

QUALIMA

Summary of the Study carried out by the Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia

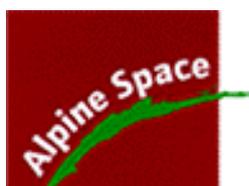
**Analysis of the socio-economic and territorial potentials propaedeutical to the planning of the experimental activities related to the INTERREG IIIB “Alpine Space”
QUALIMA programme**

Project Partner: REGIONE AUTONOMA FRIULI - VENEZIA GIULIA
DIREZIONE CENTRALE RISORSE AGRICOLE,
NATURALI, FORESTALI E MONTAGNA
SERVIZIO PER LA MONTAGNA

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Content

This abstract summarizes the results of the survey the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region commissioned to the Department of Civil Engineering of the University of Udine



INTERREG III B "
Alpine Space "
Programme

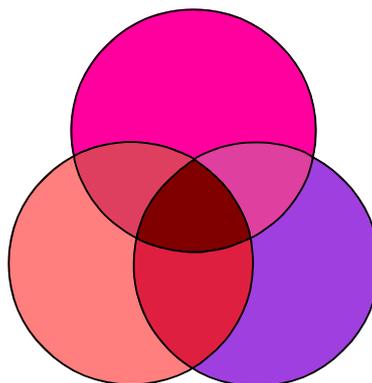
Progetto
QUALIMA

REGIONE AUTONOMA FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA
DIREZIONE CENTRALE RISORSE AGRICOLE, NATURALI, FORESTALI E MONTAGNA
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UNIVERSITY OF UDINE
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL ENGINEERING

*Analysis of the socio-economic and territorial potentials
propaedeutical to the planning of the experimental
activities related to the INTERREG IIIB "Alpine Space"
QUALIMA programme*

Abstract of Survey Results



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The basic aim of the survey descends from the acronym coined for the QUALIMA Project – “Quality of Life Improvement by Supporting Public and Private Services in the Rural Areas of the Alps” – that has led to the acquisition of various pieces of knowledge oriented at planning (by means of *evaluating the transformation potentials*) the proximity services existing in the core residential system of the marginal mountain areas that are more at a disadvantage.

The guiding idea is to make it possible to subsequently plan methods of sustainable management in order to preserve, support and, if possible, re-introduce proximity services by starting-up a public support measure pursuing, afterwards, the aim of self-maintenance of these proximity services. This, starting from the availability of limited financial resources for the QUALIMA Pilot Projects, amounting to 150.000,00 Euros on the whole.

From the methodological point of view, the survey is structured on three levels:

1. The “*territorial scale of the mountain territory*”, addressed to the 47 Municipalities in zone C (DGR (Regional Decree) n. 3303/2000) that leads to the definition of the classical framework, constituted by the most up-dated statistics of the social and economic situation existing in the mountain area under survey;
2. The “*local territorial scale*” with targeted surveys aimed at verifying, in detail, the results of the trends that have come up in the previous level and at acquiring the specific knowledge necessary for verifying the critical ratio to be used as reference for the sustainability of possible innovative support measures;
3. The “*scale of innovative proximity services*”, propositional of pilot cases, to be accomplished while carrying out the QUALIMA project, conceived with the aim of testing models and “prototypes” that can be applied to similar, recurrent conditions in mountain contexts and which act on the levels of transformation and integration of existing services together with other services of new conception or already present in the mountain territory, to re-consolidate and rationalise ‘under the same roof’.

It is a well-know fact that the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region has divided its **mountain territory** - following pre-defined criteria - in three similar areas that give a picture of the different degrees of socio-economic disadvantage of these rural territories. This has been made possible by a special law (art. 3, LR (Regional Law) 13/2000), which has been implemented with deliberation by the Regional Council (Deliberation n. 3303 of 31st October 2000, published in the “BUR” (Official Bulletin in which the Region publishes its laws) n. 47 of 22nd November 2000):

The three types of territories have been classified as follows:

- Area “A”, corresponding to municipalities or built-up areas with a low degree of disadvantage;
- Area “B”, corresponding to municipalities or built-up areas with an average degree of disadvantage;
- Area “C”, corresponding to municipalities or built-up areas with a high degree of disadvantage.

(This study concerns the 47 municipalities of Area C with a greater degree of disadvantage; 10 municipalities come under the province of Pordenone and 37 under the province of Udine).

In order to understand the phenomena that is taking place, it has been necessary to compare significant trends concerning the three similar mountain areas, as defined above, as well as the two provinces of Udine and Pordenone. Furthermore, the survey data referred to areas A* and B* include both the respective values concerning municipalities that can be considered, only in part, mountain municipalities and the values concerning built-up areas that have been re-classified in area B or area C.

Study - Summary

Zone of Municipality	Population census 1991	Population census 2001	Absolute change	Change of population in % 2001/1991
<i>Total of the Province of Pordenone</i>	274.750	286.198	11.448	4,0%
A*	40.476	42.180	1.704	4,04%
B*	8.915	8.928	13	0,15%
C	6.127	5.509	-618	-11,22%
Not mountain	219.232	229.581	10.349	4,51%
<i>Total of the Province of Udine</i>	522.455	518.840	-3.615	-0,7%
A*	59.353	59.729	376	0,63%
B*	21.031	20.773	-258	-1,24%
C	45.505	40.936	-4.569	-11,16%
Not mountain	396.566	397.402	836	0,21%
Total A* (PN+UD)	99.829	101.909	2.080	2,04%
Total B* (PN+UD)	29.946	29.701	-245	-0,82
Total C	51.632	46.445	-5.187	-11,17%

The population according to statistical data given by the Central Institute of Statistics "ISTAT"

The image of the mountains in Friuli divided in three areas with different degrees of disadvantage is confirmed by the socio-economic data and by the present trends, but the analysis that has been carried out underlines how the levels of development and the present trends of the sector are also tied to the fact of belonging to traditional territorial areas, made up of provinces, that still represent an important organisational constriction.

Between 1991 and 2001, the most serious and pronounced demographic phenomenon concerns the municipalities of the mountain area called area "C", the most disadvantaged, where the overall decrease is 16 times the average decrease reached by the Province of Udine (-0,7%) and is of the same amount also in the municipalities of area C of the province of Pordenone with an overall loss of approximately 5,200 inhabitants, thus touching about 11.2% of the decrease, in view of a substantial performance (of no decrease) of the other mountain areas in the region.

The seriousness of the problems posed by these numbers, that show such a trend, is also confirmed by the most recent demographic data concerning the years 2002 and 2003, as well as the trends shown by the performance of production and of the people employed in the different economic sectors of the marginal mountain that loses about 20% of businesses and workers (industry, service industries and craftsmanship) in front of the drastic and steady fall in the agricultural sector - with an average of -70% - even if the latter had noticeable rural rather than productive features.

The overall picture outlines such an articulated and diversified decline that it cannot be attributed to one single cause.

At the same time, it must be emphasised that, in the past, such phenomena involved the entire mountain area of Friuli in a more uniform manner, but these phenomena have now greatly slowed down thanks to the habit of commuting and have now become evident in the most marginal areas, where the quality of life in the mountains is seen in negative terms.

In the C areas of the mountains in Friuli we can identify areas characterised, in the past, by intensive depopulation, that today show noticeable levels of senility and areas that border on economic marginality where the greater the local economic disadvantage the greater the decrease in demographic and centralised services leading to, at the worst, the depopulation of built-up centres.

A phenomenon of this kind is much more intense than what becomes visible through the official data – it is sufficient to realise that more than a quarter of the active population commutes and works in built-up centres outside its own mountain community. This induces

the habit of buying almost all goods, also for other members of the family, in a de-localised way (chain stores and weekly shopping) thus causing local commercial activities to collapse, closings of shops and other services (from petrol stations to doctor's offices, basic businesses and bars). For these inhabitants, the place they reside in becomes a sort of dormitory, and their primary needs are satisfied in places outside their place of residence.

It is without a doubt that, by now, in the mountains:

- cultural isolation and the distance from urban-type consumer models belong to the past;
- consumer goods available in the mountains are basically the same as those available in the plains and the same traditional agro-industry - forest management - zoo-technical activities are proposed, once more, with new methods in order to survive;
- the level of education has risen and, even if tele-working has not yet taken hold it is possible, thanks to the new technologies, to have easy access to any kind of information even in the mountains.

The situation seems to be characterised by three big phenomena that intersect and design uncommon interdependencies that are still not adequately taken into consideration as part of training policies, employment policies and social policies:

- demographic transformations taking into particular consideration, particularly, the ageing of the population;
- transformation in the time taken for and the ways of making up the family;
- the transformation of the job market.

These phenomena apply both to the relation between the generations and to the experiences, needs and resources available for each generation. Family and relatives continue to be a great safety valve, both as far as young people and not self-sufficient elderly people are concerned – however, the progression of the three phenomena puts this family function under increasing tension.

In short, the objective and subjective unease of the population are perceived in different ways - depending on age and common problems of daily life, on how one relates to work and to proximity services – by the family groups made up of the inhabitants of the marginal mountain areas, thus giving rise to kinds of behaviour that lead to a crisis of the traditional stability, where the levels of centrality, induced by the new models of life, no longer correspond to the traditional residential models that are no longer confirmed in social behaviour.

The survey, in this sense, identifies the profiles of: young couples (20-35 years old) with or without children; couples (35-50 years old) with teenage children; independent couples (50-70); elderly self-sufficient people.

It is, therefore, to be considered advisable – for the purpose of modifying the tendency that has led to the present difficult situation – to try and develop, within a network logic, products and services supporting local action for:

- promoting relations between public administrations and other local participants in order to contribute to the improvement of the proximity services and to the effectiveness of the social policies in the valleys;
- carrying out local promotion projects, in order to improve the capacity to participate through the connection between abilities and experiences;
- starting an activity for information and training that can make it possible, for the people involved, to improve their capacity to intervene;
- consolidating a network of people who have applied for social collaboration, planning and management of proximity services and socially useful interventions within the area of local action projects.

Such considerations do not contradict the request, always made by local administrators and operators, for the need to support and re-launch policies in terms of compensating localised disadvantage with tax incentives for the marginal mountain areas of Friuli, but these policies, doubtlessly, go beyond the authority of the Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia and the problem needs to be recognised at the most convenient levels: the European Union and the Italian Republic.

At the same time, the Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia can envisage specific rules and regulations in order to drop some limits; for example, the tables of trade licences so as to

allow shopkeepers and the more dynamic dealers to expand the offer of products by interpreting the demand, in the best way.

It is a question of intervening in order to compensate for the lack of appeal due to the crisis of the hierarchical role of the built-up centre as well as the local unease aimed, not only, at a limited number of services, but also at multi-service activities. It is not to be expected that there be automatic and significant results other than initiatives, of a concrete inter-sectorial type, with small projects with an average and long time-limit, to be defined in terms of collaboration between the different economic categories (artisans, traders, dealers, farmers...) in terms of problems concerning innovation, that can direct development; competitiveness of businesses; multi-activities carried out within a workday, that imply adaptability of a person and specific competence; work that can be de-localised through computer technologies; monitoring and widespread social assistance; training of professional figures that are still missing in the mountains, in all sectors: from tourism to agriculture; from industry to craftsmanship, from commerce to social deterrence and protection of the territory. It is necessary to also target the health of the mountain inhabitants, who pay, in terms of their own life, local difficulties and the difficulty of putting deterrence into action at urban costs, in a scarcely inhabited context in which processes of decay and depopulation are highlighted. In this regard, as is well-known, according to the analyses carried out by the Ministry of Health, the n.3 ASS (Public Welfare Agency) holds the “negative record” - in the national classification - concerning the health of Italians, highlighted by the causes of death.

Initiatives of this type can also find a definition in regional rules and regulations and lead to the definition of integrated development projects of all the economic sectors in the mountain area capable of re-launching development and employment, but can actually be experimented by carefully utilising the scarce financial resources available through pilot interventions to be defined, at a planning stage, in the field of the present INTERREG Alpine Space.

Because of the peculiarity of the project and in principle, it is necessary to make the proximity services part of a territorial marketing action, a key for development, capable to make mature in the inhabitants the belief that the mountain has a specific quality of life and is not considered in negative terms as a non-urban area; a suburb.

The sensation of unease and lack of quality consequent to the organisation of the infrastructures and services to the population is, by now, the main cause of the decrease of the population in mountain areas and of the failure to recover the population.

The diffusion of an urban quality of life in the mountains is the goal to aim for. This entails raising the quality of the offer of services for local inhabitants and businesses, but also for the occasional users and the tourists with services and products that must be offered at the right price. But this quality must be felt with the local connotation characteristic of the place (the history, traditions, landscape, endogenous resources...).

The “**pilot cases**” to be carried out with the QUALIMA project must be conceived with the aim of testing “models” and “prototypes” that can be applied to situations with similar conditions in the mountain context. From an analysis of the socio-economic and territorial potentials it is possible to infer how the decrease of the population can be referred to a large number of factors that have caused the break up of the traditional centralised structure and of the methods of utilisation of these proximity services.

The fact that the commercial activities are ‘suffering’ reflects the scarce vitality of the marginal mountain community; the average ageing of the population requires more and more health assistance and controls that are not sustainable for the present models of supply of services, due to the costs and the engagement needed; at the same time, the few children residing in the mountains no longer refer to their place of origin, but are forced to commute depending on their parents’ place of work with devastating effects on the emotional and cultural rootedness.

Obviously, the QUALIMA project does not have the financial resources needed for starting up an integrated development project that can take on such goals, but it can aim at experimenting methods for creating a “QUALIMA Network”, with equipment and operators that must be able to manage essential services and to group together - “under the same roof” and at the same level of the territorial system of the valleys - the demand for services for the *re-socialisation of work – re-personalisation of anything that has a social connotation.*

Within such a process, particular importance is gained by the activities that verify, from a quantitative and qualitative point of view, the degree of satisfaction expressed by the people who utilise the experimental interventions. It can even be claimed that, by verifying, the operators will be able to listen to and better understand the people's needs (mountain inhabitants-tourists-clients), focus their attention constantly on their opinions, develop and improve the capacity of talking and relating between those who provide the service and those who receive it.

The verification, carried out in this manner, would allow the service providers, the administrations and the Regions to get better acquainted with and better understand the needs of the last people for whom the services are intended and consequently, to re-plan both the public policies and the system that provides the services.

However, the aim is to emphasise how the proximity services are not only the result of the single functions of an institution or enterprise, but also the result of processes that are common to all the functions.

The survey identifies three models of "innovative services" to be refined in the following phases of the project and of the intervention:

- 1) *QUALIMA e-service*, in order to guarantee the distribution and the control of the territory by re-interpreting the way of working in the field of proximity services, that puts e-commerce and e-government together with the system made up of commercial and retail businesses. It provides operators with a common telematic platform, innovative equipment and technology, logistics and marketing for the integrated promotion of the territory, in a *network* that assigns a multi-service role to the traditional "mono proximity service", so that the inhabitants can find whatever they need through a consulting, order and delivery service.
- 2) *QUALIMA Call Centre and Tele-rescue*, to give an answer to the demand, for assistance and prevention, for a wide range of the population at social risk and with health problems who, compared to geographical, cultural and behaviour peculiarities of the subjects at risk, will introduce methods of Tele-rescue and Tele-control. Thus, at the same time, stopping the dangerous drift towards deterioration of local communities and enhancing the potential for co-operation and promotion of a solidarity network.
- 3) Aggregation of children (5-13 years old), in answer to the primary need to associate with peers, in this way improving the quality of life in the mountains for youngsters thanks to the adaptation of the model of school clubs (used as reference) which organise extracurricular activities for school students, that can, even now, be funded by Local Authorities and as provided for by the organisation in force, freeing such an activity from a strictly school scope and allowing it to take place, when possible, as far as inhabited areas are concerned that are no longer served locally by the school institutions, but are provided with school buildings to be equipped for this purpose.