



## Project Short Title

ACCESS



## Project Long Title

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

## Lead Partner

Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für die Berggebiete (SAB)  
Regione Lombardia, D.G. Industria, Artigianato, Edilizia e Cooperazione

## Project Partners

LP Regione Lombardia, D.G. Industria, Artigianato, Edilizia e Cooperazione  
PP1 GAL Appenino Genovese (I)  
PP2 Amt der Kärntner Landesregierung, Kompetenzzentrum 3  
(Landesentwicklung und Gemeinden) (A)  
PP3 Amt der Tiroler Landesregierung, Abteilung Raumordnung-Statistik (A)  
PP4 Région Franche-Comté / direction de l'Aménagement du territoire (F)  
PP5 Région Rhône Alpes, Direction générale des services /Mission  
Montagne (F)  
PP6 Regionalverband Südlicher Oberrhein (D)  
PP7 Syndicat mixte du Pays du Haut-Jura (F)  
PP8 Syndicat mixte du Pays horloger (F)  
NMS LP Swiss centre for mountain regions (SAB)  
NMS PP1 Association pour le développement du Nord Vaudois (ADNV) (CH)

## Project Website

[www.access-alpinespace.eu/](http://www.access-alpinespace.eu/)

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## Duration

09.2008 - 08.2011

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2478845

## ERDF in EUR

1719008

## Abstract

All ACCESS Workpackages were duly closed and the milestones achieved at the end of the project in August 2011. 24 pilot projects have been implemented and 8 strategies developed. The project set at its beginning 3 objectives in order to improve accessibility to services in mountain areas. Have these objectives been achieved?

Objective 1) Improving the accessibility to services by finding new forms of organisation.

- The ACCESS pilot activities which based on a reorganisation of services such as aggregating the offer (eg. Center of Mobility, Carinthia), developing different types of providers (eg. PostPartner, Carinthia), improving governance, co-design and co-delivery (all ACCESS activities) proved their effectiveness and user friendliness.

Objective 2) Using Information and Communication Technologies

- ACCESS pilot activities in the field of alternative delivery mechanisms (eg. video service desks, Franche Comté) confirmed that ICT is a very promising approach in providing services over long distances cost effectively.

Objective 3) Fostering innovative, flexible, demand oriented and integrated mobility systems.

-The ACCESS mobility projects developed innovative approaches to improve mobility as well as to increase the use of public transport. The different approaches tested in the pilot areas put into practice the strategies selected by ACCESS: for example alternative supply systems and unconventional suppliers, marketing as well as new governmental approaches.

## Relevance

The maintenance of a spatially and socially equal accessibility to services of general interest (SGI) is a core issue to the functionality of mountain areas and any regional development strategy both on a national as well as on a transnational level. All over the Alpine Space sparsely populated areas are facing difficulties to maintain existing services due to their poor profitability and due to the need to respond to new or changing needs of the local population. The ongoing territorial concentration of SGI leads to a vicious circle of further deterioration in the quality of provision which in turn causes a decreasing demand in the existing services. This process has many negative consequences for the affected regions. In fact the withdrawal of SGI causes a reduced functionality, competitiveness and a higher amount of motorised mobility in communities of sparsely populated areas. Furthermore it aggravates social inequalities - persons who do not dispose of a car, not having the knowledge to use ICT etc. face problems to reach services. Often these areas are characterised by important population losses and/or over-aging. Since the same problems occur in the entire alpine space a transnational approach is very recommended because it assures a) that the project partners can learn from each other (eg. PP2-BLC from PP3-BLT in the case of a nature park bus) and b) the project and its partners can easier capitalize programmes and networks in their field of interest.



## Key Achievements

One of the main outputs of the ACCESS project are 24 implemented pilot projects in partner test areas all over the alpine space. And what is even more important most of the pilot projects will persist and even be mainstreamed in political programmes. 7 Project steering committee meetings together with public conferences have been organized in Genova (Italy), Landeck (Austria), Yverdon-les-Bains (Switzerland), Weissensee (Austria), Freiburg im Breisgau (Germany), Aix-les-Bains (France and finally Varese (Italy). An uncountable number of events such as projects opening, information sessions, workshops (transnational, national and regional) and project meetings have been organized within the partnership. Not less than 44 media articles, 5 TV documentations and 3 radio reports on ACCESS pilot activities as well as 27 project publications have been published. One of the most important project publications was the Transnational intermediate report (TIR) with a status quo on services of general interest (SGI) in all partner areas using a standardized indicator set, a collection of best practices and a guideline on how to build pilot projects. Very recently the second key report – the final synthesis – has been published. It includes 8 strategies on how to improve SGI delivery in peripheral areas underpinned by ACCESS pilot activities and implications for political decision makers on a legislation level.

## Lessons Learnt

A success factor in many of the pilot projects is “innovation” and the willingness to consider a new methodology or approach, instead of rescaling the way the service is provided in an urban setting. Tailoring the service delivery to better fit the needs of the rural population is key. This involves strategies such as: aggregating offer, finding a different type of service provider, improving marketing in order to increase demand, strengthening governance etc.. The substantial differences from one ACCESS test area to the other all over the Alpine Space, underline the necessity of an appropriate mix of strategies and measures including private, public and voluntary services as well as the implication of the end user in all stages. These challenges are advantageously put into relation with the concept of „Governance“ which involves leadership commitment, citizen rights, clarity and transparency in processes and decisions, inclusion of all groups of the society and accountability. The 24 implemented pilot activities represent a very important element of the ACCESS project. They helped in developing and testing strategies and produced concrete improvements in service delivery to the population. The assignment of adequate funding, the delimitation of an appropriate test area, a well structured project schedule and communication plan as well as clear duties and tasks proved to be a prerequisite for a successful project development.

## Replication / Roll out

As far as transferability is concerned, the project partners evaluated their projects positively. Most of the approaches tested in the ACCESS partnership are transferable to other peripheral mountain areas but whether it will be a success or not, depends very much on the implication and the commitment of governmental institutions. However it can be said that, if the 8 strategies evaluated during the ACCESS project are firmly considered, the approach can be replicated everywhere in the Alpine Space. In a policy context, strategies 7 and 8 have to be especially underlined. Strategy 7 puts governance, Co-design and Co-delivery in the center. It contains mechanisms which do involve service providers, public authorities, and service users in designing the types of services and how they are provided. Strategy 8 deals with the reinforcement of SGI related policies. In this regard the ACCESS partnership makes the following recommendations: a) guarantee SGI a prominent place in the field of legislation b) pay particular attention to SGI in sectoral policies c) set up inter-sectoral cooperation d) develop ICT in rural mountain areas e) adapt the regulatory framework to SGI changes f) assess territorial impact g) make the regulatory framework more transparent h) make state aid rules more flexible i) ensure long-term funding for SGI k) Support innovative actions l) foster SGI provision through spatial planning policies.

