



Implementation Study „Alpine Pearls“ For the project Alps Mobility II – Alpine pearls

Perlen der Alpen
Perles des Alpes
Perle delle Alpi

Summary



This project has received
European Regional
Development Funding
through the INTERREG III B
Community Initiative



Interreg III B

Table of contents

The table of contents of the summary has the same structure as the implementation study. Less relevant topics are not included.

1. Introduction	3
2. Definitions	4
2.1 Pearls, chain of pearls, constellation	4
2.2 Project partners	4
2.3 Implementation partners	4
2.4 Criteria for the product „Alpine Pearls“	5
3. Goals of the project and the study	5
3.1 Goal of the project	5
5. Tasks – implementation of the „Alpine Pearls“	5
5.1 Conditions to attain the status of a „Alpine Pearl“	5
5.1.1 Definition of the elements, which describe the product „Alpine Pearls“ and its indicators	5
5.1.2 Definition of the modalities of quality control and the quality assurance	6
5.1.3 Definition of conversion solutions in the starting period of the project	7
5.2 Definition of the implementation process	7
5.3.1 Technical implementation of the information system	9
5.3.1.1 Feasibility	10
5.3.1.2 Data	10
5.3.1.3 Costs	10
5.3.1.4 Conditions in order to make this system generally applicable	11
5.3.2 Logistic implementation	11
5.3.3 Umbrella organization	12
5.3.4 Legal feasibility	15
5.3.4.1 Sale of the product and packages	15
5.3.4.2 Mark protection	15
5.3.4.3 Registration	15
5.3.4.4 Use of the mark	16
5.3.5 Earning power for regions and tour operators	16
5.3.6 System for the evaluation of the „Alpine Perls“	17
Final remarks	17

1. Introduction

The goal of the project „Alps Mobility II - Alpine Pearls“ is the creation of a sustainable touristic product with a focus on sustainable mobility. In order to ensure the successful execution of the project a transnational team of experts has been established to assign a implementation study, which has to consider local and transnational requirements. Due to the fact that the regional circumstances are very different it became clear very soon that the implementation study has to consider the regional situation to meet the project goals in the best way. The implementation study is a "plan for action" for the partners, the responsible organisations in the "Alpine Pearls" and the different implementation partners.

The study has the following goals:

1. Definition of the criteria for the product " Alpine Pearls ".
2. Definition of the way which leads to the common product.
3. Definition of a measure list, in which is listed for all partners which measures are to be met for the fulfilment of the criteria and indicators.

The transnational team of experts consists of the following persons and organizations (alphabetical sequence of the partner countries):

Austria:	Innovationswerkstatt Mettler
France:	Moreau Pierre, Architecture & Territoire
Germany:	Alpenforschungsinstitut gGmbH
Italy:	Giorgessi Bruno, Regione Friuli-Venezia-Giulia-Direzione centrale Attività Produttive Moretti Nicola, Dolomiti Bus SpA Landi Elena, Direzione Trasporti, Regione Autonoma Valle d´Aosta
Switzerland:	Alpenbüro Netz GmbH
Coordinator:	Süddeutsches Institut für nachhaltiges Wirtschaften und Oeko-Logistik GmbH

2. Definitions

2.1 Pearls, chain of pearls, constellation

Pearls:

„Alpine Pearl“ could be a municipality, if the municipality meets permanently all the criteria requested.

„Alpine Pearls“ could be a destination, if all the municipalities of the destination meet permanently all the criteria requested.

String of pearls:

The string of pearls are the relations (in the area of mobility) between the pearls: lines, cycle tracks, moving ways, points of interest (museums, castles etc..) and typical restaurants of the region along the chain belong also to the string of pearls.

Constellation:

The entire is called constellation: it contains the pearls, the relations between the pearls, the points of interest and the restaurants.

2.2 Project partners

Project partners are the responsible organizations, who have initiated the project, and who design the project up to the end of the project (e.g. Bundesministerium für Land und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft, Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Umwelt, Gesundheit und Verbraucherschutz, Commune de Morzine-Avoriaz, Provincia Belluno, Kanton Zürich...).

2.3 Implementation partners

Implementation partners are persons, organizations and enterprises who are important for the realisation of the project and for the positioning of the product "Alpine Pearls" in the market. These are e.g. mobility service provider, tour operators, etc..

2.4 Criteria for the product „Alpine Pearls“

Criteria are those conditions which have to be met by the municipalities/destinations to become a "Alpine Pearl". It has to be pointed out that the criteria according to the catalog of criteria are minimum criteria, who are not adequate to obtain a USP (unique selling proposition) in the market. It is recommended to the "Alpine Pearls" to deepen the mobility criteria and to develop a specialisation in other areas than mobility. It can be quite important and serves the variety of the product if for example one pearl focuses on moving and another on cycling.

3 Goals of the project and the study

3.1 Goal of the project

Goal of the project „Alps Mobility li Alpine Pearls“ is the development and implementation of a touristic product, which is in accordance with sustainable mobility, environmental protection and who is able to compete successfully in the market.

5 Tasks – implementation of the „Alpine Pearls“

The experts define a touristic product as follows: a touristic product is a bundle of touristic activities which is offered on the market. The development of the product and the product itself has three dimensions:

- the "Alpine Pearl" as a product
- the package (organized package tour) as a product
- the individual journey through the "Alpine Pearl" as a product.

5.1 Conditions to attain the status of a „Alpine Pearl“

5.1.1 Definition of the elements, which describe the product

„Alpine Pearls“ and its indicators

The "Alpine Pearl" as a product:

For a municipality a competitive advantage can emerge because it is a "Alpine Pearl" and this trade mark is communicated at the market. It is recommended to develop even higher mobility qualities (in comparison to those defined in the catalog of criteria). Within the other (e.g. touristic) dimensions a "specialization" (cycling, moving...) is recommended.

The package (organized package tour) as a product:

The concrete package development (vacation trip, which consists of a defined bundle of services) will be made through different channels. Packages will be developed and offered only through organisations who are legally authorized. The umbrella organization as well as the municipalities/destinations will offer modules for the product:

- railway and bus connections in and between the pearls
- mobility in the pearls (local mobility systems such as a shuttle, horse shuttle etc..)
- mobility in the region (local mobility systems, sight seeing tours etc..)
- attractions in the municipalities and the region (mountain experience, nature experience etc..)
- accommodation in the municipalities (in different categories)
- characteristics in the sense of the product (ride with pollution free or nearly pollution free vehicles etc..).

The aforementioned modules must be made arrangable (through modules) and purchasable.

The individual journey through the "Alpine Pearls":

Within this area the same conditions apply as to the organized package tour. However a travel chain is created by the consumer in "self-direction" and the individual modules are booked by different service providers.

General conditions for the product "Alpine Pearls"

In the sense of the project different conditions for the product are necessary. Market communication must be directed towards the additional benefits.

5.1.2 Definition of the modalities of quality control and the quality assurance

The quality assurance belongs to the core tasks of the umbrella organization. It is proposed to the umbrella organization to appoint a committee for quality control. This committee should consist of:

- three members of the controlling body (representatives of tourism organizations with the principle of rotation).
- an external expert, who will be determined and provided with an order through the umbrella organization.

The committee for the quality assurance works selfly-sufficient and independently of the umbrella organization and has an obligation to deliver an annual report. In the case of rough

injuries of the criteria and/or the statutes an immediate message to the umbrella organization is obligate. The costs of quality control are borne by the umbrella organization and are to be included in the budget annually. The kind of quality control is specified by the umbrella organization. A possible suggestion:

- standardized questionnaire
- participating observation and documentation by means of scientific project diary
- online guest questioning.

At clear and rough misdemeanours against the criteria and statutes the committee of the quality assurance has to deliver a report to the umbrella organization immediately. Once annually a documented and justified report is to be conveyed to the umbrella organization. With determined lack in the "Alpine Perls" the experts recommend the following procedure: after statement and reporting to the umbrella organization the recovery of the lack is called in an appropriate period. If the period lapses without success this entails automatically the withdrawal of the mark. The "alpine perl" may not lead the title "alpine perl" to remove the label from all means of publicity at own expense. For offences the experts recommend to determine an obligatory conventional penalty in the statutes.

The costs of the quality assurance are 64000€ or 2560€ for each perl

5.1.3 Definition of conversion solutions in the starting period of the project

The conversion solutions for the starting perls are regulated in the catalog of criteria. For additional new "Alpine Perls" conversion solutions are not judged as acceptable.

5.2 Definition of the implementation process

To finalize the product "Alpine Perls" the following plan suggested

What	who	when
implementation study	experts	in the middle of March 2005
adjustment of the starting pearls	partners	February 2005
basic marketing plan adjustment of contents according to project	expert team, tourism organizations	in the middle of May 2005

adjustment of the measures in the starting perls	experts with the responsible persons in the perls	in the middle of April 2005
partner meetings in Les Gets adjustment and resolution of all necessary orders and all necessary measures in the countries	partner	in the middle of April 2005
meeting with delivery of the certificates "Alpine Perls"	partner mayor of the pearls, tourism organizations of the pearls, experts	in June 2005
marketing plan II adjustment of the contents for the starting marketing	experts, representative of the tourism organizations	in the middle of July 2005
preparation for the establishment of the umbrella organization (statutes etc..)	experts, local tourism organizations	June 2005 until September 2005
establishment of the national organizations "Alpine Perls"	tourism organizations in the perls, experts	at the end of of 2005
establishment of the umbrella organization "Alpine Perls"	tourism organizations in the perls, expert	end of 2005
first marketing steps	tourism organizations, umbrella organization	at the beginning of of 2006
development of the technical solution InterNet, Handheld, Handy....	umbrella organization, external experts	to July 2006
development and production of the printed media - guide, folder...	umbrella organization, external experts	to July 2006

negotiation with mobility service providers (railways, bus etc..)	experts, partners, local organizations	March 2005 until August 2006
implementation of the mobility services (connections into the perls)	mobility service provider, experts, partners, local organizations	March 2005 until August 2006
implementation of the mobility services (connections between the perls)	mobility service provider, expert, partner, local organizations	March 2005 until August 2006
implementation of the mobility services (mobility in the perls)	mobility service provider, expert, partner, local organizations	March 2005 until August 2006
implementation of the infrastructures in the Alpine Perls - according to the list of measures	expert, local organizations	March 2005 until August 2006
first quality control in the starting perls	expert of members of the committee for quality assurance	July 2006 and August 2006

5.3.1 Technical implementation of the information system

For the technical implementation of innovative information systems it is recommended:

1. Creation of a common, transnational, touristic information-plattform (e.g. informations of the perls, on mobility and products).
2. Individual development of the already existing touristic plattform in the regions. The main focus has to be on the informations concerning the journey to the perl and on the connection between touristic activities (z.B. cycling, moving ...) with the local/regional mobility services (z.B. local public transport, shuttle, etc.).

For the implementation of the transnational information-plattform it is recommended to place an order to an organization suitable for that task. The development of the regional plattform has to be initiated through the local organizations respectively through cooperations of local organizations.

5.3.1.1 Feasibility

The technical communication solution is based on the Internet. Possible elements are:

- Internet platform with the modules described under "data availability" and discussed with the local touristic decision makers
- with special information possibilities for the different target groups
- possibility of an output in print form

Additional modules for the regional platforms are

- geological information management system with the possibility of georeferenced inputs and updates through different regional user groups
- possibility of reservations of different service modules
- data are made available online on mobiles or stationary terminals
- possibility of downloads of regional data on mobiles.

Mobile terminals:

Beyond that mobile terminals are suggested. From today's view the use of PDAs (personal digital assistant) has to be regarded as a positive possibility. Due to the fast technical development a final recommendation cannot be given. The decision has to be made together with the municipalities/destinations resp. the umbrella organization. The current standards and the expected developments are presented detailed in the Bavarian implementation study.

5.3.1.2 Data

For an optimized version the following data are judged as relevant: local data, regional data, national data along the connecting route between the "Alpine Perls", geographical data and mobility data.

5.3.1.3 Costs

The costs of the implementation of a data base-supported Internet platform and the development of a content management system are estimated at approx. EURO 15,000. The additional purchase of georeferenced material depends strongly on the quantity of the needed data. The initial costs of PDAs and Smartphones vary from EURO 300 (normal variant) to EURO 1,500 (weather-proof terminals).

5.3.1.4 Conditions in order to make this system generally applicable

The conditions for the system are divided into four areas:

- general conditions of the system (see also the German implementation study)
- data procurement
- data availability
- data actuality.

Within the area of the "technical implementation" of the central information system it is recommended to assign one organization through an international tender on the basis of an duty list (which has been discussed with the partners).

Concerning the regional platforms it is recommended that each country assigns a organization in their country with the development of the solution. All organizations develop according to a uniform product requirement specification. This is particularly necessary for the compatibility of the systems (e.g. for the data base).

5.3.2 Logistic implementation

Main requirements of an ideal journey are:

- connections without transferring or with comfortable transfer possibilities
- travel time comparable to the car
- price structure comparable to cars (basis: car-occupation with 3 to 4 persons)
- simple access for the purchase of tickets
- high level of service quality of the employees
- luggage transport (similar to the airplane)
- train material in high quality
- experience quality of the train journey (cinema, child compartment with games..).

With the bus round trips in the alps appear to be interesting.

Logistic feasibility in the different countries and for the starting pearls of the different countries:

In the area of the logistic feasibility national measure lists are to be provided for the starting pearls. The measure lists are attached to the study as national appendix.

As result of the research it can be stated that the fundamental accessibility of the "Alpine Pearls" with railway connections is given. In some cases it seems possible to arrange train-based travel routes.

5.3.3 Umbrella organization

It is suggested an organization form which can steer central contents of the project and allows a high level of subsidiarity. The experts recommend the establishment of an association "Alpine Pearls" as an umbrella organization. This association can be organized as a federation (union of associations) if national associations are created in the partner countries. If this possibility should not appear appropriate (for example if a country has only two starting pearls) the tourism organizations of the "Alpine Pearls" can become individually members of the umbrella association. The national associations and/or individual touristic organizations of the "Alpine Pearls" unite in the umbrella organization with own statutes.

The decision if national associations "Alpine Pearls" are created in the partner countries or if the touristic organizations should become direct members within the umbrella association is up to the committees of the partner countries.

Is is principally insignificant In which of the partner countries the umbrella association is registered. It is crucial that each member (touristic organization of the "Alpine Pearls" or national association) has as many voices in the umbrella association as it represents „Alpine Pearls". That is, if in France two "Alpine Pearls" are nominated as pearls, each of these pearls has one voice in the transnational association. If in Italy a national association represents the interests of the "Alpine Pearls" and this national association consists of five "Alpine Pearls" the association has five voices in the umbrella organization.

From expert view the membership should be divided into different ranges:

- ordinary members are touristic organizations of the "Alpine Pearls"
- extraordinary members can be financially or idealistically promoting members - (public organizations, cooperation partner etc..)
- voluntary members can be persons or organizations, who concern themselves with the topic and make positive contributions - financial or idealistic.

The transnational association gives itself obligatory statutes. The statutes for the national associations should be compiled uniformly. In any case the following contents and tasks are to be considered In the statutes of the transnational association:

- seat of the association
- name of the association - „Perles des Alpes“, „Perle delle Alpi“, „Perlen der Alpen“
- languages of the association - the languages should be German, French, Italian
- quality assurance and quality control
- advancement of the product in the sense of the catalog of criteria
- assurance and advancement of the criteria for the product "Alpine Pearls"
- creation of an Internet platform "Alpine Pearls"
- production of an annual marketing plan for basic marketing activities
- production of an annual financial plan
- right to vote and seat of the routistic organizations "Alpine Pearls"
- acceptance of majority decisions in the general assembly
- acceptance of amendments of the rules of the umbrella association (possible unanimity)
- obligation of the product-related use of the mark "Alpine Pearls"
- obligation of payment of the marketing contributions (prescribed annually by the general assembly (by the majority))
- participation in the annual general assembly.

Costs and funding

The total costs of the umbrella organization (with concentration to the quality assurance) amount approx. 105.000□ p.a.

It is recommended to devide the costs by basic contributions as well as after the sum of overnight stays.

A final decision concerning the statutes, the level of the budget and additional marketing fees, the distribution of voices and the procedures of decision making has to be developped by the representatives of the umbrella organization on the basis of these recommendations during the setting-up period of the association.

Right to vote

The experts recommend in the case of the "Alpine Pearls" the concept: each pearl has one voice.

Organizational implementation

Within the range of the organization of the product-marketing different levels and organizations will have different tasks. According to the experts the settlement of the tasks may look like the following:

Umbrella organization:

- annual budget plan with appointment of the membership dues of the "Alpine Pearls"

- agency for content management within the range of the internet platform resp. in the area of the regional information systems: delegation to the municipalities/destinations.
- quality assurance

In the case of a broader and more cost intensive activity of the umbrella organization additional tasks could be (if they are decided and financed)

- annual marketing plan and agency for the implementation
- annual measure plan

National associations "Alpine Perls" or routistic organizations "Alpine Perls"

carrier associations for the umbrella organization

no operational activity in the context of the product promotion

receiver in the context of national projects.

Tourism organizations in the "Alpine Perls":

Carriers of the project in the "Alpine Perls" and member in the umbrella organization

marketing of the product within the marketing plan of the municipality/destination

establishment from supplier-groups according to the criteria

creation of infrastructures

use of the mark

supply of data for the Internet platform.

Municipalities in the "Alpine Perls":

Creation of infrastructure

promotion of the project and the product.

National and regional tourism organizations:

marketing of the product within suiting product lines.

Accommodating enterprises:

member of the supplier-groups with obligatory criteria

use of the mark

sales of the product

supply of data for the Internet platform.

Mobility service provider:

creation of the mobility chain

marketing for the product in the context of the total marketing plan

sales of the product so far legally authorized

supply of data for the Internet platform.

Mobility center/mobility manager:

contract partner for the mobility service provider

supply of data for the Internet platform

possible: national sales-organization (if legally authorized to it).

Tour operators:

sales and marketing of the product

development of packages (lump sums).

National (along the travel chain) and regional service providers (POIs etc.):

offer of services in the sense of the product

supply of data for the Internet platform.

Strategic partners:

marketing of the product - to regulate over partnership contracts

authorized to use the mark.

5.3.4 Legal feasibility

5.3.4.1 Sale of the product and sale of packages

At the beginning the umbrella organization should not act as a tour operator and shouldn't organize sales. It is suggested to use a tour operator as central organizer for the product "Alpine Pearls". It is possible that in each country such an organization takes that task. Additionally all tourism organizations, which are legally authorized, should arrange reservations.

5.3.4.2 Mark protection

In the range of the trademark protection it is to be stated that the umbrella organization should register the mark and should be the owner of the mark.

5.3.4.3 Registration

First the mark has to be registered in one of the partner countries (at best at the seat of the umbrella organization). Afterwards the trademark protection can be expanded on other countries (touristic main source markets). In any case the mark has to be protected in the class 39 (transportation, packing and storage of goods, arrangement of journeys), 41 (education, training, maintenance, sporty and cultural activities) and 43 (food supply and accommodation of guests) of the list of the goods and services ("agreement by Nice"). Further classes should be registered also. A further possibility is to register an European Union Community mark. The decision should be made by the umbrella organization. The period of protection is valid for ten years.

In principle the experts recommend the registration of a word mark in all languages - thus „Perles des Alpes“, „Perle delle Alpi“, „Alpine Pearls“, „Perlen der Alpen“ - and a word picture mark (Logo). The mark should be registered only in plural. With a registration in singular competitors can intervene over the "danger of mistake". The logo "Alpine Pearls" should be prepared graphically in a way that the product core and all languages are integrated. Thus

only one word picture mark has to be registered. That saves costs and documents internationality.

Possible problems with a word-mark and a word-picture mark „Alpine Pearls“:

There are some examples which are showing that the term "pearl of the alps" is already used in the touristic market. Presumably there will be no problems with the registration of a word mark "Alpine Pearls" as well as a word-picture mark "Alpine Pearls" in the aforementioned categories. Security within that topic can be gained only if the registration takes place in the register of trademarks in the different countries without objection.

To make an alternative discussable the term "Kristall der Alpen", "cristaux des Alpes", "cristalli delle Alpi", "crystals of the Alps" was tested as another possibility of the naming for a touristic product. There are no mark registrations of these terms in the five partner countries. Only a word-picture mark "Alpkristall" is protected in the class 32. One can assume that the term of "crystals of the alps" will not raise registration problems. It will have to be decided from the partners which of the two terms has to be registered.

5.3.4.4 Use of the mark

The use of the mark is free. Fees are only raised from strategic partners, cooperation partners and manufacturers of merchandising items.

5.3.5 Earning power for regions and tour operators

The term of rentability isn't defined just in one way. In one direction the main focus is on turnover e.g. sum of wages, salaries and profits. On that basis it could be analyzed if there are income effects which exceed the sum of public expenditures.

Especially in regions with high unemployment rates or non existing possibilities for income it could be justified politically that public expenditures are used to keep people in their jobs resp. to create new jobs. It is analyzed if a subsidy in the tourism sector has corresponding income effects. The subsidy has to be financed from other sources than tourism.

To compute the regional return on investment it has been assumed that

- the average duration of holiday tourism is 8.8 nights (that's the average in Austrian holiday tourism)
- the average expenditures in the region are EURO 88.80 per day and that the regional marketing expenditures are EURO 350,000.00 for all "Alpine Pearls".

With these assumptions the break-even point will be at approx. 698 guests per year in all pearls resp. approx. 28 guests per year in each pearl. On the corporate level (accommodating enterprises) the break-even point will be at approx. 932 guests (in total) or approx. 3,7 guests per enterprise.

Alternative to that point of view one can consider the term of rentability in a more restricted way for regions who intend to reduce subsidies (for example in Bavaria). In that case it is necessary that the public expenditures have to return to the public household via taxes. In that case the break-even point is at 11.413 additional overnight stays in one pearl resp. 285.325 overnight stays in all 25 pearls.

Due to the facts that the calculations are based on assumptions and that the structure of expenditures and the overnight stays may vary from region to region an assured conclusion concerning the rentability is only possible in a restricted way.

5.3.6 System for the evaluation of the „Alpine Pearls“

The principal item of the product "Alpine Pearls" is the catalog of criteria compiled by the experts and unanimously accepted by the partners. Municipalities who are willing to use the mark "Alpine Pearls" have to fulfill all the the criterias. Additionally a touristic specialization appears to be very important. The singular strengths of different regions will have positive effects for the product.

Final remarks

With the project ALPS MOBILITY II there is the possibility to influence tourism as one of the main economic factors of the alpine region in the sense of sustainability. Through adequate regional and transnational measures (e.g. high level information- and consulting activities concerning environmental sound mobility and packages) it is intended to

- reduce emissions,
- support a positive economic development (e.g. increase in incoming tourism and overnight stay.) in the alpine area,
- to increase the share of tourist using environmental sound transport on their way to the pearls,
- to change the travelling behavior in the long run.

It is the target to concentrate on the value added which could be achieved via using the environmental sound mobility supplies during touristic activities. A detailed explanation of the herefore needed steps can be found in the implementation study and in a more differentiated way in the regional studies.

To link environmental sound mobility and tourism in a best way the implementation steps were detailed in the national studies concerning the regional differences.

The majority of the experts comes to the conclusion, that a sustainable journey through and into the "Alpine Pearls " may attract customers on the market under the described conditions and implementation steps. The quality, the engagement of the service providers and the touristic organizations will be crucial for the market success.

Through the transnational linkages an exchange of experiences and a process of learning can be introduced. These are the basis for a successful implementation based on efficient measures and a European surplus. If the pilot perles can increase the demand of believable „ecological“ offers successfully and sustainable it will be easy to find mobility service providers and tour operators for the idea of the perles.

It depends now (in the context of the implementation) on the commitment and the creativity of the project partners that this potential is used for the advantage of the environment, the local inhabitants and the tourists.