)	<p>*1: Problematic in detail: Railway services and partly the quality of roads (mountain areas); also in general problematic: Current and future financing in transport</p> <p>*2: In general: Good situation; but: General increasing problems in finding physicians-general for rural areas; some positive and also negative future changes in provision of hospitals</p> <p>*3: In general: Currently no major problems except for child care services and professional training</p> <p>*4: In general: Currently no major problems except for TV and radio reception in some areas</p> <p>*5: In general: Currently no major problems except for provision of local groceries / food stores and with cash dispensers; user group of the elderly without private car is especially concerned by this development</p>
DE – Germany	Südlicher Oberrhein	In general: Several future trends are seen as a potential tread for the local development: Especially the further importance of high-speed data exchange infrastructure and the changes in the retail sector.
FR – France	Franche-Comté	<p>*1: Health care: Problematic, especially physicians-general / physicians-specialists and pharmacy; but: Care for elderly: No problems</p> <p>*2: Child Care / Education: Very problematic; but: Culture: Problematic</p> <p>*3: Displayed here: Assessment by private users; basing on accessibility</p> <p>*4: the regional report describes the situation as rather problematic</p> <p>*5: Care for elderly: Very problematic; but: Health care: Problematic</p> <p>*6: Child care / Education: Very problematic; but: Culture: No problems</p>
IT – Italy	Liguria	<p>*1: Current situation assessed by SME: Problematic</p> <p>*2: Health care: Problematic: Physicians-specialists; but: Care for elderly: Good situation, only need for new structures for the future</p> <p>*3: But: Current situation problematic for secondary and professional schools</p> <p>*4: Very problematic situation: Fast internet connections</p> <p>*5: But: Current situation of physicians-general and pharmacy is good</p>

	Lombardia	*1: Quality of services predominantly not problematic; but: Accessibility of these services is assessed as problematic *2: Child Care: Good / no problems; but: Education and Culture: Problematic
SLO – Slovenia	Gorenjska	*1: Focus on most mountainous remote parts of the test area, most problematic domains in detail: Quality of roads, bus services, TV, radio signal, Internet / Broadband *2: Focus on most mountainous remote parts of the test area, most problematic domains in detail: Quality of roads, bus services, hospital / physicians

2.4 Discussion

Based on all data analysed it can be stated that, of all services the following three provoke the most dissatisfaction:

- Transport
- Health Care / Care for Elderly
- Telecommunication.

Predominantly for the following three services also a worsening has to be expected in the near future:

- Transport
- Health Care / Care for Elderly
- Every day needs.

The supply with daily needs is mainly operated by private enterprises without involvement of the public sector. A further decrease of demand (caused by a decreasing number of inhabitants) is in some countries accompanied by a spatial concentration due to the enlargement of retail units (economy of scale). In areas already coined by a low density of population, the availability and accessibility of the service will probably worsen.

In touristic areas the problems are often less pertinent. This is due to the fact that there is a solid and relatively constant demand in public services and an above average income of the respective municipalities. Nevertheless, multiplier effects by tourism are not always sufficient to stabilise the provision of public services.

Mainly areas located in proximity to centres can benefit from their offer in workplaces, infrastructures and services. It can be said that the dimension of existing and expected problems is highly connected to the accessibility of the respective area.

Furthermore the situation depends very much on the respective user groups, i.e. persons with limited mobility, elderly, (families with) children or young persons in education and their very specific needs.

In summary, it can be said that **the fear of a further decrease in quality and accessibility of public services has been clearly articulated in the interviews and surveys.**

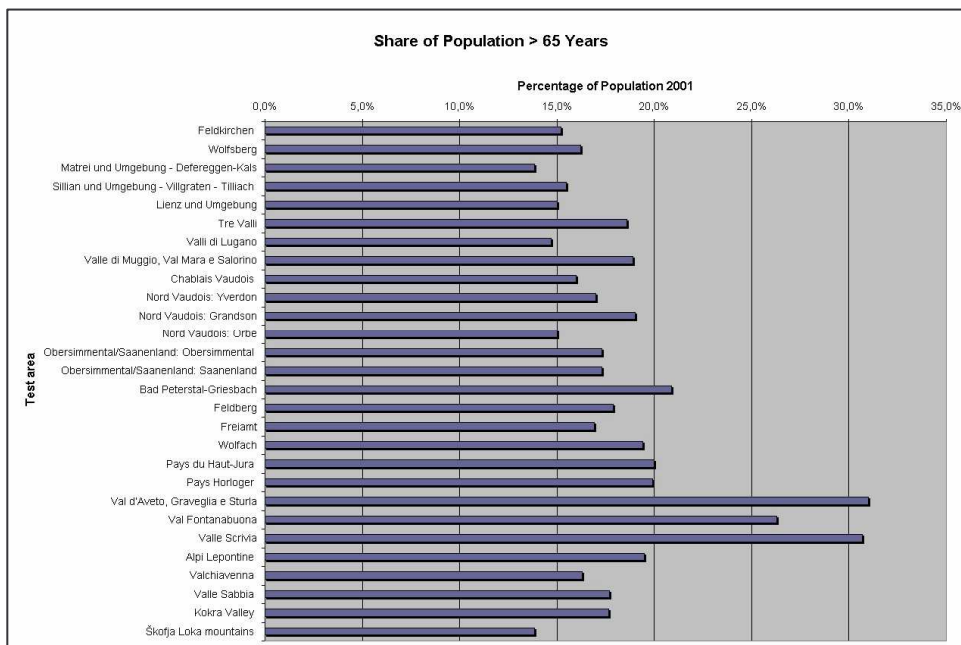
In addition, changes in the spatial structure of an area are always corresponding to the development trends in society and economy and the actual (and visible) spatial development

trends are strongly influenced by some superior megatrends in the background. For the Alpine Space, five so called megatrends can be identified:

- Globalisation and tertiarisation of the economy, further evolution of a “society of knowledge”, increasing international division of labour
- Demographic change (ageing population and migration), new social structures and new life-styles / new models of combining work, family life and leisure
- New technologies, in particular new information & communication technologies ICT (and new fields of appliance as e.g. telemedicine, virtual counter, distance learning etc.)
- Increasing mobility (goods and passenger traffic) on the international level as well as on the regional level, more flexible systems of production and commerce (“just in time”)
- Climate change and an increasing risk of natural hazards, cumulative pressure on natural resources, loss of biodiversity and habitats and (in future) increasing importance of renewable resources.

With respect to demographic change, the test areas show a rather uniform picture and a share of people in the age over 65 years which is not much above of the average (Fig. 7). Only the test areas Bad Peterstal-Griesbach, Val d’Aveto/Graveglia e Sturla, Val Fontanabuona and Valle Scrivia have an increased percentage (more than 20%) of people older than 65 years.

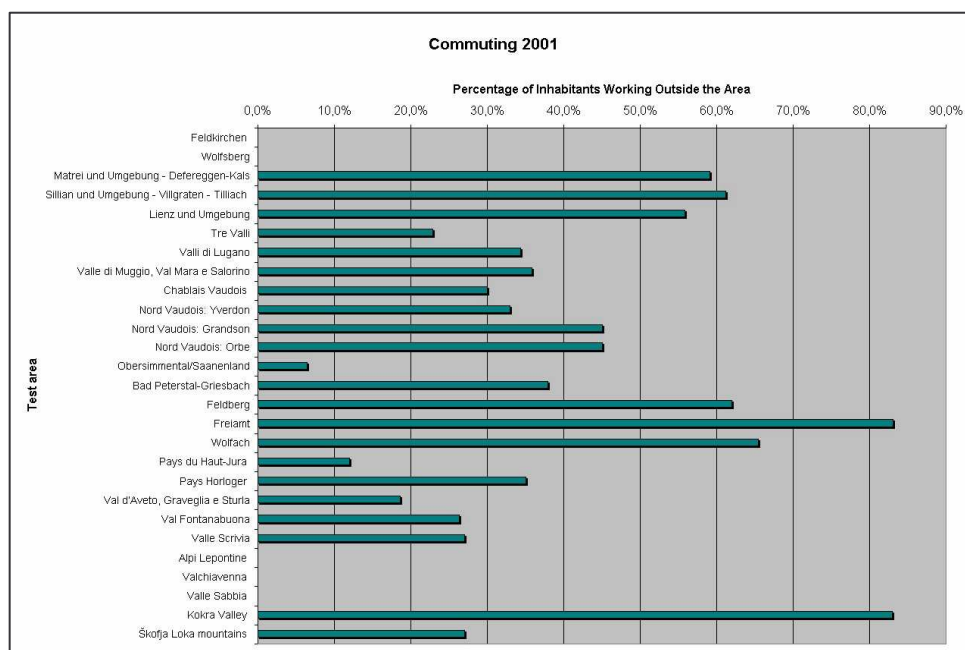
Fig. 6: Share of population older than 65 years



The increasing averages age of the population – and also the increasing share of very old people – will especially lead to a qualitative change in the demand of basic infrastructure in the test areas of Bad Peterstal-Griesbach, Val d’Aveto/Graveglia e Sturla, Val Fontanabuona and Valle Scrivia. More emphasis will be laid on facilities for ‘health care’ and especially ‘care for elderly’ and less for ‘child care’ and ‘education’. In general a corresponding need for adjustment of the respective infrastructure is important for almost all test areas.

The second trend influencing the provision with public services is the increasing mobility of the inhabitants of remote areas. Many employees work in centers and use services (shops, post office, hairdresser etc.) on their way home and near the work place. The related reduction of demand threatens the maintenance of existing infrastructures, and thus the supply of less mobile parts of the population, e.g. retired persons

Fig. 7: Commuting 2001



The test areas Freiamt, Kokra Valley, Planungsverband Matrei und Umgebung-Deferegggen-Kals, Planungsverband Silian und Umgebungs-Villgraten-Tilliach, Planungsverband Lienz und Umgebung, Feldberg and Wolfach reveal the highest percentage (more than 50%) of commuters.

These megatrends are not only affecting the spatial structure of the test areas, but also its systems of provision with public services. The relevant public authorities and the providers of public services have to take into consideration these megatrends and adapt and find new solutions regarding the supply systems of services.

The greatest challenges can be identified in the stabilisation of the ‘classical’ elements of infrastructure, especially transport and distribution systems for persons and goods as well as an adequate connectivity to modern information and communication technology. Transport and ICT are two “tools” which can make the services more accessible to all inhabitants and PME’s.

3 Regional strategies and pilot projects

3.1 Goal and procedure of workpackage 7

Within PUSEMOR Work Package 7 each PUSEMOR partner developed, together with regional actors, 3-5 local or regional pilot projects, and started with the project implementation. Altogether 30 implementation-ready pilot projects have been elaborated. Corresponding to existing regional strategies and to the findings of the PUSEMOR analyses in the test areas (cf. chapter 2), the pilot projects should improve the quality of public services in sparsely populated mountain areas. The projects should be of transnational interest (exemplary for other sparsely populated areas). Furthermore, WP7 aimed at deriving strategic recommendations for the development of such projects (cf. chapter 5). Lasting from January 2006 to June 2007, spending 42% of the total PUSEMOR budget, and producing visible results, WP7 was the core work package of PUSEMOR. The tasks were divided among the PUSEMOR partners as follows: All partners prepared pilot projects in their region and started with the implementation. Bundesland (BL)-Carinthia, being the lead of WP 7, elaborated guidelines, assisted the other PUSEMOR partners and managed the exchange of experiences. BL-Carinthia was assisted by GAL Appennino Genovese who organised one meeting of the PUSEMOR project steering committee.

Work package 7 consisted of the following tasks:

Regional framework – survey of relevant regional strategies

With the aims of obtaining clearness about the regional context and of ensuring that the PUSEMOR pilot projects fit into regional strategies, the PUSEMOR partners identified existing regional strategies and activities with regard to basic services. Furthermore the results from WP5 were used as an orientation, in which thematic fields the pilot projects should be located. In WP 5, each partner has also collected best practices already implemented in the region, in order to analyse which project was successful and why and what is the best way to implement projects.

Development of project ideas and selection of definite pilot projects

With the aim of preparing and selecting sound and promising projects, project ideas have been gathered, further developed and detailed. Local actors were involved into this procedure. The feasibility has been checked, and the projects have been evaluated. Finally each partner selected one to five pilot projects for being implemented. BL-Carinthia suggested the following evaluation criteria, which were adapted and applied by the partners for their selection procedure:

- Positive impact on the provision of public services in mountain areas
- Contribution to avert deficiencies observed in the regional analysis
- Contribution to implement regional strategies

- Good project management and sound financial concept
- Local support and acceptance
- Transferability to other mountain areas.

The selection procedure in all PUSEMOR regions was mostly finished in summer 2006.

Start-up of project implementation

With the aim of a successful project implementation, detailed project plans have been elaborated, agreements between the PUSEMOR partners and the project executives have been signed, and first actions have been undertaken. The PUSEMOR partners delivered regional progress reports about the state of the art with the pilot projects in February 2007.

Exchange of experiences with pilot projects

Beyond the exchange of experiences between the PUSEMOR partners which took place in the PSC (project steering committee) meetings, a deepened thematical exchange was offered in two meetings which were open to a broader public:

- A workshop on ICT infrastructures and projects took place in East Tyrol namely in Hopfgarten in Deferegggen, Lienz and Obertilliach on 3 and 4 July 2006, which was attended by 30 persons particularly from Regione Lombardia and the Tyrol.
- A conference on the future of public services was held in Villach, Carinthia, on 28 February to 1 March 2007. This event, bringing together 120 persons from all alpine countries, was the core exchange activity.

3.2 Overview of regional strategies

The issue of public services in rural or mountainous areas is not always addressed explicitly in regional concepts or plans, but there are various documents addressing specific aspects of this vast issue, either in an integrated territory-based or in a sector-based approach. The PUSEMOR partners highlighted rather different aspects, because the overview of regional strategies was just a clarification for each partner's further work, in which regional context they would operate. The following regional policies were mentioned:

Regional government programs:

A political declaration like the Government Program Carinthia 2004 – 2009 mentions several relevant objectives, such as “securing primary schools”, “setting up e-government” or “check the proper need and upgrading of child care”, but does not mention details of the implementation.

In Franche-Comté the issue of essential services to the population is one of the three main priorities for the 2007-2013 period (at the “Pays” level) voted for the 2007 budget by the regional assembly. The adaptation of services is a major issue for the years to come. The needs should meet with territorial approaches. In order to act efficiently, the financing of new services can only be done with a precise state of the art of existing services and wants. This is why the Region will promote territorial schemes of services, which include a detailed

analysis of existing demand and supply as well as the setting of priorities. In accordance with these schemes, the region will intervene in favour of actions promoting complementarities between towns and rural areas (by using ICT). The Region will also support financially equipments in the fields of sport, leisure, culture, education, could promote the settlement of health care houses and support the mutualisation of services (such as “maison multiservices”) and innovative solutions. These actions are considered as a contribution to reach the general objective of the Region: a redynamisation of rural areas in terms of demography and economic activities.

Formal spatial / regional planning

A formal plan like the regional plan of the Region Südlicher Oberrhein, which is embedded in an overall-strategy for the sustainable development of rural areas, delivers an obligatory framework for the further development of “Greenfield” sites, the license of (bigger) retail outlets or several public facilities. This plan supports the concentration of relevant public and private services in central places. This allows a comparatively good accessibility, especially in the context of rural areas. This also contributes to a development coordinated with the capacities of transport infrastructure – aiming at the maximum quality of service with the resources available.

Regional Development Concepts

In the German region Südlicher Oberrhein the Regional development concepts are an informal supplementation to regional planning. They were introduced to foster spatial development, to support the cooperation among public and private institutions and to coordinate measures with spatial relevance.

In Carinthia informal Regional development concepts were recently established on the districts level. They were worked out by the Planning Department of the Carinthian government, after intensive consultation with mayors and other local actors and businesses. Based on analyses of regional strengths and weaknesses, the concepts describe aims and development strategies. Several key projects which should be promoted by 2010 are defined in the concepts. Relevant to public services, the following objectives and strategies are mentioned:

- Safeguarding public services by raising the flexibility, efficiency and cross-linking (cooperation) of the supply
- Concepts for social services, cross-linking the municipalities
- Securing, set up and assessment of the proper need of public basic supplies
- Concepts for small elementary schools and for child care facilities
- Care for elderly people, home help for elderly and sick, help for housekeeping
- Safeguarding mobility of the rural population, regional traffic concepts, promotion and cross-linking of local initiatives; development of regional public transport
- Promotion of local retail sale.

The regional development concepts implementing European Rural Development Policies also mention the issues of public services, especially for the next planning period (2007 to 2013). The Liguria Region will support those essential services that are necessary for the economy of the region and rural population through the distribution of funds. Such priority is highlighted in the new Regional Program for Rural Development (PSR) whose Axis 3 (“Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of rural economy”) focuses on improvements for the supply of services for companies and people living in these areas, in order to increase the attractiveness of these regions. This action envisages to support initiatives carried out by individuals, multi-purpose initiatives and public services directly managed by the Region:

- Services to companies, e.g. creation of local networks in order to encourage cooperation among enterprises, market access, technical modernization, spread of Internet
- Services to the rural population: creation of multi-purpose services including mail and bank services, Internet centres, product and medication delivery, and other services of public or collective interest
- Development of additional services focused on the services intended for children, the elderly and those who are not self-sufficient
- Development of additional services for public transport.

Spatial planning at European level

The Ministers of the EU-membership countries responsible for spatial planning / spatial development have accepted the “Territorial Agenda of the EU” during their informal meeting at the end of May 2007. Within the document spatial measures to support the aims of the Lisbon- and Goteborg-strategies – mainly: foster sustainable economical development and provide new job opportunities – are declared to complete the *European Spatial Development Concept*.

According to this, all European regions can contribute to the targeted development. Therefore the “Territorial Agenda” does emphasize the important role rural areas are playing in this process. The measures proposed in this document are the following ones :

- Rural-areas should define their common potential together with urban areas and set up development strategies on regional level to make them accessible.
- Within rural areas the cooperation among public and private stakeholders should be intensified to safeguard necessary infrastructure and services – even against the backdrop of a decreasing number of inhabitants.
- To provide a general access to broadband Internet “area wide, according to demand” new traffic project should be combined with the establishment of infrastructures for telecommunication.
- The European Commission and other European Institutions are requested to examine the impacts of European legislation on sustainable development – and to optimise the coordination of EU-policy and EU-initiatives in the field of spatial development.
- The European Commission is also requested to provide further support for cross-border, trans-national and interregional cooperation with an effective instrument of territorial cohesion.

- Public and private stakeholders of spatial development are encouraged to engage themselves in territorial cohesion

ICT/Broadband development plans

As regards sector development plans, some of the PUSEMOR partners referred to ICT development.

In Austria the Broadband Initiative was run by federal and provincial authorities in 2005/2006. An important enlargement of the broadband infrastructures in the Austrian provinces was caused by this initiative. Thanks to the broadband initiative and the commitment of a number of individual municipalities, the area of settlement in East Tyrol now has almost complete broadband Internet coverage.

Liguria Region developed a three-year operational plan aimed at regional computerization 2006 to 2008. It emphasizes how the ever increasing use of broad band is essential for a real exchange of data and services on the territory, especially for remote mountain areas; this is essential in order to develop “interoperability” among mountain municipalities and provincial, regional and national authorities, in order to improve the quality of the services dedicated to citizens. This plan aims at developing broadband connections in the whole Region, by eliminating the differences between the services offered on the coast and those offered in the hinterland or mountain areas. In order to guarantee a uniform development, the Liguria Region allocated a good deal of financial resources for all necessary investments. A Co-ordination Group for broadband development was created, that comprises the Liguria Region and telecommunication businesses. It aims at developing actions to encourage an uniform development of the Broad Band project in Liguria and monitoring initiatives at the regional and local level. A map of broad band connections on Liguria's territory has already been developed and a survey is envisaged for local authorities in order to develop a map of the likely demand of broad band services. This Plan envisages the realization of a number of projects in four pilot areas and one of these is going to be developed on the GAL Appenino Genovese territory.

3.3 Methodology for developing pilot projects

Due to their different strategic approaches, the PUSEMOR partners have applied rather different procedures for developing their pilot projects. They have taken up with the issues which make sense in their region, and they have made use of their regional networks. Nevertheless, one important common factor could be observed in all regions: the strong commitment of the local actors.

Austria – Carinthia

The PUSEMOR analyses in two Carinthian test areas revealed that public transport was assessed as the most problematic domain of public services, and future trends indicated even a further deterioration within the next years. Initially the team supposed that safeguarding the mobility of non-motorised parts of the population in rural communities would be a thematic focus of pilot projects. On the other hand, pilot projects should build upon existing strengths. Social services for elderly people were assessed as very positive in the

surveys. In view of the expected demographic ageing of the population, the existing potential might be useful for developing pilot projects for more effective and well-co-ordinated social services. The best practice examples collected in WP5 indicated the importance of the non-profit sector for the supply of high-quality services well-adapted to local needs.

The Carinthian team initially did not focus on a specific thematic domain of public services; it should be possible to develop pilot projects from all domains. Carinthia followed a specifically strong bottom-up approach: Local actors and project executing organisations were strongly involved. With the aim of developing feasible and well-accepted projects, the ideas for pilot projects should come from local actors themselves. The PUSEMOR team would give them the opportunity to realise projects which they had already in mind before. The continuity with the results of the regional analyses should be guaranteed by the evaluation of the project ideas, with the help of assessment criteria. Another decision was related to the territorial scope: It should be possible to support projects from all Carinthia, not only from the WP5 test areas.

At first the WP5 PUSEMOR results were presented in the test areas. The intended synergies with the development of new LEADER projects could not happen as planned, because the LEADER program was not ready in time. The key projects of the regional development concepts were screened for eventual synergies. After the release of the first PUSEMOR newsletter, several regional and local actors presented their project ideas and concepts to the PUSEMOR team of the Carinthian Planning Department. The PUSEMOR team asked them for detailed project concepts. In July 2006 the PUSEMOR team evaluated the submitted project concepts with the help of the PUSEMOR criteria and held conversations with the responsible persons. Finally three pilot projects were selected for implementation (see chapter 3.4).

There had been two project ideas related to public transport and mobility which could not be implemented within PUSEMOR:

- The idea for a **rapid bus service for commuters** between Feldkirchen and Klagenfurt, promoted by the Traffic Department of the Carinthian Government, was eliminated because it was not possible to integrate the interests of the commuters living in peripheral communities.
- The project idea of a **local mobility service**, promoted by the community of Preitenegg, could not be realised, but some questions with regard to legal / administrative hindrances to such projects, were clarified.

Furthermore, also the project **Working with rural youth**, submitted by the College of social work in Feldkirchen, had to be eliminated because it did not fit well enough to the criteria: a sustained positive effect could not be expected.

The **retail project** of a multifunctional village shop in the community of Frauenstein, submitted by the mayor, had to be adapted because it was not possible to accord financial support to an individual business. So the village shop of Frauenstein was integrated as a pilot community to the ALISE project.

As for the selected pilot projects, during the next weeks the project concepts were adapted, several details were clarified, and contracts between the project executives and the government of Carinthia were signed. The project implementation began in September 2006.

Austria – Land Tyrol

With its involvement in the PUSEMOR project, the Tyrolean Provincial Authority (Land Tyrol) is pursuing two basic objectives:

First, the subject of telecommunications, and in particular the use of broadband Internet, is to receive in-depth treatment in East Tyrol, so as to encourage the more widespread use of this technology. Pilot projects in this domain should prepare the ground for implementation measures throughout the Tyrol.

Second, from the transnational project results, ideas and experiences from other Alpine countries are to be incorporated in strategies for the maintenance of services of general interest throughout the Tyrol. There should be synergies especially with the Future Space regional development guideline, a concept for the province of Tyrol which was elaborated at the same time as PUSEMOR.

Thanks to the broadband initiative the settled areas of East Tyrol have already achieved an almost complete broadband internet coverage. The next step must be to intensify the use of this technology by the general public and the business community. It is necessary to have a strong offering of diverse e-services with user-friendly solutions. Such an offering, with an increasingly regional or even local character, can be used to recruit additional users. For them the Internet-based services mean that information can be obtained and transactions performed without having to travel long distances.

In order to ensure more general penetration at the level of the private user, it is necessary not only to have attractive content and interactive applications but also to overcome barriers to use. In this context special attention must be paid to senior citizens and the non-employed and to the rural population in general. These groups tend to have concerns relating to costs and system security combined with a lack of knowledge with regard to content, applications and system operation.

Increased awareness building is therefore required with regard to the advantages offered by modern information and communication technologies. In addition to the relevant information, it is above all necessary to provide needs-based training and public access to information media – with financial support where required – to raise the penetration rate for the general public above the 80% mark, as is already the case in other European regions.

Communication and interaction was taking place at several levels, with the focus shifting from the provincial to the regional level as the project developed:

At the provincial level, a group of experts has been working in a European and national context to establish strategies for the Tyrol for the further development of telecommunications, and especially the use of broadband.

In East Tyrol a group of opinion leaders (regional and local politicians) and stakeholders (chambers) have discussed the scope for regional implementation of the strategies, evaluated proposals for pilot projects and taken measures to promote their implementation.

For implementation of the pilot projects, steering groups representing the actors involved have been set up in support of the pilot projects in terms of content and handling.

The pilot projects were selected from proposals made by Regionsmanagement Osttirol (RMO) on the basis of ideas previously submitted by the various actors. A total of seven project ideas were involved. The final choice was made with reference to two basic criteria:

- A focus in content on (aspects of) services of general interest and the use of broadband technology;
- A clear commitment on the part of the actors and their willingness to continue with the project beyond the development phase.

Responsibility for the pilot projects in terms of content and organisation has been entrusted to Land Tirol as a PUSEMOR project member, to be precise to the Department of Spatial Planning Statistics at the Office of the Tyrolean Government. Organisational work in the District of Lienz as the PUSEMOR test area is the responsibility of Regionsmanagement Osttirol RMO, who have a network of contacts with regional and local actors. The Tyrolean provincial authority has appointed commercial enterprises with the actual implementation of the three pilot projects, with contracts placed for internal and external communications as well as project content and handling.

In the context of the pilot projects, great importance is attached to public relations and the involvement of all interested parties. In all cases, workshops for the general public or invited audiences are being held, where attendees can formulate their interests and wishes and subsequently propose and discuss possible solutions. In the areas affected by the pilot projects, leaflets have been sent out and information on the projects provided via local and regional media.

France – Franche Comté

When the Region began to discuss about the PUSEMOR project with the two test areas, the latter already had some ideas of innovative projects in the field of public services. The Pays du Haut-Jura knew it had to do something with ICT dealing with cultural issues and the Pays Horloger wanted to handle educational, child minding issues.

In the region Franche-Comté the pilot projects were selected in the following way:

Projects of Pays du Haut-Jura:

With the elaboration of the charter and priorities of the Pays in 2001, ideas of a (media) libraries network and a multiservice card emerged from the survey and meetings with local representatives and population. Thanks to the studies carried out in the framework of WP5, the ideas became projects and the Region had always been careful that these projects meet the Pusemor features: innovation, bottom-up approach and local involvement. Since the multiservice card was given up in September 2006, the Pays proposed a new project that corresponded also to the Pusemor criteria, the videoconference, in the sense that it was a pilot project, local representatives really agree on this project and it is innovative in terms of target group for Pusemor (youngsters and SMEs).

Project of Pays Horloger:

During the WP5 studies in 2005, the Pays focused on the theme “education and child minding”. Since the study revealed that there was a real lack in this field in some parts of the test area, the Pays asked the consultants to propose an innovative solution that could fit the needs and features of these parts of the territory. The project of a mobile kindergarten was proposed to the Region to be sure that it will meet the Pusemor criteria and to the local key actors involved in this field (associations, elected representatives, child minders...) during meetings.

Germany – Südlicher Oberrhein

The four test areas within the Region Südlicher Oberrhein do represent typical structural situations in rural south-western Germany: Wide-spread townscapes with extensive chains of supply, changes in the health-care system and re-organisation of administrative institutions – each leading to the close-down of facilities, ongoing changes in the tourism-sector with impact on the overall economical development of many municipalities.

While the number of inhabitants of the whole region Südlicher Oberrhein is growing, some municipalities have to deal with a massive loss of population. This is caused by an insufficient natality rate as well as from inhabitants moving away due to inadequate supply with goods, services and job opportunities resp. inconvenient commuter situations. Moreover, as some municipalities reported, residents cannot be gained even if jobs are available. This leading to a severe drawback for local entrepreneurs and a further declining of the over all quality – a process often referred to as “vicious circle”.

The PUSEMOR pilot projects should provide a detailed support for the communities, how to tackle the challenges of demographic ageing or population losses. Furthermore, the conclusions provided should be adaptable for other municipalities within the area.

The development of pilot projects is based on a comprehensive analytical approach that has been applied to each of the four municipalities taking part in Pusemor. A procedure that can be divided in the following steps:

1) Evaluation of the local situation and framework conditions: demographic and economical development within the last ten years, population forecast, outlook on the future of significant elements of infrastructure resp. the expected requirement, content of local and regional planning documents, strategic aims of the municipalities.

Thereby several indices reveal a general approach to gain increasing population numbers by the provision of residential areas. In doing so, some of the municipalities tried to consolidate the provision with basic infrastructure. The limited success of this modus operandi did – in a very early phase - support the consideration within Pusemor, to chose a more comprehensive strategy.

2) On-site survey of each municipality for verifying the databased analysis: Qualitative aspects of facilities for retail and tourism, overall impression of the urban structure and townscape.

3) Discussion of the results with the mayors and other experts of the local administration. The result was a supplementary input and first political emphasis.

4) Profile of each municipality: updated strengths and potentials to open up for further development as well as foreseeable constraints. Thereby the possible advantage of location is fully described and assessed.

5) Several workshops with local stakeholders: Depending on the specific situation of each municipality town councillors, entrepreneurs, tourism experts and the public are invited to contribute to the analysis and the selection of pilot projects.

6) Nevertheless, the final definition of pilot projects takes place after consulting the mayors to assure accordance with other requirements of the municipalities.

Albeit somewhat time-consuming, this elaborated procedure did ensure a widespread selection of relevant and politically important pilot projects.

Italy – Appennino Genovese

As part of the Regional study envisaged by PUSEMOR WP5, a socio-economic analysis was carried out, which involved the provincial territory and highlighted several difficulties, related to demographic threats and imbalances between rich and congested valley areas and fragile and deserted mountain areas.

By analysing outcomes of the regional study and taking into account future strategies which have been planned at the regional level, what is clear is that dissemination of new technologies in mountain areas is of the essence for the development of networks and is thus a strategic action to guarantee a high-quality and more uniform supply and distribution of public services both for people and companies. Moreover, in order to simplify access to services, what is highlighted is the importance of grouping a number of services by creating multi-purpose offices in mountain areas. Outcomes of the survey carried out within WP5 and national and regional strategic indications have been crosschecked, the following conclusions have been reached and will be taken into consideration for the development of pilot projects.

What is important is focusing on the decentralization of a number of offices and services for companies above all. Experiences carried out in many different areas are considered as significant activities and were aimed at the creation of multi-purpose offices in mountain areas.

Mobile telephony, ADSL lines, TV broadcasting system, Internet connections need to be improved in order to limit isolation of SMEs, local authorities and people living in these areas. Improvement of communications will allow the implementation of the supplying of a number of on-line services and their upload.

The crosscheck of outcomes coming from the WP5 regional analysis and those projects which are being implemented by Mountain Communities belonging to GAL Appennino Genovese as for public services, highlighted that the greater difficulties are to be found in peripheral areas of Fontanabuona, Alta Valle Scrivia, Valli Aveto, Graveglia and Sturla Mountain Communities. Therefore, these areas have been selected for the implementation of the WP7 pilot actions.

The following procedures have been carried out in three selected areas:

Presentation of WP5 outcomes at the regional and local level

With the aims of disseminating the results of the analysis, raising the awareness for the needs and informing about the opportunity of pilot actions on the territory, an event was organised, a newsletter published, and best practices disseminated.

Choice of the actors

A number of Mountain Communities have been identified as suitable subjects for the implementation of pilot projects, since they embody the mountain territory, are able to start a local planning which may meet this territory's needs and expectations, and jointly supply services over the territory of their own municipalities.

Gathering of project-ideas and territorial activities

The needs identified by PUSEMOR were compared to the projects communicated by the authorities in order to identify territorial priorities and create synergies. A number of ideas were clearly not applicable since they did not match the specific goals of the PUSEMOR project. Likely local partnerships were identified and developed through the organisation of meetings for administrators, technicians and suppliers of public services. The definition of project strategies and future development perspectives of pilot actions was done in steady collaboration with the Liguria Region, especially with the Organisational Department, Information and telematic systems. Technical service was given for improving the project quality and identifying adequate financing sources.

Evaluation and refinement of project ideas

- Economic feasibility and consistency with the objectives of the PUSEMOR project
- Synergies with other actions already financed by community programmes managed by GAL
- Synergies with regional planning and future investments in order to be able to implement and finance pilot projects over the years

Selection of three pilot projects

Project refinement caused the selection of 3 pilot projects, one from each test area. Two of them are related to the new technologies' sector, whereas the third is related to the improvement of public services supplied by local authorities.

The progress of pilot projects is subdivided into three main phases:

- Implementation of correct planning
- Drawing up of the project contact between GAL and the three Mountain Communities which are benefiting from the pilot projects
- Starting-up of activities

Italy – Lombardia

The PUSEMOR test areas in Lombardy region have to tackle with problems due to the scarcity of infrastructures: not only rail and road networks are insufficient, but also the telecommunications infrastructures. According to the results and the best practices collected through the test areas studies carried out during the regional studies (see the Regional Intermediate Report), the Lombardy Region decided to focus on actions devoted to the reduction of the digital divide within the region and to support the creation of wireless infrastructures.

Lombardy region focused on wireless technologies for broadband connection. The IREALP institute was charged with the development and selection of pilot projects. At first there was an agreement with Regione Lombardia about the service category and kind of infrastructure to select according to regional policy and strategies (January-April 2006).

The following four months (May – September 2006) were spent to define the project ideas and collect detailed data with the local authorities and local technical teams. For each area an initial feasibility study was made, and proposals regarding different technical questions

were defined. Many local surveys and discussions with local authorities and technicians were required in order to define any technical detail (i.e.: which kind of wireless technology to select, where localize the equipments, how many points to connect...).

At the end of this complex process, a plan was drafted which was able to link the existing need of broadband connection, existing wireless technologies and infrastructures, foreseen wireless infrastructures, budget limits. Furthermore the local skills were evaluated with regard to the future management of the net, the use of this net for new public services, the potential of a provision of new inter-municipalities services. A first draft of projects proposals was available at the beginning of July.

On July 26th 2006 a meeting with the regional team, the project responsible and some regional authorities was organized, in order to obtain a first official approval of the projects by Lombardy Region.

During the months of July-October 2006 IREALP assessed a preliminary budget for a cooperation proposal with the selected enterprises in the pilot project implementation.

An official meeting with the Presidents of the Mountain Communities, their local technical experts and some local authorities was held on September 27th: The pilot projects were officially presented and finally approved.

The outcome of this job was a detailed technical description of the three wireless pilot projects in the test areas Valchiavenna, Valle Sabbia and Alpi Lepontine. Before the end of year 2006, the three pilot projects have been full drawn, also thanks to the cooperation of the selected implementation enterprises. The projects have been evaluated with regard to the PUSEMOR criteria additionally the link to local best practices was also considered.

In particular, in the months of November 2006-February 2007 IREALP collected: the final signature of an agreement with the enterprise who have to be involved in the project implementation, the final version of budget plan, the final version of all the contracts required, the official signature and approval of starting up of each Mountain Community. In November 2006 IREALP was also officially charged to follow this implementation process by Regione Lombardia. All the pilot projects were fully implemented before the end of Pusemor project.

Slovenia – Gorenjska

The Slovenian PUSEMOR partner decided to follow a strategy of small steps for improving the quality of life in the test areas. Thus, responding to local needs, local action for village development should be supported.

In the Gorenjska region PUSEMOR was carried out within two test areas: the Kokra Valley and the Skofja Loka Mountains. At first local workshops were held in each of them. Local representatives, local population and SMEs were taking part. During these workshops the results of the PUSEMOR survey and the best practices were presented, project ideas were gathered and discussed. The issues pointed out by the workshop participants were related to social life in the villages and village revitalisation, as well as to the need of improving the access to broadband internet and the use of it. The ideas generated in the local workshops were further developed and became pilot projects. These were positively evaluated with regard to the PUSEMOR criteria. The implementation of the rather small local pilot projects

could begin quite quickly, because of the high local support and the willingness of locals to contribute actively, partly with volunteer work.

Switzerland – Ticino

The Pusemor partner, the Cantone, offered to all the mountain region of the Ticino the possibility to participate to the regional analysis (WP5). Three of them were interested. Because of lack of time the canton charged a private bureau (SEREC) to achieve the analysis.

The analysis of the interviews has shown that the majority of services depend on politics and overregional decisions. Besides the most important social services have been already planned and accomplished. Moreover the study areas are of different spatial types. Although the evolution of the population is very different in the three test areas, there was some common problem. Considering that, Cantone Ticino decided to focus on a single project of general problem, valid for all the mountain and rural areas of Ticino.

August 2006: proposal of three pilot projects to the Canton Ticino after discussion with involved mountain regions

- Project 1: Concept of promotion for the small all days shops of the villages. Support the selling of the little shops in order to permit them to be economically sustainable and remain open
- Project 2: *Badanti* - domestic aid. Person who take care of a group of old people of the same village in the most out of way areas. The service could be mixed for old and young people.
- Project 3: Bank of hours. Exchange of hours of services between neighbors, elderly people still actives etc. in order to solve the little problems of common life.
- October 2006: choice of the project 1 by the Canton Ticino and compilation of the detailed planning. Decision to propose an university study for the realization of the pilot project. The study is supposed to begin ?

As said before it was difficult to find a project suitable to all the three test area of Ticino. The chosen common problem is the maintain of services for daily needs in remote villages. Considering that, Cantone Ticino decided to focus on the economical improvement aspects of village shops.

Switzerland - Western Switzerland

The team of Western Switzerland was operating within three test areas. At least one pilot project should be developed for each of the test areas, in strong cooperation between the regional PUSEMOR team and the local actors, and responding to the specific needs of the test areas.

The Region **Chablais vaudois** (district of Aigle) is well situated in terms of public services and density of population: The plain area situated near Lausanne, and the mountain part of the region has three well known ski resorts: Villars, Leysin and les Diablerets. The situation of the services in the plain area and in the ski resorts is good. The biggest concerns of the regional actors are the costs of road maintenance and the survival of the four (mountain) railway lines.

The region Chablais vaudois started one year ago looking for project ideas. The following data shows the main steps.

March 06	Presentation of results of WP5 in the general assembly of the region
April 06	Creation of a work group to develop project ideas. Members of this group are municipalities, inhabitants and the local provider of railway services.
June 06	Four projects ideas have been developed : <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Multifunctional bus offering various services to mountain communities (postal, grocery, bakery, etc.)2) Internet via wimax: The idea is to implement this new technology (not yet available in Switzerland) in mountain areas.3) Park & ride for the "Alpes vaudoises" (ski resort areas): this could be a solution to make more profitable the mountain railway lines.4) Active senior citizens network: the idea is to exploit local resources to give informations and volunteer help to local population.
June 06	Selection of project one (multifunctional bus) with the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is making what in this thematic? Can PUSEMOR help something? (e.g. project 3 is already carried on by the municipality of Aigle)• What can we do with our timetable and our budget?• Are a provider and a municipality interested in the project?
July 06	Survey of interest for a multifunctional bus by the inhabitants of three municipalities
Sept 06	Search of partners (Swiss Post, local shops): The Swiss Post was not interested, because they think that it will not be profitable (demand too weak).
Nov 06	The five shops of Ollon are interested
Dec 06	Development of the new offer
8. Jan 07	Start of the test phase, press conference
Febr 07	First meeting to discuss results of the first month of test.
April 07	Development of publicity material (flyers, posters, etc.) and PR actions

The Region **Nord vaudois** (districts of Yverdon, Orbe and Grandson) is characterised by the traditional watchmaking and precision mechanical engineering industries of the Jura chain. In the Yverdon district, activities in the tertiary sector have greatly developed in the last few years. The district of Orbe is situated near the highway Lausanne-Bern, so there are a lot of commuters. The situation of public services seems satisfactory for the population.

The region Nord vaudois has developed project ideas on the basis of the regional intermediate report.

April 2006	Four ideas have been submitted to the appreciation of the 83 municipalities. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Organising a retail and distribution network2) Carsharing by internet or by sms
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3) Networking of sport facilities and meeting rooms

4) Exchange network for several services

- August 06 35 municipalities have answered to the questionnaire. The carsharing project was the most appreciated one. But after analyzing carsharing projects, the project team has noted, that often such projects are not conclusive. The project team abandoned this project idea and concentrated on the project with local retailers.
- Sept. 06 A meeting with local retailers revealed that they don't need a logistic help or whatever, but it will be useful to make the population aware of the advantages of the proximity. Retailers want help for delivering messages, like "the shopping basket is not more expensive in local shops than in big shopping centres, especially when one counts the transport costs."
- Nov 06 The SAB and the region developed the concept of the week of proximity.
- Dec 06 This concept is presented to the municipalities
- Febr 07 The concept is more detailed and the week of proximity should take place the first week of May.
- 29 Apr.-4 May The first week of proximity is organized.

The third test area consists of two districts: **Obersimmental** has experienced out-migration and a loss of work places and public services during the last years. In opposite, the district of **Saanenland** is growing, due to the strong tourism sector (Gstaad). The situation of public services seems mostly satisfactory for the population, except that public transports are not very attractive for commuters and tourists, and some local deficits with high speed internet and TV reception.

In the beginning of 2006, the Region Obersimmental-Saanenland has chosen to focus the pilot project ideas on the domains education and telecommunication. Five ideas have been developed:

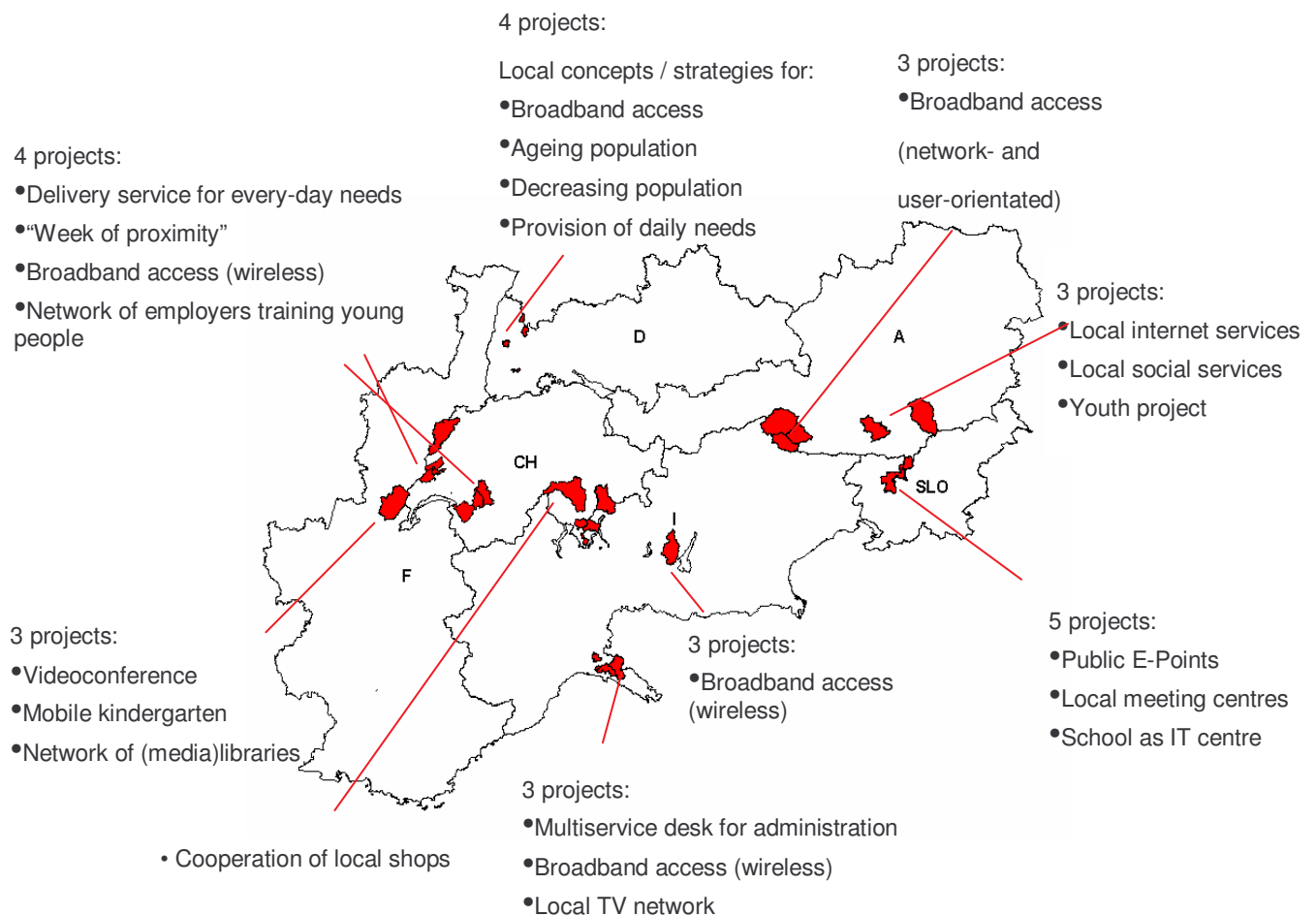
- Network of employers (SMEs) training young people
- Optimize the offer of the different training institutions
- Course for using the new technologies (target: old people)
- College in three languages (german-french-english)
- Wireless connections for rural areas.

Because of personal changes in the region, the selection procedure had some delays. Two ideas have been further developed: The "network of employers" and the project "wireless connections". The last one has been already realized.

3.4 Description of the PUSEMOR pilot projects

Altogether the PUSEMOR partners developed together with local and regional actors 30 pilot projects which are presently implemented. All PUSEMOR partner regions have developed pilot projects. On June 2007, the implementation status differs from test areas to test areas. For details, contact the project managers in each country (a list is available in the annex).

Fig. 8: Pilot projects in each test area



The pilot projects are shortly described in this chapter. The various projects illustrate that there are different approaches of how to tackle the problems of public services in mountain areas.

Austria – Carinthia

Village services

SOCIAL SERVICES

4 communities in the district of Spittal /Drau

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

The project Village Services intends to close gaps in social services. On a local level, missing services will be provided for elderly people and caring family members, for single parents and families:

- Local needs are surveyed, local voluntary groups are founded and supported.
- The Villages Services staff provides rapid individual help, e.g. when caring family members are sick or overloaded.
- Village Services informs about the existing offer of social services; it co-ordinates also services of associations and volunteers.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

In three pilot communities of the Drau Valley, local groups of volunteers have already started to work. Later on the extension of Village Services to the whole district is planned, by using financial means from the municipalities and from rural development programs.

Youth.Enterprises.Future

EDUCATION, REGIONAL ECONOMY

Region Mittelkärnten

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

The project aims at enhancing the creative potential of young people in the rural region Mittelkärnten, and at using it for a sustainable regional development. With the help of professional facilitators the young persons are developing project ideas for different issues, such as economy, environment, education, culture, leisure or tourism. The co-operation with enterprises should advertise project ideas and facilitate implementation.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

After a well-attended start workshop a “creativity centre” has been established in the commercial college of Althofen. Here young people can advance their project ideas. The web site www.juz.co.at provides an online database of the project ideas and informs about more events and activities.

Local internet services for citizens – ALISE communal

TELECOMMUNICATION, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

10 rural communities all over Carinthia

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

The project intends to improve the internet access for the inhabitants of rural areas.

Low-cost, maintenance-free, standardised and safe IT structures will be set up in ten rural pilot communities. Technically, this is based on the high-capacity CNC network linking the

Carinthian municipalities. Instead of PCs which need a lot of maintenance simple “Thin Client” terminals will be installed.

The internet desks will not only be used for municipal tasks, but also provided to the population. At “i-Service” stations the citizens have a cost-free internet use. Municipality staff will support them with e-government application.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

The first „i-service“ station is already installed in Dellach in the Gail Valley, the others will follow. If positively evaluated, the project will be extended.

Austria – Land Tyrol

Corporate internet portal Deferegggen

TELECOMMUNICATION, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Communities of the Deferegggen Valley

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

With the aim of developing a a more interactive and communicative internet portal of the municipalities, meeting the needs of citizens and businesses, the municipal homepages of three neighbouring communities are bundled within one attractive internet portal.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

Workshops with citizens and businesses for rising their needs have been held. A concept of the items, quantities and functions of the internet portal has been established. Due to the wide acceptance the project had been extendet by programming the website. Project finished in June 2007.

Overcoming barriers to internet access

TELECOMMUNICATION, EDUCATION

5 peripheral communities of the Gail and Villgraten Valley

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

With the aim of increasing the private internet usage in remote rural areas, the barriers to internet access will be overcome by traditional ways of communication and education, focusing on senior citizens and non-employed persons.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

Milestones until May 2007 (project end) are:

- Information by local motivators
- Training for interested people
- Free accessible broadband internet terminal in each village

Internet platform about regional food

TELECOMMUNICATION, REGIONAL ECONOMY

East Tyrol (District of Lienz)

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

With the aim of constituting both virtual and real networking about regional food, the internet portal will offer information about benefits to produce, to convert and to use regional food.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

Milestones are:

- Scientific survey of content
- Networking of producers and sellers
- Preparation of messages
- Concept of functions
- Technical implementation
- Public relations

The internet platform starts in June 2007.

France – Franche Comté

Videoconference

TELECOMMUNICATION, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, EDUCATION, REGIONAL ECONOMY

Natural park of Haut Jura (59.000 inhabitants), Pays du Haut Jura

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

The basic idea is the equipment of 11 sites with videoconference materials to guarantee a greater access for diverse users. The project aims at favorising the links between local and regional authorities (Pays, Région, Département), at getting young people closer to associations and job information centers, at consolidating the Pole of Territorial Competences (training for adults) and at simplifying and enhancing the relationships between enterprises and their suppliers.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

Milestones:

- Detailed study of specific needs of beneficiaries
- Selection of the equipment provider
- Installment of the equipment (March 2007)
- Elaboration of methodological guidelines

Mobile kindergarten

CHILD CARE / EDUCATION

Remote parts of Pays Horloger (10 municipalities)

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

An equipped bus goes from village to village to propose the kindergarten service for families, which sometimes need a caring service for their children (from 3 months to 6 years old). This aims at allowing parents to get free time for administrative tasks, shopping etc. and at offering young children the possibility to meet other children and to get used to collective life. By bringing locally specific professional skills a counseling role to parents is ensured and quality activities for children guaranteed.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

Milestones:

- Equipment of the bus
- Selection of villages and rooms to welcome children and the bus
- Setting up of activities and skilled team

The mobile kindergarten will run before the end of the year 2007.

Network of (media)libraries

CULTURE, TELECOMMUNICATION

Natural park of Haut Jura (59.000 inhabitants), Pays du Haut Jura

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

The basic idea is allowing local population to have access to every book of every library of this mountainous territory. The project aims at:

- Optimizing the ICT potential in order to simplify the management of equipments and to develop services
- Getting in common resources of libraries and medialibraries
- Developing the quality and diversity of the services and expanding the targeted group

Implementation status and future perspectives:

Milestones:

- setting up of a numerical catalogue for each library
- setting up of a common database with all books and literature held in the libraries
- setting up of a booking and management system

The project is ready to work.

Germany – Südlicher Oberrhein

Fact finding: feasibility of broadband internet access

TELECOMMUNICATION

Municipalities of Bad Peterstal-Griesbach, Feldberg, Freiamt, Stadt Wolfach (Test areas)

Remote parts of municipalities

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

With an overview of the feasibility evaluation of different (technical) solutions to improve broadband internet access the position of municipalities to service providers will be improved. Furthermore advice and support for (also political) strategies on (supra)-municipality level is stated. Political decision makers, local businesses and also the general public will benefit from the expected positive long term effects.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

An overview on solutions has been elaborated and will be the disposal of the communities together with further suggestions for an implementation strategy for broadband Internet access. The results are provided in a final report in German, issued to all participating communities at the end of the project.

Local demographic concept

INTEGRATED CROSS-SECTOR APPROACH

Municipalities of Bad Peterstal-Griesbach, Feldberg, Freiamt, Stadt Wolfach (Test areas)

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

Municipalities have to deal with the future effects of demographical changes on local infrastructures and also have to provide a strategy for positive respond. Within the pilot project the contents and procedures for a local overall concept to deal with specific demands of ageing population are elaborated: Forecast of upcoming age structure, identification of affected local facilities, options and necessary tasks. The target groups focused are mainly local policy makers, but the participation of the general public and further important stakeholders is also needed.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

Content and procedure for local concepts to deal with the specific challenges connected with the demographic change are provided in a final report in German, issued to all participating communities at the end of the project.

Local concept for daily needs and retail services

DAILY NEEDS

Municipalities of Bad Peterstal-Griesbach, Feldberg, Freiamt, Stadt Wolfach (Test areas)

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

Preparing innovative approaches to assure the disposability of services of daily needs and to integrate also local retailers and farmers in the local chain of supply. An evaluation of the transferability of alternative supply structures and concepts for the provision of goods and services in daily need is also elaborated

Implementation status and future perspectives:

Possibilities to safeguard the provision with according products and services have been elaborated.

Strategy: Local residential quality

INTEGRATED CROSS-SECTOR APPROACH

Municipalities of Bad Peterstal-Griesbach, Feldberg, Freiamt, Stadt Wolfach (Test areas)

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

Aiming at the a comprehensive strategy and the definition of a road map for its successful implementation – adopted to the specific situation of the respective municipality – elements for a long term strategy to ensure the residential quality of municipalities with decreasing population are provided. The main target groups are local policy makers, but also the participation of relevant local stake-holders is strongly recommended / necessary.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

The long-term stability of the number of inhabitants is one of the main aims of regional planning and therefore embedded in an overall regional strategy with formal as well as informal tool and measures. Aside from the three aforementioned fields of activity suggestions are provided for future documents of spatial planning and additional activities on local and regional level.

Italy - Appennino Genovese

Multiservice desk

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, TELECOMMUNICATION

Scrivia Valley, test run in 1 municipality

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

Basic

With the aim of reducing the hardships of the territorial marginalization the creation of joint comprehensive district services is planned and could be implemented in the next years. The basic idea: The creation of a physical and computerized service network which allows people living in the remotest areas, to be able to reach the offices providing the necessary services or get the information they need over the shortest time possible. Target groups are: Inhabitants, Associations, Municipalities, Tourists

Implementation status and future perspectives:

Milestones:

- creation of the new multiservice desk, its implementation and dissemination of the activities
- Planning of three local workshops to discuss the future perspectives of the public services in sparsely mountain areas.

The communication plan of the activities has been developed. Three local workshops are planned.

Wireless broadband services

TELECOMMUNICATION

Aveto, Graveglia and Sturla Valley

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

The pilot project will support the strategy of Regione Liguria that gave rise to a collaboration process involving the territory and aimed at offering the opportunity of using broadband connections to local administrations, citizens and enterprises, which are situated or live in remote mountain areas.

The main goal of the project is to implement the existing broadband network in order to assure this service also in the marginal areas and to allow SMEs to be more competitive and to foster social development of the population. Target groups are: Inhabitants, SMEs, Public Administration, Providers of Public Services.

The planned activities are:

- planning stage
- selection of the subject who will carry out the project
- feasibility project to identify the best technological solutions
- technical assistance and specialized advices
- dissemination of results.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

The planning of activities and estimation of the budget for the operation are in operation.

Local TV broadcasting network

TELECOMMUNICATION

Fontanabuona Valley

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

The pilot project aims at reducing the marginality of the territories by means of strengthening the communication and information channels for people. A local television broadcasting network will be created in the remotest areas, not covered by such service. Thus an information and communication network among institutions, local TV channels, and people will be established. Target groups are the inhabitants.

The activities will be:

- the analysis of the actual television signal's provision;
- the creation of a partnership among local TV broadcasting companies;
- the improvement of the TV's signal in Fontanabuona remote areas where the signal now is not present;
- the use of TV programmes to disseminate local information among inhabitants

Implementation status and future perspectives:

The implementation is in preparation; a cooperation agreement with the mountain community Fontanabuona has been signed.

Italy – Lombardia

Wireless infrastructures for local public services

TELECOMMUNICATION, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Valchiavenna Mountain Community, 13 municipalities

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

This project aims to implement new infrastructures for the broadband connection through wireless technologies in order to improve the existing one for public users. The main users of this net will be: municipality offices, public administrators, local authorities, public employees, citizens (as customers of communal services). The planned new wireless infrastructures will be faster and more powerful and will provide all the services that the Mountain Community and the single Municipalities need to manage on line (or plan to manage in the next future). Some new services could be provided on line: cadastral services, exchange of documents, GIS services. Many softwares could be shared with a relevant costs and time saving.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

The project has been re-drawn and extended (integration of mountain Community's proposal). The implementation is in progress. The entire implementation process ended in April 2007.

Network between schools

TELECOMMUNICATION, EDUCATION

Alpi Lepontine Mountain Community

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

An intranet area is created among nine primary and secondary schools through the use of the wireless technology in order to provide them with broadband connection. This new technology can overcome morphological obstacles, is not expensive, is easy to implement and permits fast and powerful connection. The users of the selected schools (teachers, students, pupils, administrative personnel) will be able to exchange information and to share many educational and administrative activities (i.e.: on line documents, lessons, libraries, educational and administrative software).

Implementation status and future perspectives:

The infrastructures are already installed (the entire process implementation was carried out in February-March 2007). The equipment is now available and ready to use in each school. PCs and an Internet rooms will be provided by the Mountain Community using local resources. Local Authorities, local technical teams and schools are being involved in order to find the best services to share.

Wireless infrastructures for educational services TELECOMMUNICATION, EDUCATION

Marginal areas of the Valle Sabbia Mountain Community: Serle area, Cariadeghe area.

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

With the aim of reducing the existing digital divide of marginal zones such as the area of Serle and Cariadeghe, new broadband connection based on wireless technologies are provided for the Municipality building and the public library of Serle and for the “Casina del Comune”, located in the Cariadeghe Natural Reserve. The Casina del Comune is a little farm used for education (botanic laboratory, natural path, diverse activities) and for the preservation of agricultural traditions and territorial identity. Some new communal services could be provided on line or improved by the Municipality of Serle. The Internet access for library and for the little farm permits a lot of new services such as on line booking, exchange of informations/documents, on line videos or lessons...

Implementation status and future perspectives:

Implementation will be fully ended within June 2007. The Local Authorities and local technical teams will be involved in order to define the best/new services to promote.

Switzerland – Ticino

Promotion of small villages shops

EVERY DAY NEEDS

Small villages in all the rural area of Ticino

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

The aims is to maintain the local shops in rural areas, though detection of most appropriate operational measures which improve the incomes. The target groups are shop managers, clients and wholesale dealer.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

The project will start in June 2007.

Switzerland - Team Western Switzerland

Delivery service of every day needs

EVERY DAY NEEDS

Small villages in the municipality of Ollon, region Chablais vaudois

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

With the aims of ensuring the local shops faithful customers and increasing the population's awareness of the advantages of proximity, the demand for such an offer is tested in one village. Five local shops (a butchery, a pharmacy, two retailers and a bakery) are organising a common delivery system in villages without shops. The delivery system is organized two days a week; it is done by a senior citizen and the local bus agency. The customers order by phone and the products are delivered at home the day after.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

The project is running since January 2007.

Week of proximity

EVERY DAY NEEDS

Region Nord vaudois

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

With the aims of increasing the population's awareness of the advantages of proximity, ensuring the local shops faithful customers and improving the local networks and the local identity of inhabitants, several PR actions will promote local shopping. These actions will be organised during one week and will be broadcasted by local newspapers and local TV.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

In March 2007 a contest of ideas has been launched, in order to find animations during the week and also new ideas to improve the services of proximity.

The week of proximity with PR actions and articles in newspapers is scheduled for 29 April to 4 May 2007.

Network of employers (SMEs) training young people

Region Obersimmental – Saanenland OSSA

EDUCATION

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

With the aim of ensuring and creating new training positions a new network between the regional enterprises and the vocational school of Saanen should be created.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

Project development is still in progress. There was a delay due to staff changes, the implementation will take place only after PUSEMOR.

Test of wimax (wireless connection) in mountain areas

TELECOMMUNICATION

Municipality of Boltigen in Region Obersimmental – Saanenland OSSA

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

Swisscom, municipality, region, SAB

With the aims of bringing high speed internet to mountain regions with specific topographical conditions and developing innovative and efficient technical solutions, a new technology called wimax (new for Switzerland) is tested in the community of Boltigen (30 households). Swisscom is partner of the project, because it is interested to test this technology in specific topographic conditions. The municipality of Boltigen wants to promote the use of the new technologies among their inhabitants. The project will be completed by training courses.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

The technical installations were carried out in April 2007 when a six months test phase and the training course for the inhabitants are starting. In September 2007 an evaluation of the project will be done.

Slovenia – Gorenjska

Establishment of a public e-point

TELECOMMUNICATION, EDUCATION

Lučine, Skofja Loka Valley

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

The idea is to establish a public e-point with organised courses about computers and internet in the cultural hall in the centre of the village of Lučine near Gorenja vas (140 inhabitants and almost no public services, many household have no computer/ internet equipment). This aims at improving the access to different public services through the suitable internet technology and at developing new activities in the village (gathering, social life, education). Target groups are local people (children, youth, adults, elderly).

Implementation status and future perspectives:

The implementation is in progress, the equipment already partly installed.

Local school as IT centre and gathering point

TELECOMMUNICATION, EDUCATION

Podblica, Skofja Loka Mountains

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

With the aims of maintaining the local school, strengthening local social life and of providing e-services, the small school of the village of Podblica will serve as a gathering point and local IT centre. The local community proposed to equip one of the currently unused room in the local school as a multipurpose room – with computer equipment and broadband access – and to organise introductory ICT courses (e-banking, e-administration, www...) as well as different events, lectures... to gather different groups of village residents.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

The equipment is already installed, further activities are being developed.

Establishment of a meeting centre

CULTURE, MEETING CENTRE

Davca, Skofja Loka Mountains

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

In Davča, a sparsely populated and dispersed village without a real village centre, a meeting centre for locals and different interest groups is established, in connection with a tourist info point and the local museum (presenting the traditional flax cultivation). Thus the social and cultural life among local people should be improved, the local handicraft, tradition and identity enhanced, and the village should become more attractive for visitors and tourists.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

The meeting centre is already equipped with furniture, animation programmes for school groups and tourists are made.

Establishment of thematic playground

CHILDCARE / EDUCATION

Sorica, Skofja Loka Mountains

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

In Sorica, a picturesque village with rich cultural tradition and potential but not enough supporting services (no tourist info centre, shop, children playground ...) a public open air area for children is installed. Upgrading the existing cultural and educational activities should improve the quality of life of locals as well as the tourism offer. Target groups are local children, organised school groups and family tourists.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

The project has been fully implemented by the municipality and local associations: the playground is established, the cultural and educational programmes for children have been improved.

Kokra Valley revival by tourism

TOURISM, VILLAGE RENEWAL

Kokra, Kokra valley

Basic idea, Objectives, Target groups:

Kokra is a sparsely inhabited and depopulated valley, but there are several opportunities for the development of tourism, organic farming, forestry... The main objective of the project is to motivate local farmers to offer their existing products and services to tourists and strengthen their economical position in order to reduce commuting and encourage self-employment. The specific project objective is to support the local tourism association with actions:

- Installation of an info board informing about tourism facilities, about all farms, cultural and natural heritage, cycling trails, footpaths....
- Study and action plan for the revitalisation of the ancient trail (intended for mountain bicyclists, riders and hikers) along the mountain farms, with their daily offer of food and other services.

Implementation status and future perspectives:

The local Community of Kokra has already implemented the project: the info board has been placed near the main valley road, the action plan has been elaborated.

3.5 Conclusions

3.5.1 General assessment of the projects

The PUSEMOR pilot projects are very diverse, regarding to the thematic content, the approach of how to tackle a problem, the territorial scope and the structure of the project executing organisation. Nevertheless, there is a strong thematic focus: All partners have developed at least one ICT project. On the other hand, it was not possible to implement transport and mobility projects, although public transport and mobility in remote rural areas had been designated as problematic in the PUSEMOR analyses in the test areas. This may be explained by the high costs of transport measures and the complicated organisational and legal framework conditions.

By contrast, the ICT focus proved to be very innovative and developable. The pilot projects dealing with ICT measures blend well with national or regional strategies for improving broadband connections. The ICT pilot projects within PUSEMOR are dealing with different aspects:

- New infrastructures or new technical solutions: wireless networks, “Thin Clients” or hardware for videoconferences
- Public internet access and e-government applications
- Common regional portals and platforms for different users
- Training for overcoming barriers to the use of the internet

The other projects, emphasizing educational, cultural, social or economic (retail) aims, are very diverse. Generally, the project aim is not only an improvement of services, but also a contribution to the cohesion of communities and to the enhancement of regional economy.

Several PUSEMOR projects illustrate that it is not sufficient just to react to changes of the service supply. The changes of the demand, due to demographic or societal development, are equally important. A new offer must be created for the sectors with an increasing demand, such as the care for elderly. On the other hand, a decreasing demand for services can endanger the maintenance of the existing supply. In this case, projects adjusting the services so that they better meet the demand may be successful.

3.5.2 Success factors for local / regional projects

Resulting from the workshop discussion during the Villach meeting⁴, the following most important success factors can be mentioned:

- Projects will be successful if they are adapted to the needs of the local population, and if the offer meets the demand. Local retail projects for instance may offer high quality products and products symbolizing regional identity, they may focus on combined and

⁴ PUSEMOR-CIPRA meeting „Future of Public Services in Alpine Areas, Challenges-Chances-Good practice” Warmbad Villach, 28.02.07-01.03.07

mobile services, and they will adapt the opening hours to the needs of local population. In other thematic fields it may be necessary to survey the needs or to involve the population into project development, for obtaining widely accepted projects.

- Impetus for developing new projects may be given by an increasing demand, but also by high pressure through existing deficits and problems.
- Creative solutions aside from mainstream structures are important.
- The creation of specific offers well-adapted to the local demand enhances the residential quality of the involved communities.
- Projects can profit very much from the exchange of best practices.
- Cross-sector solutions involving different partners need good cooperation structures and practices, also between public and private actors.
- For keeping a project running, the project executives need a strong motivation and much patience. A strong leader person is helpful for overcoming difficulties.
- If voluntary work is supported and coordinated in a professional way, the new services are especially well-adapted to the local demand.
- Small businesses or volunteers running a project need a good knowledge about the administrative and political framework, for being able to assess the own options for action. They need professional support and training possibilities. Networks between different suppliers are important for exchanging experiences.
- Public administrations and political decision makers have a major role in anticipating future needs as well as in initiating and coordinating local and regional projects. Especially in rural areas with often-small communities and limited resources of local authorities regional support is necessary to cope with this task. The responsibility assignment between the different levels of public institution should – at least in rural areas – meet these requirements.

3.5.3 The impact of the PUSEMOR pilot projects

Even if the implementation phase of the pilot projects is just beginning, an impact with regard to the project aims, safeguarding or improving public services in alpine areas, can already be stated or at least anticipated:

- The problems of public services in alpine areas receive more attention by the public and by local and regional politics. The regional population and SMEs are motivated for action.
- Cross-sector and inter-municipal cooperation within the regions is strengthened, new networks are built.
- Project development and project management know-how within the regions is strengthened – this will be useful for other rural development projects, too.

Anyway, projects must be embedded into overall strategies. From the point of view of rural communities and areas the own problems and options are taking center stage. Alpine-wide, national or regional strategies have to focus on the best and most effective territorial distribution of infrastructures and services.

The PUSEMOR – approach led to an important amendment of already existing regional strategies by providing possible counteractive-measures for threatening cutbacks in the

provision of basic infrastructures. To PUSEMORs special merit, “best practices” have been collected in most countries of the alpine space- stating an example for the concrete benefit of transnational cooperation.

4 Recommendations

4.1 *Results of the comparative analysis of the legal framework*

Before formulating recommendations at different levels, the PUSEMOR partners made a short comparative analysis of the legal framework of different sectors⁵. A detailed analysis of the framework in each country is available in the annex. The following chapter illustrates the main findings of this analysis.

a) **Services of General (Economic) Interest (SGI) are vital to rural and mountain areas.**

Enterprises and households rely on those services to do their business. Without postal offices, public transport, phone access etc. rural and mountain areas would lose their attractiveness. New technologies like broad-band-access can – if they are available in a sufficient quality -help to bridge physical distances. This crucial role of public services is also confirmed by a new study of the OECD called “the new rural paradigm”. In this study, the OECD identified four priorities for rural development:

- transport and ICT infrastructure development
- public service provision
- valorisation of rural amenities
- rural enterprise promotion

The EU is investing heavily into the development of rural and mountain areas through instruments like its Common agriculture policy (CAP) and cohesion policy. But until now, the crucial role of SGI for those areas has not been fully recognised by the EU. All too often, state aid rules and processes of market-opening seem to be predominant. These two approaches are conflicting with each other. The EU cohesion policy plays an important role in helping new, innovative projects to get on their way. This was shown with the actual PUSEMOR project running under the Interreg IIIB initiative. But Interreg can only intervene on the soft-factors. The cohesion policy and the CAP with its 2nd pillar (rural development) can help in hard factors (investments).

b) **On the level of nations, a great difference of how SGI's are dealt with can be seen.**

While some nations put a strong accent on SGI's, like France, Austria and Switzerland, this is not the case in countries like Germany and Italy. This phenomenon can be largely explained through the historic context of market liberalization and the public discussion on SGI's.

c) The **financial mechanisms** are diverse and differ more from sector to sector than from country to country.

⁵ Only for four topics: postal services, electricity, transport and telecommunications

d) The role of the **regulation authorities** is different from sector to sector and from country to country. In an open market, a strong regulation authority is important to avoid market distortions.

e) The sectoral analysis shows the **ongoing process of market opening**. While the market is fully open in the telecom-sector, the process is still going on in the other sectors. The sectoral analysis shows also **great discrepancies as to how SGI's are dealt with in the respective sectors**. E.g. in the telecom-sector, there's a minimum standard of SGI fixed at EU-level. In the public transport sector, this is not the case. This finding is of particular relevance to PUSEMOR. In PUSEMOR we have seen, that those are the two sectors which seems to be most critical. A lot of pilot actions have been developed around the telecom-sector, because new technologies are available. But almost no project has been developed in the public transport sector. This can be explained partially by the decentralised approach in defining public transports and the minimum standards. But building infrastructures for public transports and running public transports is also very cost-intensive and can hardly be resolved in an Interreg project. It would only be possible to build on soft factors like know-how-transfer, management models, defining common standards, coordinating timetables etc.

4.2 Political recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the comparative analysis of the legal framework, on several exchanges of experiences done during the PUSEMOR period and on the experiences gained through the implementation of pilot projects.

4.2.1 on the EU level

- a) On the level of the EU, a **strong commitment towards SGI** is required. The white book on SGI from 2004 contains several guidelines in this respect. They must be translated into concrete actions, particularly into the relevant directives.

In the process of elaborating and approving a new European Constitution, particular attention should be paid to the aspects of SGI as was foreseen in the now defunct project of 2005.

Through the two above-mentioned elements, the EU should urge its member states to

- define a coherent national policy on SGI;
- define nationwide, unitary standards for the SGI in each sector;
- strengthen the role of regulation-authorities where appropriate, e.g. in the public transport sector.

- b) The new EU-objective on territorial cooperation should foresee the possibility to continue working on this important topic of public services. **The EU-cohesion policy and the territorial agenda of the EU should pay particular attention to those public services⁶.**

⁶ See OECD study: The New Rural Paradigm, Paris 2006

- The process on the EU-level can be influenced through
- the bodies of the EU itself
 - the territorial entities or groupings of entities and their respective representatives like the council for regions and municipalities
 - NGO's like Euromontana, the European mountain association.
- c) The measures described in the **territorial Agenda of the EU** (see chapter 3.2) should be implemented. They foresee an intensified cooperation between the centres of growth but also between those and rural areas. Wherever the spatial and socio-economical situation does allow such a partnership, the option should be examined thoroughly. In the context of the experiences made in the PUSEMOR project, it seems useful to organise an international exchange on the possibilities and requirements of these new alliances. Nevertheless, the consolidated position of growth centres must not lead to a neglect of rural areas. It is therefore very important to attend the further process, in which the upcoming Portuguese presidency of the EU aims to formulate a related package of measures. It would be very useful, if a sufficient participation of relevant stakeholders could be assured in this procedure.
- d) The EU should propose a choice of **different financial compensation mechanisms**. It is important to leave some autonomy to the countries which should know how they finance their SGIs. In this respect, the EU rules on state-aids have sometimes proved to be contra-productive. The EU should provide the possibility of making exemptions to the state aid rules.
- e) The process of market opening can be seen as a chance to influence it and to pay special attention to SGI's. **Ex-ante evaluations** should be carried out to show the impact of such actions on SGI's in rural and mountain areas. The process of market-opening should take into respect the impact on less favoured areas. **Exemptions from general rules should be possible on a national level**. E.g. nations should have the option not to open the postal market entirely from 2009 on, because this last step towards a complete opening can impose severe problems to the financing of the SGI by the service providers. There's thus a risk of deterioration of services.
- f) The basic principle of **unitary tariffs and equal quality** of the SGI's throughout a country must be maintained.

4.2.2 on the national level

- g) At the national level, the future of rural areas should be a political theme and the crucial role of an adequate supply of SGI must be highlighted. As previously mentioned, not all countries tackle the question of SGI in the same manner. France e.g. has a long standing tradition of SGI and gives them a strong position already in the Constitution. SGI's are an ever recurrent political topic. This is less the case in countries like Germany or Italy, where the topic is often dealt with reference to urban areas, but rarely to rural areas. Therefore, actors like political parties, Regions and municipalities as well as NGO's should make them a political topic. This can be done through a Lobbying-process, through PR-actions, through the dissemination of

studies and concrete results like those from PUSEMOR, creating a multilateral platform for discussion etc.

- h) On the national level, there's often missing a clear **body or person in charge of SGI** as a transversal domain. This gap should be closed by appointing a responsible body or person. In this respect, the unitary regulation authority in Germany (Bundesnetzagentur) is an interesting approach.
- i) Where appropriate, **nationwide unitary standards** must be fixed for the different services. This is e.g. actually not the case in the public transport sector, which is largely delegated to the regional level.

4.2.3 at regional and municipal level

- j) At regional⁷ and municipal level, a **territorial and integrated view on SGI** (not just an addition of sectors) is necessary, focusing on the spatial distribution of services within a region / district. This should be the responsibility of spatial planning authorities.
- k) **Evaluation of the supply situation:** based on a monitoring system for services on local level, supply standards should be defined and regularly evaluated.
- l) Also on the regional level, **persons or bodies responsible for SGI's** as a transversal task must be nominated. In Germany for example, the responsibility for spatial planning on regional level is regulated on the level of the Bundesländer. In Baden-Württemberg twelve Regions have been established, each with a corporate body assigned for the setting up and implementation of regional planning ("Regionalverbände"). It proved to be useful for the successful execution of this task, that the Regionalverbände have also been assigned with the competence for regional development concepts.
- m) Where the responsibility of SGI's is delegated to the regional level as e.g. in the public transport sector, a **strong cooperation with the other territorial entities must be sought** in order to avoid differing standards and ruptures in the network.
- n) Experience through PUSEMOR has shown, that **voluntary work** is still an important factor in public services and will remain so. In small villages it may become even

⁷ The regional level is understood in this context as everything from the French term of region, the Italian regions and provinces, the German and Austrian Bundesländer and the Swiss cantons.

more important when services provided by now by the market or by public authorities are withdrawn. Reflections should therefore be made as how to support volunteers and compensate for this voluntary work. Coaching, networks of volunteers, acknowledgement and tax reductions for individuals working as a voluntary could be promising approaches.

4.3 Sectoral recommendations

Postal services

1. Introduce prescriptions in respect to postal offices in the national legislative framework. The minimal level of access-points should be fixed in the law or directive. There should also be a mention to letter-boxes, as this will be a theme for the future. The dialogue with municipalities and / or regions in case of closure of postal offices should also be integrated into the national legislative framework.
2. The Commission's proposal of abandoning the basic idea of unitary tariffs should be rejected.
3. Evaluate the possibility of exempting universal service providers from VAT (value added tax).
4. Enhance multifunctional use: facilitate the installation of access points for postal services in shops, municipality offices etc, evaluate which hindrances there might be.

Telecommunications

1. Integrate broadband access into the content of the SGI at the level of member states. National and regional lobby-organisations can achieve a lot in this respect as was successfully shown in Switzerland.
2. Enhance the power of the regulation authorities in particular in respect to the imposition of the SGI-obligation.
3. Strengthen (or at least clarify) the legal position of communities that have to support I&C infrastructure on local level.
4. Provide technical assistance and precise and factual information for local communities in relevant matters of I&C infrastructure. (i.e. "Clearingstelle Baden-Württemberg" a public helpdesk)
5. In case where crucial I&C-services cannot be provided under market conditions, financial support must be an option.

Public transports

1. Fix minimum standards for public transports at national level and provide adequate budgets for the executing (regional) authorities
2. Create sequenced timetables
3. Coordinate the tendering process of regions and municipalities at the superior level to avoid frictions
4. Clarify the role of regulation authorities
5. Promote flexible and demand-oriented transport models, eliminate legal and assurance hindrances for such models
6. Support the efficiency of public transport by concentratic (future) settlement development and important facilities / services along existing transport alignments.

Goods / services of daily need

1. Support local retail services by an obligatory spatial framework for shopping centres and other services with a supra-local support area.
2. Alternative concepts can contribute to the fulfilment of local demand. If necessary, local authorities have to initiate and support their realisation.
3. Most rural areas can rely on an extra-ordinary social engagement of the citizenship. Public authorities should support these activities and should arrange necessary support – i.e. insurance, legal matters.
4. Marketing / distribution of agricultural product by farmers have a major potential for food supply in rural areas. Agricultural / dairy cooperatives could encourage and support their members to distribute also processed goods as part of a local / regional supply chain.

4.4 Recommendations for setting up projects

The PUSEMOR pilot projects illustrate the importance of tangible bottom-up projects for an adequate supply with basic services. Several regional, national and European policies facilitate project development by providing financial support; for the mountain areas especially rural policies are to be mentioned. This chapter gives some recommendations for setting up such projects.

4.4.1 Which kind of projects should be set up?

PUSEMOR has shown, that in most regions covered by the project, infrastructures for the delivery of public services already (still) exist. Where it is not the case, gaps must be bridged. What is needed is a **better exploitation of those infrastructures**. Post offices exist, but there's little traffic going on. Small village shops exist, but people do not buy products there but go to supermarkets in nearby towns. A strong effort must therefore be made on the promotion of the use of public services.

So we suggest that beside the set up of infrastructures, following kinds of projects should be developed:

- Projects aiming to make a better use of infrastructures: e.g. "sensibilisation"/promotion projects but also stronger orientation of further settlement activities on elements of infrastructure already existing. The services must be demand-orientated. Actions will also often have to be taken on the demand side (e.g. promote the use of public transports). The possible synergies of different networks must be investigated. Inter-municipal cooperation for providing services as well as multifunctional offers should be strengthened.
- Projects aiming to better distribute the services on the territory : e.g. mobile kindergardens in Franche-Comté
- Projects aiming to train people to use the services : e.g. training courses for the new technologies in East Tirol
- Projects aiming to give a better accessibility to the services: e.g. telemedicine in Appenino Genovese. Best use must be made of new technologies.

4.4.2 Who should set up public services projects?

Regions and municipalities are those territorial entities most directly concerned with the impacts of SGI-policy. They should therefore adopt a **proactive strategy**. This means to develop new and innovative approaches to provide (or at least support) those services. Projects like PUSEMOR deliver models of how to deal with new problems in rural development. Although each project is developed in a special territorial and legal context, they are transferable to a certain degree to other regions (at least in respect to the methodology applied). This **transfer of knowledge** can be done through a transnational project like PUSEMOR. Regional politicians should understand the stakes and the importance of public services for remote areas and encourage the regional administration to

define strategies – and vice versa: In their role as politic-consultancies public institutions have to provide a reliable forecast on the future development of basic infrastructure and possible strategies to safe an adequate quality.

4.4.3 How to organise the provision with public services?

The provision of public services has to be based on an integrative combination of options that are adapted to the specific spatial situation:

- **Supra-local instead of local solutions**, cooperation between municipalities, cooperation town centres-rural areas, etc.
- **Combination and concentration of several domains**: intersectoral projects like “maison des services”, networking of services like network of libraries, etc.
- **Increasing the accessibility of the services** in using movable and / or temporary solutions, especially with the support of new IC-technologies as chance. To increase the accessibility, two approaches are possible : better organise the mobility of the users of the services (flexible transport solutions like transport on demand) or make the service mobile (physically with for eg mobile kindergarden or with the use of ICT).

All these options have to be accompanied by transverse measures like training, communication, increasing the awareness of the users and of the decision makers and should be integrated into regional strategies.

4.4.4 What is the role of the regions and the municipalities?

The (economic) capacity even of public services is determined by the size of area that has to be supplied and the number of users. Therefore various forms of cooperation can be useful / necessary to extend / ensure the provision of services. The regions or municipalities play following roles: initiators, organisers and promoters of cooperation. This implicates also the activation and further support of the local citizenship for voluntary services – one of the specific potential in rural areas. All too often, municipal authorities do not have the time or the knowledge to develop new strategies. A certain amount of **coaching** would therefore be welcome. Intermediate organisations like the Regionalmanagements in Austria are very important. Located on a sub-regional level – within a Bundesland, comprising several municipalities – they are a link between the regional administration and the local people and businesses, doing consulting and advisory services, planning and project development. This organisational structure should be enhanced.

4.4.5 Which are the important steps in setting up projects?

a) To increase awareness of the stakes of developing public services in rural areas.

It is still necessary to communicate about the importance of maintaining public services in rural areas, and to show the links with other territorial policies. E.g. if a service is well distributed on the territory, this could limit the transports and therefore the pollution (link to ecology) and could keep decentralised working places and make villages more attractive for new families. Or if the existing infrastructures are better used, it will not be

useful to build new infrastructures which could damage the landscape (link to spatial planning policy).

This communication has to be oriented towards different levels and actors: the **policy makers** which can set up good framework conditions for providers, the **medias** which can inform about the evolution of the region, the **regional stakeholders** which should analyse the needs and set up projects and the **population** which should better use the local/proximity offers.

b) To orientate the services to a market and / or an efficient use of existing infrastructure

The services must be demand-orientated. Regions should analyse the needs and wants of the target groups, not only current needs but also future ones in order to anticipate future trends due to notably (qualitative and quantitative) demographic changes. The spatial or functional combination of infrastructural “hard- and software” could contribute to more efficient and sustainable provision of services.

c) To find partners

Project leaders should involve local authorities but also private key actors in the definition of the objectives and possible actions. A bottom-up approach is results oriented.

d) To integrate the project in a regional strategy

PUSEMOR has shown, that the results of new innovative projects must be integrated into the overall strategy of the nation or of the regions (according to which level is responsible for spatial planning and public services). This is the only possibility to guarantee the survival of projects and the introduction of new models of services provision for rural areas.

e) To differentiate the solutions

Rural areas are not homogenous at all. Strong distinctions can be observed in the field of demographic and economic development or accessibility. In PUSEMOR, we had touristic regions, periurban regions and agrarian regions (see chapter 2.2.1). All strategies considering rural areas should therefore be in accordance with the specific general framework.

f) To strengthen competencies for project development and project management

Good ideas should not be abolished just because nobody is able to develop them further and implement them. More involvement of local private actors is necessary.

5. Conclusion

Services of general interest (SGI) are definitively one of the major topics for the future of mountain and rural areas. SGI are important for the attractiveness of a territory for its inhabitants and enterprises. They should therefore play an important role in the context of spatial planning, regional development and cohesion and must be integrated into the relevant strategies.

The thematic choice made by FOSD Switzerland in order to have a „**strategic project**“ for the Alpine Space programme proved to be right. The awareness for this important topic could be raised, not only within the test areas but also in a broader European context through the I&P-activities and the dissemination of the relevant information through various networks like Euromontana.

Problems exist in various fields of services of general interest. Heavy network-infrastructures like public transports are particularly problematic due to the financial burden. The problems with those infrastructures will increase in the future due to budget constraints. ICT technologies can help to a certain amount in bridging gaps. But they can not solve all problems. **Innovative solutions** must be sought in a pro-active approach. Mountain and rural areas have the responsibility to search for innovative and user-adapted solutions in order to build their own future. The relevant public policies at various hierarchical levels must encourage this search for solutions in order to guarantee a high qualitative level of SGI in all regions.

During the process of working on PUSEMOR, it became more and more obvious that the problem with Services of general interest is often less the availability of such services but more so the **sparse use of those services**. This is in direct correlation to the overall economic and social development of the concerned areas, respectively to the attitudes adopted by the potential users. E.g.: if people get used to buy their stuff in supermarkets in urban areas, they will not any more buy it in local grocery shops. So future projects should not only focus on the offer-side, but even more on the demand-side. How can we encourage a better use of existing services and infrastructures? Cooperative organisation forms and a transparent embedment in local/regional chains of supply could be a way to establish a stronger linkage between customers and service facilities.

Existing networks like the Alpine Convention, Arge Alpen Adria, Euromontana, ESPON etc. can be helpful in **building new partnerships** as was the case in PUSEMOR. They can be a starting point from which to build on already existing cooperations or contacts to build a new partnership.

Splitting Lead-Partnership between a financial lead-partner and a technical lead partner proved to work. Regione Lombardia / IREALP was responsible for the EFRD leadership and FOSD / SAB was responsible for the technical leadership. Furthermore, each partner was responsible for one work-package.

Leaving a maximum of **autonomy** to partners proved to be a decisive point for mounting the project and for the success of the project. Partners were free to choose their field of intervention. So they could develop projects most appropriate to the needs of their test areas.

One of the major aims of PUSEMOR was to have several **pilot projects** realised. This aim was one of the success factors for PUSEMOR. Test areas will only participate in such a

project, if they can get real value for their time and money. With around 30 realised pilot projects, PUSEMOR has achieved this aim.

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Appendix

Appendix 1⁸: Sectoral analysis of the political framework per country

Postal Services

Domain	EU	Austria	France	Germany	Italy	Slovenia	Switzerland
Degree of market opening	Universal services obligation for letters till 50g. Fully open from 2009 on.	Universal services obligation for post mail till 2 kg and parcels till 20 kg. Registered and insured items.	Universal services obligation for post mail till 2 kg and parcels till 20 kg. Addressed catalogues and magazines	Universal services obligation for letters till 50g. Fully open from 2008 on.	Universal services obligation for post mail till 2 kg and parcels till 20 kg. Registered and insured items.	Universal services obligation for post mail till 2 kg and parcels till 20 kg. Registered and insured items + items for blind and weak eyed people	Universal services obligation for letters till 100g.
Incumbent	-	Österreichische Post	La Poste	Deutsche Post AG, fully privatised	Posta Italiana	Pošta Slovenije	Die Post, entirely state owned
Content of universal services	No more unitary tariffs from 2009 on (national exceptions allowed)	Delivery of mail at least 5 days a week, minimum 20 hours	Delivery of mail 6 days a week	Delivery of mail 6 days a week	Delivery of mail at least 5 days a week	Delivery of mail at least 5 days a week	Delivery of mail at least 5 days a week

⁸ Source : SAB, „Überblick über die rechtlichen Bestimmungen zur Grundversorgung in Deutschland, Frankreich, Italien, Österreich, der Schweiz und der EU“, Februar 2007

And <http://www.bundesnetzagentur.de>; <http://ris.bka.gv.at/>; <http://www.parlamento.it>; <http://legifrance.gouv.fr>;

Content of reserved services	No more from 2009 on.	Letters till 50g	Letters till 50g	Letters till 50g	Letters till 50 g including express-mail	Letters till 50 g	Letters till 100g
Postal offices	Regulation of network access delegated to member states	Obligation for a concept on postal offices to be approved each year by reg. authority. Closure of postal offices only if replacement is provided. Obligation of discussion with municipalities. Prescriptions for letter-boxes	>90% of the population of each county need to have a post office within 5 km and 20 minutes by car.	No particular prescriptions	“appropriate” number of access-points = no particular prescriptions	Obligation for postal offices all over the country. Assurance for access all over the country.	Obligation for postal offices all over the country. Obligation for discussion with concerned municipalities. Particular mention of home-services.
Means of obligation		Concession for universal service	Licence for all service providers. 4 types of licences.	Licence for all service providers. Obligation of one or several service providers to provide Universal services if market fails.	Licence for service providers within the universal services provision and notification for other providers	Licence for all service providers. Obligation for service providers to provide universal service or give rights to reserved service if market fails.	Concession for universal service.
Financial mechanisms	Choice of several options: compensation	No prescriptions	Compensation fund. Service providers have to	Possibility for compensation of uncovered costs	Compensation fund administered by the ministry.	Compensation fund. Service providers have to	Possibility for compensation of uncovered costs.

	fund, state aids or public tendering.		pay a certain amount in relation to their turn-over. La Poste does not have to pay VAT.		Licence holders must pay up to 10% of their revenue into the fund. Rest is paid by ministry. Cross-subsidies are allowed.	pay certain amount to Agency for postal service.	Interdiction of cross-subsidies. Compensation to be paid by other service providers above a minimum turn-over.
Regulation authority	Stronger position of regulation authorities. Strict separation from Ministries. Stronger international cooperation.	Moderate to strong position through approval of universal service concept	Strong position. Authority can influence legislative process, has sanction mechanism etc.	Strong position, unitary regulation authority	Strong position. Ministry = regulation authority	Strong position. Authority can influence legislative process, has sanction mechanism.	Moderate position.

Comments

Other than in the telecom-sector, the individual prescriptions in the postal market are very diverse from country to country. They reflect the political and historical process of the market-opening process. This is particularly the case for the prescriptions on postal offices. Austria and Switzerland pay particular attention to this field, while Germany and Italy do not. Austria is the only country with particular attention to letter-boxes.

The EU offers a choice of several options for financing universal services. So it's not astonishing, that the countries apply different solutions.

It is however interesting to note that some countries interdict cross-subsidies (e.g. Switzerland) while others allow them (e.g. Italy).

France and Switzerland exempt their incumbent from the VAT. This is an interesting approach in financial terms.

The position of the regulation authority differs from country to country. The EU strives for a stronger position with a clear separation from national governments and a stronger international cooperation.

Recommendations

1. Introduce prescriptions in respect to postal offices in the national legislative framework. The minimal level of access-points should be fixed in the law or directive. There should also be a mention to letter-boxes, as this will be a theme for the future. The dialogue with municipalities and / or regions in case of closure of postal offices should also be integrated into the national legislative framework.
2. The Commission's proposal of abandoning the basic idea of unitary tariffs should be rejected.
3. Evaluate the possibility of exempting universal service providers from VAT.
4. Enhance multifunctional use: Facilitate the installation of access points for postal services in shops, municipality offices etc, evaluate which hindrances there might be.

Telecommunications

Domain	EU	Austria	France	Germany	Italy	Slovenia	Switzerland
Degree of market opening	Fully open	Fully open	Fully open	Fully open	Fully open	Fully open	Fully open, Govt. holds 54,1% share of Swisscom
Content of SGI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to telecom-network, • Access to public phone indexes, • Access to public information service • Phone cells all over the territory • Access to emergency services • Services for disabled persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to telecom-network, • Access to public phone indexes, • Access to public information service • Phone cells all over the territory • Access to emergency services • Functional internet-access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to telecom-network, • Access to public phone indexes, • Access to public information service • Phone cells all over the territory • Access to emergency services • Services for disabled persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to telecom-network, • Availability of public phone indexes, • Availability of public information service • Phone cells all over the territory • Access to emergency services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to telecom-network, • Access to public phone indexes, • Access to public information service • Phone cells all over the territory • Access to emergency services • Services for disabled persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to telecom-network, • Access to public phone indexes, • Access to public information service • Phone cells all over the territory • Access to emergency services • Services for disabled persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to telecom-network, • Access to public phone indexes, • Access to public information service • Phone cells all over the territory • Access to emergency services • Services for disabled persons • Broad-band access
Means of obligation	Concessions or notification	Obligation for public tendering every 10 years. If not successful, obligation of one service provider	Public tendering. If not successful, obligation of one or several service providers.	1 st priority: market, 2 nd priority: public tendering, obligation for one or several service providers		Obligation for public tendering every 5 years for one or more service providers. If not successful, obligation of one	Obligation for public tendering every 7 years. If not successful, obligation of one service provider

						service provider.	
Financial mechanisms	Compensation mechanism or fund	Compensation for uncovered costs financed by a tax to be paid by the other service providers	Fund financed by all service providers	Compensation for uncovered costs financed by a tax to be paid by the other service providers	Compensation for uncovered costs financed by a tax to be paid by the other service providers	Fund financed by all service providers.	Compensation for uncovered costs financed by a tax to be paid by the other service providers
Unbundling of local loop	Full unbundling	Full access to incumbent's network but not to the broad-band-network		Full unbundling			Full access to incumbent's network, unbundling of fast bitstream-access limited for 4 years.
Regulation		Moderate position. No system of concessions, only notification	Moderate position. No system of concessions, only notification. Authority subordinate to ministry	Strong position, unitary regulation authority		Strong position, unitary regulation authority	Strong position. Obligation for concessions. Authority plays a crucial role in the legislative process.

Comments

EU directive 96/19/EC lead to the opening of the telecom-sector in member states and influenced also the process in Switzerland. In all countries, the telecom market is fully open. The SIG-obligations are largely identical in all countries. Only Austria and Switzerland foresee obligations for Internet-access.

In 2005, the EU-commission made a public consultation on telecom-services. The question was raised, whether broad-band access should be integrated into the content of SGI. The question did not find a major approval and was rejected. In Switzerland, broad-band access is part of the SIG-obligation from 2007 onwards.

The position of the regulation authorities is strong in Germany and Switzerland. It's moderate to weak in the other countries, where there's sometimes not even a system of concessions but only of notification. Sanction mechanisms are different from country to country.

Recommendations

1. Integrate broad-band-access into the content of the SGI at the level of member states. National and regional lobby-organisations can achieve a lot in this respect as was successfully shown in Switzerland.
2. Enhance the power of the regulation authorities in particular in respect to the imposition of the SGI-obligation.

Electricity market

Domain	EU	Austria	France	Germany	Italy	Slovenia	Switzerland
Degree of market opening	Fully open till 1 st of July 2007.	Fully open	Partially open, unbundling of providers which provide more than 100'000 clients until 1 st of July 2007. EDF remains state controlled. EDF controls 95% of market share.	Partially open, unbundling of providers which provide more than 100'000 clients until 1 st of July 2007	Partially open. Part of the market is not yet unbundled.	Partially open. Not for households (untill 1 st of July 2007)	Closed. Opening in 2 phases from 2008 onward
Content of SIG	Stronger commitment to SGI and more pressure on member states to provide these SGI.	Obligation to provide all consumers, exceptions allowed.	Obligation to provide all consumers, exceptions allowed.	Obligation to provide all consumers, exceptions allowed if economically justified.	Obligation to provide consumers within closed market-share.	Obligation to provide all consumers within area of concession.	Obligation to provide all consumers within settlement areas with electricity. Unitary tariff within area of provision.
Special provision for inhabitants of peripheral areas		None		None	Particular measures in handicapped regions to stimulate the provision with electricity by national government	None	Yes, but delegated to cantons.

Role of different actors		SGI is a task of the local / regional providers.	SGI is fully delegated to EDF	SGI is a task of the local / regional providers and the network operators. The federal government <u>can</u> fix the tariffs. In case the SGI is endangered, the federal government can make a public tender.	Subsidiarity: National: national grid, measures for capsized clients, Regional: Provisions for electricity supply and standards.	National: network operator -ELES Regional: providers for electricity supply for all clients.	Subsidiarity. Cantons delimit area of energy-supply. Local / regional energy providers must deliver energy to all households. National grid operator responsible for long term planning. Confederation can intervene in case of energy shortage. E.g. possibility of public tendering
Position of regulation	Stronger position of national regulators and stronger international cooperation.	Weak. The Länder have a strong influence.	Weak. Unclear delimitation of competencies versus the government.	Moderate position, unitary regulation authority	Strong position including. laying down of tariffs and of standards for electricity-supply.	Stronger position of national regulator.	Moderate. Strong reliance on auto-regulation of market.
Renewable energies		Strong position. Target of 4% renewable energies for End 2007. Fund for promotion by Länder.		Strong position, focus on new renewable energies.	Increasing attention to this topic at national and regional level. Relevant involvement of private sector in	Strong position. Energy from renewable sources is 11.7 % in primary energy consumption.	Position strongly reinforced with special programmes.

					finding new solutions for the energy provision		
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Comments

The process of full liberalization is still underway in Europe. By 2008, the market will be fully open in the covered EU-member countries. Switzerland will partially open it's market in 2008.

The prescriptions on SGI in the electricity-sector differ to a great extent from country to country. Italy and Switzerland base their actions on the principle of subsidiarity. In Austria, the Länder have an important role to play. In Germany, the government does not play an important role and leaves the provision of SGI to the market.

All countries have a strong focus on renewable energies. The concrete measures differ very much. E.g. hydro-energy is not considered a priority in Germany, while it is in Austria and Switzerland.

Recommendations

1. Clarify the content of SGI
2. Clarify the provision of consumers outside settlement areas
3. Reinforce the role of the regulation authority were appropriate
4. Reinforce the role of renewable energies (hydropower, biomass, solar energy, wind etc.) in the legislation as they are an important resource for rural and mountain areas.

Public transports

Domain	EU	Austria	France	Germany	Italy	Slovenia	Switzerland
Degree of market opening	Free access for long haul passenger transport and cargo transport.						Free access for long-haul passenger transport and for freight transport.,
Content of SGI	None		Delegated to regions	None on federal level.	Delegated to regions. Some general criteria fixed on national level e.g. access to public administrations, schools reduction of emissions etc.		Each settlement with at least 100 inhabitants must be deserved by public transports. Cantons can fix a higher level.
Financial mechanisms		Principle of tendering and ordering. Strong position of Österreichische Bundesbahnen including Busses.	Delegated to regions. Programme contracts between regions and national government.	Principle of tendering and ordering.	Programme contracts between regions and national government. Each region should establish a fund for financing the SGI.		Principle of tendering and ordering. Financial compensation by federal government, Cantons and municipalities
Role of different actors		Federal government orders public transport on	Regions are the main actors.	Bundesländer and municipalities order and finance regional public	National: public transports across borders and interregional.		Cantons and municipalitites order regional transport.

		national level for several years. Länder and municipalities order and finance regional transports.		transports. Federal Government can pay contributions up to 75%.	Regional public transports fully delegated to regions and provinces. Regions elaborate programme contracts with national government and receive subsidies based on them for the operation and for investments.		Compensation by federal government with Ø 69%.
Regulation				Unitary regulation			Federal ministry is regulation authority at the same time = no independent regulation.

Comments

Of the four topics postal services, telecommunications, electricity-market and public transports, public transports are the topic which is most decentralised. In all the analysed EU-Member countries, the regional or Länder-level is the one who is mainly in charge of public transports. This level normally gets additional money from the national level. Provision of public transports is through public tendering. In most countries, national operators play an important role in the provision of these services. This decentralised approach paves the way to several problems: there are no common standards for the definition of the public services. Timetables for the trains or busses are sometimes not coordinated. A sequenced timetable like in Switzerland is missing in most countries. This can lead to long waiting times and big discrepancies in the quality of the transportation which affect negatively the attractiveness of public transports. In France for instance, high speed railway lines are very attractive.

But local transports often only serve for pupils and students. There's no real interlinked network between long-distance transport and regional transports. This leads often to a modal split: Travel by car to the next access-point to high-speed trains, then change to the train.

The principle of tendering and ordering is now well established and works well. But still, there's a lack of coordination in the tendering process, as the territorial entities often do not search the coordination with other territorial entities.

The role of regulation authorities is not clear.

Recommendations

1. Fix minimum standards for public transports at national level
2. Create sequenced timetables
3. Coordinate the tendering process of regions and municipalities at the superior level to avoid frictions.
4. Clarify the role of regulation authorities
5. Promote flexible and demand-oriented transport models, eliminate legal and assurance hindrances for such models

Appendix 2: List of persons involved in PUSEMOR

(the PUSEMOR contact persons in each partner country are in bold)

Land	Institution	Name	First name	E-mail	Phone	Role in PUSEMOR project
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Appendix 3: List of best practices (collected in October 2005)

Theme	List of best practices	Regional team
Health and elderly care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Altersleitbild 2. Health center in Ste-Croix 3. Home Doctor Cab 4. Welcoming elderly people in tourist accomodation 5. Small accommodation units 6. Diagnostic study on needs 7. Health network 8. Telemedicine 	<p>Western Switzerland</p> <p>Western Switzerland</p> <p>Carinthia</p> <p>Franche-Comté</p> <p>Franche-Comté</p> <p>Franche-Comté</p> <p>Franche-Comté</p> <p>Appennino Genovese</p>
Transport and telecommunication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. SpediBEO 10. PubliCar 11. Electric company 12. Go-Mobil 13. Transport on request 14. Web Voice Crystal 15. Virger Bürgermobil 16. Netzdienste Deferegggen 17. Internet portal for commuters 18. CNT Corporate Network Tyrol 19. Broadband Initiative Tyrol 20. GPS System 21. Siscotel 22. Portal project Valchiavenna 23. Information of the communal associated services 24. Innovative logistic chain for disable 25. Innovative transport service Cinque Terre 26. Val Trebbia Wireless network 	<p>Western Switzerland</p> <p>Western Switzerland</p> <p>Western Switzerland</p> <p>Carinthia</p> <p>Franche-Comté</p> <p>Tirol</p> <p>Tirol</p> <p>Tiro</p> <p>Tirol</p> <p>Tirol</p> <p>Tirol</p> <p>Lombardia</p> <p>Lombardia</p> <p>Lombardia</p> <p>Lombardia</p> <p>Appennino Genovese</p> <p>Appennino Genovese</p> <p>Appennino Genovese</p>
Education and Culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 27. Drau Bicycle Lane 28. Ingolsthal active 29. Household-family and company service 30. Diagnostic study on demand for 	<p>Carinthia</p> <p>Carinthia</p> <p>Carinthia</p> <p>Franche-Comté</p>

	<p>child minding</p> <p>31. Wandering e-school</p> <p>32. Rural primary schools</p> <p>33. Grohar's House</p> <p>34. Mobile library</p> <p>35. Small group kindergarden</p> <p>36. Road Inn</p> <p>37. Baby parking</p> <p>38. Librarian system val Chiavenna</p>	<p>Slovenia</p> <p>Slovenia</p> <p>Slovenia</p> <p>Slovenia</p> <p>Tirol</p> <p>Tirol</p> <p>Appennino Genovese</p> <p>Lombardia</p>
Every day needs	<p>39. Multifunction center in Ballaigues</p> <p>40. Le P'tit Mag</p> <p>41. Goods from the farm</p> <p>42. Mail delivery center</p> <p>43. Short Chain of typical products</p>	<p>Western Switzerland</p> <p>Western Switzerland</p> <p>Carinthia</p> <p>Franche Comté</p> <p>Appennino Genovese</p>
Other domains	<p>44. Carinthian talent exchange</p> <p>45. Decentralized cadastral pole</p> <p>46. Emergency management</p> <p>47. Management of building applications</p> <p>48. Regionova : population in change</p> <p>49. Actions on stabilisation of development of population</p>	<p>Carinthia</p> <p>Lombardia</p> <p>Lombardia</p> <p>Lombardia</p> <p>Südl. Oberrhein</p> <p>Südl. Oberrhein</p>