Toward Mountains 2020

Step 1 – Capitalising on Euromontana work to inspire programming

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EUROMONTANA

European Association for Cooperation and Development of Mountain areas

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Contents

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FOREWORD BY ANDRÉ MARCON & JUANAN GUTIÉRREZ

Increasing mountain ownership of new European territorial development policies

Legislative proposals currently being negotiated at EU level bring forward a **more integrated approach to territorial development**. This new approach is translated in **transversal regulations** and a **Common Strategic Framework** explaining how the 5 main territorial EU funds (ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD and EMFF) should contribute to EU 2020. On this basis, Member States will elaborate - hopefully in relation with regional authorities and stakeholders - **partnership agreements** specifying how territorial policies will be implemented on the ground. **Programmes** will be setup at national or regional level (depending on the country), with the possibility to conceive them as multi-fund programmes and to **integrate territorial policy tools**: **multi-fund tools**. EAFRD foresees explicitly the possibility of **thematic sub-programmes** for mountain areas. Finally, **macro-regional strategies** for specific territories such as mountain ranges are gaining importance.

Euromontana has called for this integrated approach, of particular importance for mountain areas. However, our work over the last five years has been thematic and project-based. This rich work has produced recommendations, thematic or general, depending on the issue, as well as case studies and good practices. It seems necessary, at this stage, to **valorise and capitalise the results of our various thematic actions, as well as lessons learnt from the projects, into a tool which can serve as a guide** to mountain people to **approach programming 2014-2020** and to **promote their needs** in the elaboration of strategies, contracts and programmes. In assembling this document, we hope to improve understanding and ownership of the new setting, and also to equip mountain communities with useful arguments to demonstrate and recall **how mountains can make significant contributions to EU 2020**.
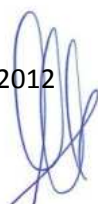
The details of the future framework are the object of intense discussion as we write this document: the final arrangements as well as the budgetary elements will be known only in the coming months, maybe not even before the middle of 2013. But the preparation of implementation has already started in all our Member States: evaluations have begun, a first rough architecture of programmes is being designed, and first drafts of the partnership agreements are being written. We must make sure the mountain voice is heard in this process!

We, Euromontana, would like to maximise chances for mountain areas to get as much and as smart and adequate support as possible in the next programming period. The '**Toward mountains 2020**' process is intended to support mountain stakeholders in the negotiation and preparation of the future programmes. Capitalising our work and re-organising our knowledge is a first step which must be undertaken internally, with the whole network, to produce a fully satisfactory guide.

Beyond that step, we must enrich our approach by building partnerships with mountain representatives, with our friends from other specific territories, with organisations of the wider rural community, to build alliances that will facilitate positive outcomes for mountain people. The coming months will offer several opportunities to communicate and further elaborate our strategies. We look forward to your total engagement in this process!

André Marcon,

President 2008-2012

Juanan Gutiérrez

President 2012-2016

The new – and not so new - EU Vocabulary

CF Cohesion Fund

CIP Competitiveness and Innovation framework Programme

CLLD: Community-Led Local Development: It is the 5th generation of LEADER which extends the approach to urban areas and fisheries

CPR 'Common provisions regulations': the new regulation setting all common elements to management of ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD and EMFF

CSF 'Common Strategic Framework': An annex to the Common provisions regulation explaining key targets and actions for each of the 11 priorities driving EU policies

EAFRD European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

EMFF European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

ERDF European Regional Development Fund

ESF European Social Fund

ESIF European Structural and Investment Funds (ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD & EMMF as a group)

ESPON European Spatial Planning Observatory Network

ETC European Territorial Cooperation: it comprises "INTERREG" "ESPON"

INTERREG: Interregional cooperation: A –Cross-Border; B-Transnational; C-Interregional

LAG: Local action groups: they are the groups implementing LEADER and now CLLD approach. We may have Urban LAG, Fisheries LAG and rural LAG

LDS: Local development strategy

LEADER: "Lien entre les actions de développement économique en zone rurale"

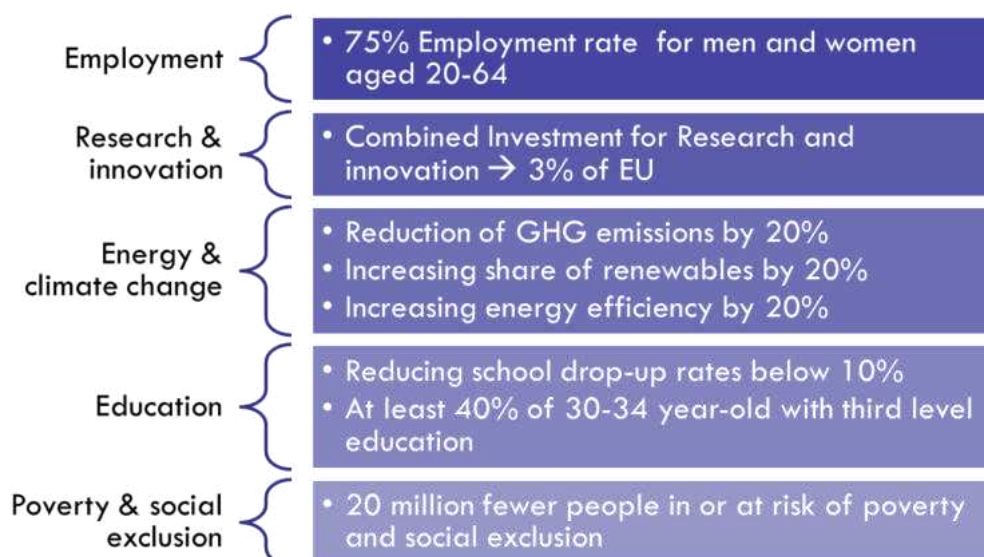**RIS[3]:** Research and Innovation Smart Specialisation Strategy

CHAPTER 1 : Understanding the architecture of European policies for 2014-2020

What the EU wants to achieve…

The backbone of European Policies for the period 2014-2020 is the 'EU 2020 strategy'. EU 2020 specifies that the EU should try to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, which means, more concretely:

Smart growth
- Education
- Research/innovation
- Digital society

Sustainable growth
- Low-carbon economy, Protecting environment, New green technologies
- Efficient electricity grids
- Improving business environments
- Helping consumers make well-informed choices

Inclusive growth
- More and better jobs
- Investments in skills
- Modernising labour markets
- Benefits of growth reaching all parts of the EU

One of the key orientations of the new period is to have a "**result-oriented approach**", meaning that the EU will define objectives and targets that are the common collective goals and will monitor the progress of Europe towards these targets through indicators. EU 2020 sets 5 overall targets:

Employment
- 75% Employment rate for men and women aged 20-64

Research & innovation
- Combined Investment for Research and innovation → 3% of EU

Energy & climate change
- Reduction of GHG emissions by 20%
- Increasing share of renewables by 20%
- Increasing energy efficiency by 20%

Education
- Reducing school drop-up rates below 10%
- At least 40% of 30-34 year-old with third level education

Poverty & social exclusion
- 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion

These targets will be translated into National targets and, where relevant, regional targets. For each theme deriving in more detail from EU2020 objectives, there will be secondary targets and indicators.

How can mountains contribute?

Mountain territories have many roles to play in reaching the overall objectives set out in EU 2020: they are even essential in reaching them, in their own specific way. Mountain development strategies must show the way forward, if mountain regions and stakeholders want to take their share of the investment programmed through these new policies.

How can mountains contribute to Smart Growth?

According to EU 2020, smart growth is about 3 main elements, also recognised as « flagship initiatives »: a **digital agenda for Europe**, an **innovation Union** and putting **European Youth on the Move**. What are the specific targets, and how can mountains contribute?

A digital Agenda for Europe – EU Targets	
By 2013	Broadband access for all
By 2020	Access for all to much higher speeds (30 Mbps or above)
By 2020	50% of households or more with connections >100 Mbps

Mountains can contribute to the digital agenda objective because the **deployment and uptake of ICT is much lower in remote mountain territories than in the rest of Europe** even though one of their greatest needs is to provide access to services, markets and economic opportunities in general.

Innovation Union – EU goals
Refocusing R&D on climate change, energy, resource efficiency, health and demographic change
Strengthening links in innovation chain

Mountains can contribute because they have a **huge potential for innovation in the green and bioeconomy** and great **demographic challenges** to face. But this potential is not exploited fully today because the **conditions to enable innovation are often not met**.

Youth on the move – EU goals
Helping students study abroad
Equipping people better for the job market
Enhancing attractiveness of Europe's universities
Improving all levels of education and training

Investing in mountains can greatly contribute to EU goals for improvement because mountains are characterised by a **lower level of education**, an **insufficient offer of education** and in general a **mismatch between the education system and the local economy** which hampers its capacity to reap full benefit of its development potential.

How can mountains contribute to sustainable growth?

EU 2020 identifies two main pillars for this, one environmental, and the other economic. On the one hand, EU leaders want a resource-efficient Europe, which translates into the so-called 20-20-20 objectives. On the other hand, they want to re-strengthen the economy, particularly industry. More sustainable agriculture is also identified in the objectives of sustainable growth.

A resource efficient Europe – EU targets and goals	
Targets By 2020	20% cut in Green House Gases emissions from 1990 levels 20% energy consumption produced from renewables 20% improvement in energy efficiency
Goals	Greater energy security Reducing energy intensity of what we use and consume

Mountains can greatly contribute because they are a **remarkable source of renewable energies** (water, wind, sun, biomass…), for themselves and for territories in the lowlands. At the same time, mountain communities, due to a lack of investment, have a **limited access so far to a clean energy mix**, while having **important energy needs** due to harsh climate and remote location.

An industrial policy for the globalisation era – EU goals
Supporting entrepreneurship
Covering every part of the increasingly international value chain

Investing in mountains can greatly contribute to EU 2020 goals as we have demonstrated that they require **support to entrepreneurship** especially in the SME sector, as **most mountain businesses are SMEs**. They also need a lot of support to improve competitiveness of supply chains, especially –but not only- in the wood and food industry sectors.

How can mountains contribute to inclusive growth?

EU 2020 objectives for inclusive growth are mainly detailed in two flagship initiatives regarding skill development and reduction of poverty.

An agenda for new skills and jobs – EU goals
For individuals: helping people acquire new skills, adapt to changing labour markets
Modernize labour markets

As demonstrated by our INTERREG IVC project PADIMA, **human capital development is a pivotal issue for mountain sustainable development**, a pre-condition for mountains to be able to deliver green innovation and green growth for Europe and therefore to contribute to EU goals.

European platform against poverty – EU goals
Economic, social and territorial cohesion
Guaranteeing respect of fundamental rights
Mobilise support to help people integrate in communities

Mountains should be priority locations for investment in this respect, as mentioned in **Article 174** of the EU Treaty on Territorial Cohesion which specifies that **special attention should be granted to the remote territories affected by severe permanent handicaps**. Indeed, mountains are home to many rural poor people and marginalised communities, especially in the Eastern part of Europe, with inadequate access to services, health, education and economic opportunities.

At the same time, we have demonstrated that **mountains can be welcoming territories** to which people come in this period of crisis, returning from metropolitan areas where they have lost jobs and cannot afford to live, coming from other countries as refugees, or just looking for a **better, quieter, safer life,** within communities where people know and help one another and surrounded by nature.

Overview of programming process and tools

The design and delivery of EU funds in 2014-2020 will be more integrated at two levels:

- At **strategic level** : via the EU 2020 strategy which sets cross-cutting goals, the common strategic framework, and the national partnership agreements;

- At **ground implementation level** : through **'integrated'** or **'multi-fund'** policy implementation tools, such as integrated territorial investments on community-led local development;

It will also be possible to have a more integrated approach at programming level especially for structural funds where there is explicit possibility to do multi-fund programmes.

Besides, the EU framework provides the possibility to adopt **macro-regional strategies** to better integrate the strategic orientation of policies. Such a strategy is envisaged for the massif of the Alps.

From the strategy to the different funds: before and after 2013

The architecture of strategy texts and regulations will change from the previous period. The EU 2020 strategy replaces the former Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies, with the same aim of giving an overall direction. However, instead of two different strategies for rural development and regional policy, there will be one **'Common strategic framework'** which translates the EU 2020 strategy into a common approach of EU territorial development policies. And this will be extended into a **« common provisions regulation »** (CPR) providing common elements to all 'CSF' funds.

From the funds to programmes and integrated development tools

On the basis of regulations approved, and of the associated financial framework, each Member State will design a Partnership Agreement with the European Commission: in this document, they should describe how, in that country, they will contribute to EU 2020 strategy objectives, using EU funds as well as National funds. They will have to say how they will structure their programmes.

Integrated territorial policy tools: which new provisions in the regulatory package?

The new regulation package provides for a variety of implementation arrangements which are designed to help managing authorities and stakeholders, city and local governments, and various territorial institutions to **tailor the scale and timing of intervention to the appropriate level**, taking into account **functional geographies**. All of these different tools can, in principle, be combined and have their own specificities (see Table below). All of them can also be **spatially focused**.

The most complex and potentially powerful are « **Integrated Operations** ». They are not very well described in the proposals but seem to provide for a solution to combine CSF funds and also other EU funds (Horizon 2020, Life…) in an integrated manner to the benefit of one beneficiary, i.e. a public or private body governed by public law. A sub-section of integrated operations are '**Joint Action Plans'** : these are also meant to cover the actions carried out by one beneficiary, in a shorter time frame than the programming period, with reporting based on declared outputs and payment in lump sums (as opposed to costs).

'Integrated Territorial Investments' (ITI) are a means of integrating ERDF, ESF and now also EAFRD programmes for measures to be implemented in one targeted functional territory. Initially designed for cities, this tool could be applied, for example, to a mountain range (inter-regional or infra-regional). The interesting point is that regional operational programmes can still operate where the specific ITI is implemented with more targeted objectives.

'**Community-led local development**' (CLLD) is an extension of the LEADER approach to all types of territories (including urban) and all CSF funds: local action groups (LAGs) which have designed a local development strategy could apply for funding under the different funds. Many rural actors see, in this extension of LEADER to rural areas, an opportunity to **establish links between urban LAGs and rural LAGs** and strengthen rural-urban relationships, and for mountain mountain-lowland relationships.

Finally, the Rural Development Regulation provides the possibility to define '**Thematic sub-programmes**' for specific target groups or territories, including mountains. These sub-programmes can include a list of measures of relative higher importance for mountain areas and can benefit from higher payment rates.

## Overview of the main specificities of the different tools

	Integrated Operations (IO)	Joint Action plan (JAP)	Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI)	Community-led local development (CLLD)/LEADER	Thematic Sub-programmes
Funds concerned	All ESIF[1] funds and other EU funds (Horizon 2020, LIFE…)	ERDF, ESF, CF	All ESIF[1] funds (at least 5% of ERDF for ITI in urban areas)	All ESIF[1] funds (at least 5% of EAFRD for LEADER in rural areas)	EAFRD only
To be mentioned in Partnership agreement	No	No, can be proposed any time	Yes	Yes	To be mentioned in architecture of Rural development programmes
Territorial focus ?	To be clarified	Possible	Compulsory, territory can be part of an administrative unit, can be cross-border	Compulsory, territory defined according to population criteria	Possible for mountain territories
Management delegation ?	To be clarified	Compulsory to the beneficiary I.E. a body governed by public law (public or private established for public purposes)	Possible to a public law independent body (eg. Local authority, development agency, NGO…)	Compulsory to a Local action group (LAG)	Possible
Other specificities	- Possible combination with other EU funds - Not well described	- At least 10m€ and 20% of the related operational programmes–but 1 Pilot JAP >€5m per OP possible - Shorter duration than the OP (3-5 years) - No infrastructure - Simplification : agreement and payment on outputs/results	- Operational programmes contributing financially to the ITI can still act on the ITI territory.	- Population thresholds - Obligation to submit a local development strategy - Transnational cooperation possible	- A sub-section of an existing programme (RDP programmes can be national or NUTS2) - Higher payment rates possible for a list of measures of particular relevance for the sub-group/territory targeted
Combination with other policy tools	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Source: Integritas 2012 – [1]ESIF= All funds concerned by the Common strategic framework: EAFRD, ERDF, ESF, CF and EMFF

CHAPTER 2: Mountains contributing to Common strategic framework priorities

The Common Strategic Framework, together with other documents specific to each fund which will be adopted, answers the question: **'where will the EU concentrate its financial contributions** ? It establishes a **list of 11 priorities** for the development of the EU. These priorities translate the 3 EU2020 components into concrete support lines and are the basis for the 'thematic concentration' that the European Commission wishes to impose as a condition of funding for Member States and regions: a certain proportion of funds has to be concentrated on one domain to ensure better efficiency and, above all, visibility of the results at the end.

In addition, the European Commission has proposed 3 categories of regions according to the situation of their GDP/capita compared to EU average, and their status in the former period. These three categories are: less developed, transition, and more developed.
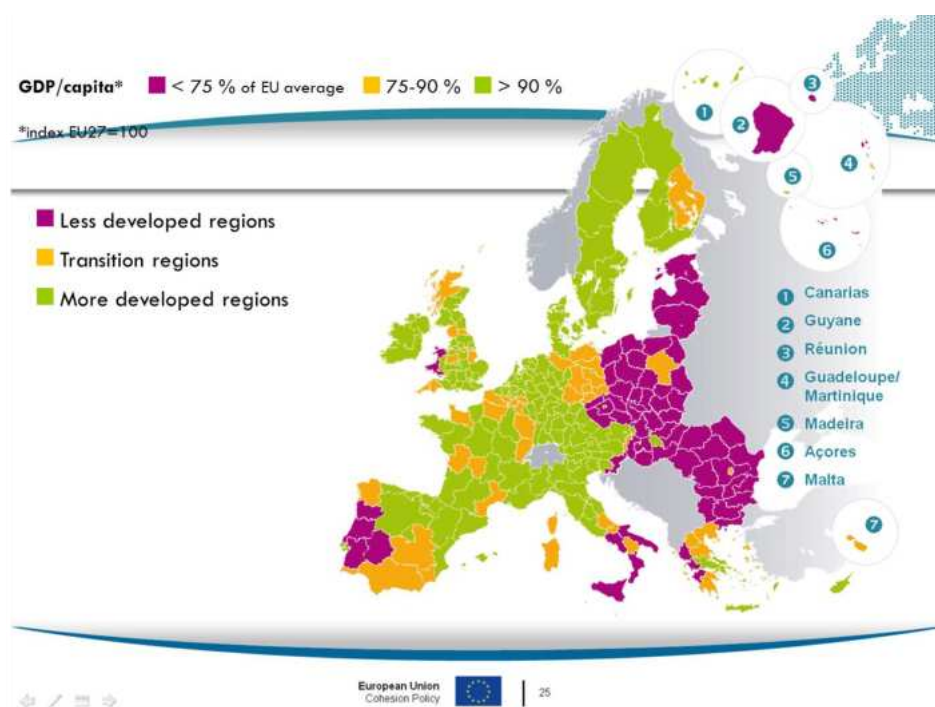
Regional map extracted from DG REGIO communication material on the legislative proposals

The richer the region, the less their flexibility in the use of EU funds: priorities on which EU funds must be concentrated are the same for all regions BUT the percentage which has to be allocated varies depending on the regional category.
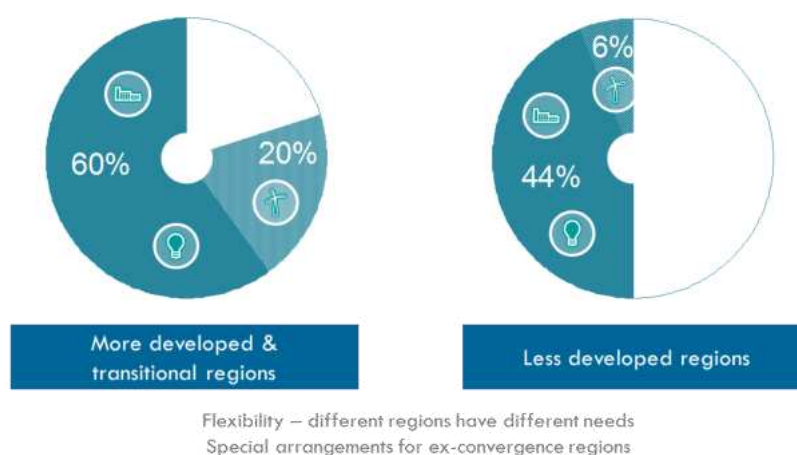
Thematic concentration as proposed in initial Commission proposals

Finally, funds will not contribute to the same extent to all 11 priorities. Some funds are more naturally allocated to some priorities, as shown in the table below (according to initial legislative proposals). ETC Cross border and Transnational programmes can target no more than 4 thematic objectives, Inter-regional programmes can cover all thematic objectives [ETC Reg Art 7]

1. STRENGTHENING RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

What does the EU want to achieve?

- reverse the economic downturn through investment in research, innovation and entrepreneurship through **3% of EU GDP combined public and private investment in research, technological development and innovation**.

How ?

Through '**smart specialisation**'. The idea is that every territory in the EU has its own specific assets: identifying these and investing to build economic development on them will help achieve EU2020 goals. The idea is also that building a strong knowledge-based economy will solve the economic crisis.

The EU will fund research and innovation investments through ERDF. For these investments to be efficient, they must be part of a strategic vision. For this reason, the European Commission requires, as a precondition to funding the obligation, the definition of a '**research and innovation strategy for smart specialisation**' ('RIS3') or Smart Specialisation Strategy. This precondition will apply to funding of the two first CSF priorities (Research and innovation and Digital agenda), inclusive of **funding of knowledge transfer and innovation support paid through EAFRD**.

What is a « **Smart Specialisation Strategy** » ?

*"Smart specialisation means **identifying the unique characteristics and assets of each country and region**, highlighting each region's **competitive advantages**, and rallying regional stakeholders and resources around an **excellence-driven vision of their future**. It also means strengthening regional innovation systems, maximising knowledge flows and spreading the benefits of innovation throughout the entire regional economy.*"

A country's or region's Smart Specialisation Strategy should be elaborated through a process *"involving key innovation stakeholders. **Businesses, research centres and universities** should work together to identify a Member State or region's **most promising areas of specialisation**, but also the **weaknesses that hamper innovation there**. The national or regional authorities must then draw up a document outlining the proposed strategy for that country or region and, in particular, the **planned public and private investments** including from Structural Funds in research, technology development and innovation. This strategy should not only build on and/or aim at regional scientific excellence but also **support practice-based ('non-technological') innovation** (for instance, social and service innovations, action to address social challenges, new business models and demand-side measures such as public procurement) and include the adoption and diffusion of knowledge and innovation."*

Source: RIS3 Factsheet

The EU has set up a **Smart specialisation platform** to help in the elaboration of strategies:

Click here to learn more: http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/

You are a mountain organisation interested in research and or innovation: have you been involved in the design of the Smart Specialisation Strategy? If not, find out who is doing it.

How will different EU funds be combined?

The EU finances research and innovation through territorial development policies and through targeted research and innovation funding. In the next programming period, the current Research and Development Framework Programme and the CIP will be merged into one programme for research and innovation, '**Horizon 2020**'. To avoid overlaps, the CSF describes which types of actions shall be funded through ERDF in comparison with Horizon 2020.

	ERDF	Horizon 2020
Capacity building	√	X
Enhance R&I infrastructures	√	√
Modernising universities	√	*Excellence only*
Technology audit	√	√
Partner search	√	√
Information campaigns	√	
Research and innovation itself	X	√

What are « **European Innovation Partnerships** » (EIPs)?

"European Innovation Partnerships bring together a wide array of stakeholders to work in a collaborative way on shared interests and projects geared towards achieving common goals and promoting successful technological, social and organisational innovation."

*"EIPs act across **the whole research and innovation chain**, bringing together all relevant actors at EU, national and regional levels in order to: (i) **step up research and development efforts**; (ii) **coordinate investments in demonstration and pilots**; (iii) **anticipate and fast-track any necessary regulation** and standards; and (iv) **mobilise 'demand' in particular through better coordinated public procurement** to ensure that any breakthroughs are quickly brought to market. Rather than taking the above steps independently, as is currently the case, the aim of the EIPs is to design and implement them in parallel to cut lead times."*

In practice, EIPs seek to improve communication and collaboration between researchers and practitioners through, for example, 'operational groups'. So far, it has been decided to launch EIPs on four themes: **active and healthy ageing**, **water**, **raw materials,** and **agricultural sustainability and productivity**.

Learn more on Innovation Union page: http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/

How/why mountains can contribute?

Mountain people and businesses are particularly well placed to develop innovative solutions and new ideas because they **face specific challenges that require specific solutions** such as: demographic changes, climate change, increasing international competition in both economies and access to markets, and a growing digital divide. These **challenges are a great stimulus to creativity**. Fostering innovation is the most promising way forward to address these challenges, thus contributing to

economic diversification and to increased competitiveness. **Innovations developed in mountains can be a source of inspiration and solutions for the rest of Europe**.

Examples of innovation taking place in mountain areas are varied and numerous: energy production, new food supply chains, new medical products, new tourism services and approaches, access to distant markets via ICT, innovative organisation of services…

What do mountains need in order to contribute?

The innovation process is not necessarily specific in mountains. However, creating the conditions required for innovation may be more difficult. Human capital, **people and entrepreneurs** are of key importance. In mountain areas, as in other rural or remote areas, the density of businesses and population is lower than in cities, the number of higher education facilities is smaller, access to infrastructure and services is more difficult, and distances between companies, potential customers, research institutes and appropriate fund providers are often large. These factors result in challenges in organizing meetings and cooperation between actors and in achieving a smooth and intense circulation of ideas. Access to finance is also one difficulty for many smaller businesses found in mountain areas.

Example of how this priority could be delivered in mountain areas

- **Support innovation in mountain businesses:** *« dissemination and adoption of new technologies, through cooperation between all relevant actors, to help companies develop new products, processes and services and diversify regional economies »*

  o Support innovation in the **key sectors of mountain economies**: life sciences, bio-economy (including agriculture and forestry), energy, materials, e-services, tourism, healthy ageing and, specifically:

  o Support technological innovation in the **forestry sector**:
    - Innovation in the field of mechanisation adapted to high slopes: for example, [ARPANA Formacion Forestal](#) (Navarra) developed new machinery and associated training to implement innovations;
    - [PINS Skrad](#) (Gorski kotar, Croatia) supports innovation and competitiveness of SMEs in the wood manufacturing sector by sharing and transferring technical and organizational know-how to enable wood clusters, wood technological centres and regional development agencies to address structural deficits of SMEs and enhance innovation potentials of the productive sector.

  o Support innovation in the development of **new products and local or territorial supply chains** such as food products, wood products, and crafts:
    - An Interreg project on wool [MEDLAINE](#) has delivered very interesting results in the field of innovation in the wool sector, transforming a traditional, 'old' sector into a modern sector able to produce high-technology textiles with, for example, medical properties.
    - In the olive oil-producing area of Sierra de Segura (Spain), the company [POTOSI](#) produces one of the best olive oils in the world, but quantities which can be marketed at a price that repays production costs are small. Taking advantage of the higher content of health beneficial polyphenols in mountain oil, the company has started to invest in cosmetics, increasing the added value and marketing potential.

- The creation of Material Banken, a company specialised in the exploitation of heavy timber from mountain forests in the North of Hedmark (Norway), led to a better exploitation of local forest resources, reducing imports from Russia and fostering the creation of new wood products for construction and restoration of buildings.
- Development of new products aiming to valorise abandoned forest areas: for example TICINORO, in Ticino, Switzerland, where new products have been created, bring new income from 20,000 ha of chestnut trees.

o Support **research and knowledge transfer in mountain agriculture** on, for example:
- **genetic improvement** of traditional mountain breeds and varieties;
- **resource efficiency** and **enhancement of ecosystem services** through pastoral management practices;
- **resource efficiency in permanent crops** (irrigation, fertilisation);
- **quality improvement** of food and non-food products from mountain farms;
- efficient **management and organisation of small businesses** and small-scale supply chains.

o Support innovation in **tourism** to increase the efficiency of resource-intensive activities like winter sports or in relation to seasonality and (re)conversion to four-season tourism:
- The INTERREG VETTA project aims to valorize and promote mountain products through the spread of an innovative 'culture of quality' and use of ICT, in order to enhance the attractiveness of mountain touristic areas through innovation.

o Enhance **transfer of research results to end users** following recommendations from the mountain.TRIP project (www.mountaintrip.eu).

- **Develop research and education infrastructures in mountain areas:**

o Locate university branches or antennas in mountain areas;
- The University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) in Scotland provides higher education on a wide diversity of topics. This permits students from the area to get targeted education in sectors that provide jobs locally, and students from other regions to get to know the area and the local economy by coming & studying on-site.
- The "Universita della montagna" in Edolo, Lombardia (Italy), delivers targeted education to around 200 students and carries out research on mountains and mountain resources.

o Create regional centres of excellence with activities targeting the specific potential of mountain areas;
- Hedmark County, Norway, developed branches of higher education in nature and cultural tourism, engineering, law, finance and creative use of the ICT in kindergartens in the municipalities of Tynset, Røros and Trøndelag. Not only do they provide the local economy with better employed staff, but they attract many experts from different countries. More information: www.padima.org (GP Education n°38).
- In the Pyrenees, ACAP, the association of Chambers of Agriculture had been granted specific competence to operate as a centre of excellence at the massif level to establish specific cooperation with the research and development sector on pastoralism, supply chains, trends in agricultural development and evaluation of public policies.

- **Support mountain networks and clusters:**
  - Encourage **links between research, education and economy** in mountain areas by providing places for face-to-face meetings or virtual meeting facilities;
    - Turomas-tecnocat (a company located in Teruel, Spain) is the leading manufacturer of machinery, equipment and accessories for cutting, handling and storing flat glass from the Iberian Peninsula. They have been working with University of Zaragoza - via the Polytechnic University School of Teruel - on various R&D&I projects.
  - Encourage **cross-sectoral cooperation at massif level**:
    - In the Pyrenees and the Massif Central (France), different organisations representing the different economic sectors (agriculture, commerce, industry…) have created common structures to facilitate their collaboration (APEM for the Pyrenees and Macéo for Massif Central).
  - Facilitate and encourage **clustering** in mountain areas :
    - The AlpsBioCluster brings together universities and SMEs in the Alpine Space to address mountain-relevant issues related to life sciences: e-care of isolated patients, pollution monitoring via innovative measurement technologies and indicators…
    - The mountain tourism cluster in Norway brings together transport, suppliers, knowledge institutions, partners and authorities to create a specialised triple helix.

> **More ideas on innovation and mountain areas:**
> Euromontana thematic page on Innovation & the Lillehammer Declaration (2010)
> Innovation in Highland regions: report of the 4th European Biennale Event of Highland Regions

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2. ENHANCING ACCESS TO AND, USE AND QUALITY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

What does the EU want to achieve?

- By 2013 broadband access for all
- By 2020 access for all to much higher speeds (30MBps or above)
- By 2020: 50% households or more with connections > 100 Mbps

How?

The European Commission has proposed to spend almost **€9.2 billion from 2014 to 2020 on pan-European projects to give EU citizens and businesses access to high-speed broadband networks** and the services that run on them. The funding, part of the proposed **Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)**, would include equity and debt instruments and grants. It would complement private investment and public money at local, regional and national levels and EU Structural or Cohesion Funds. At least €7 billion would be available for investment in **high-speed broadband infrastructure**. With regard to ERDF and EAFRD, the proposed funding would take the form of support to **infrastructure development, application development and helping the uptake of ICT**.

A **Smart Specialisation Strategy is also a precondition to funding ICT-related actions** via Structural Funds. This strategy should include a 'digital growth section' stipulating budgeting and prioritisation of measures; an analysis concerning the balancing of support for the demand and supply of ICT; measurable targets for the outcomes of actions on digital literacy, skills, e-inclusion, e-accessibility, and e-health aligned with existing national or regional strategies in those fields; and an assessment of the needs for reinforced ICT capacity-building.

How can mountains contribute?

ICTs have the greatest capacity to **bring growth where growth is limited by distances and limited accessibility to people and markets**. Euromontana argues that the roll-out of ICT should happen primarily in most remote territories where these ICT will shrink distances. Indeed, the digital divide can often be found in mountain areas, where access to broadband is insufficient or even inexistent. The challenge is therefore to implement innovative solutions that allow mountain people and businesses to benefit from the advantages linked to good ICT infrastructure to the same degree as those living in lowland or urban areas. With good connectivity, mountains will become more welcoming places to work, live and create businesses for all those looking for a better quality of life.

What do they need in order to contribute?

- Infrastructures bringing **connectivity to the same level of quality as in the lowlands**, using adapted and the most cost-efficient technologies: these infrastructures must come at a reasonable price for mountain people, and investment must be mutualised and carefully thought of, especially installing fiber optic cables at the same time as other work.
- **Training in the uptake of ICT** by people and businesses.
- Support to the **development of applications**, in all economic sectors, that fit their specific context, including specific applications for the agricultural sector.

How to deliver the digital growth priority in mountain areas?

- **Support the development of Broadband infrastructures in mountain areas** : i.e. *« roll-out of open, affordable and future-proof Next Generation Access Infrastructures (NGA) that are accessible to all in under-served areas and in the economic centres of the less developed regions ».* In the initial Commission proposals, infrastructure development could be supported by the Connecting Europe Facility for larger projects, ERDF in less developed regions, and EAFRD in all regions. This means that infrastructure development in the under-served parts of most developed regions could be supported only via EAFRD. **Euromontana advocates that this needs to be changed!**

- **Develop e-Government and e-trade applications in mountain areas** i.e. *« enhancing innovation, the modernisation of public administrations and access to these services by citizens, including marginalised groups and people with disabilities»:*
  - Provision of e-services in sparsely populated areas through: e-appointments with officials from local authorities, improving relations with administrations, e-voting, e-ordering of goods distributed via an integrated multi-functional transport, delivery of medicine by post etc…
    - In Boticas (Portugal), the county created a 'travelling office' consisting of 3 connected and equipped vehicles that visit all the villages of the municipality once a week.
  - The INTERREG IT-CH project PTA – Piattaforma Tecnologica Alpina (Alpine Technological Platform), led by Lombardy (Italy), promotes integrated ideas for enhanced access to open-source shared ICT in the mountains, overcoming incompatibilities in network infrastructures.

- **Support development of ICT applications that contribute to meeting future societal challenges and opportunities in mountain areas** such as:
  - **E-health**, answering specific needs of ageing populations with limited access to medical support in remote areas: many good practices have been collected by the INTERREG IVC projects IMMODI and Regional Telemedicine Forum (RTF)
  - **Improving mobility** via smart transport organisation, such as transport on-demand in sparsely populated areas using remote ordering or car sharing groups.
  - **e-learning,** diversifying the education supply for young mountain people and working-age people looking for training or professional development, like the telecenter in Gorski Kotar hosted by the Business Incubator Skrad – PINS (Croatia).
  - **Smart grids for energy efficiency,** allowing, for example, optimum use of renewable energy facilities and energy storage.
  - **Smart applications for rural tourism** allowing on-line booking, combination of services, experience sharing, virtual tours, tourism product optimisation etc…: the INTERREG IVC project DANTE is collecting practices (see also I-SPEED).

- **investment in the large-scale uptake of ICT-based innovations** within and between regions to address key societal challenges, through targeted uptake :
  - **Look at Cybersudoe best practices relevant to mountain areas!**

- **ICT applications for competitiveness and traceability of mountain food products:**
  - **Applications for marketing of mountain foods**: In Scotland, Macbeths of Forres, "the Scottish on-line butcher" produces high quality Scotch Beef and markets it on-line.

More information on ICT and mountain areas:
Euromontana thematic page on ICT - Cybersudoe good practices relevant to mountain areas
European Mountain ICT Forum: www.emict-forum.eu

3. ENHANCING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SMES, THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR (FOR THE EAFRD) AND THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR (FOR THE EMFF)

What does EU want to achieve?

The EU wants to invest in **SMEs**, considered to contribute 58% of European business added value, so that they create new employment and enhance their capacity to operate on a larger scale, within and outside their region of origin. More particularly with regard to agriculture and forestry, EU wants to:

- secure **viable food production**;
- contribute to **job creation, maintenance and growth in rural areas**;
- address the challenges of the **size of agricultural holdings** in some regions, and the sector's **age structure**, with only around 6% of farmers under 35 across the EU;
- foster **productivity and efficiency** to respond to competition from non-EU countries, rising input costs, market volatility, and environmental challenges.

How?

The CSF foresees the priority use of **financial instruments** to contribute to SME investments, advisory services, development of new business models, restructuring and generational renewal of farms.

How/why mountains can contribute?

Mountains both provide public goods and produce **many private goods and services**.

Historically, several mountain areas in Europe have been considered as **an ideal place for industry because of nearby energy resources** (water power and, more recently, hydroelectricity plants). Mountains still offer many advantages for producing various types of renewable energy, and these advantages will become more important as fuel prices increase. However, state aid rules now forbid providing mountain companies with a preferential electricity rate, even though – in most cases - mountain areas are not compensated for what they provide to the rest of society! Moreover, the mountain environment represents an advantage for several industries requiring pure air or water (specific chemistry) or cool temperatures (data centres).

According to a recent European Commission study, mountains produce up to **11.4% of European agricultural output**! Even if their productivity is lower than that of more intensive farming systems, mountains occupy 15% of Europe's utilised agricultural area, and therefore represent a significant and precious production potential which will be needed as demand for – quality - food increases. New forms of food industries are being redeveloped. A new chestnut processing factory opened in Isola in France. Ancient cereals are being planted again in the Austrian mountains to produce local bread. Mountains are an ideal place to experiment with the 'relocalisation' of the economy. Large mountain forests provide resources for **excellent wood supply chains**, as in Vorarlberg in Austria. Mountains are also renowned for **tourism**, an economic sector which is considered by European Commission on its webpage to account for 10% of EU GDP and employ 12% of the labour force.

Most businesses in mountain areas are small or medium size. A recent intersectorial diagnosis by APEM in the French Pyrenees establishes, for example, that **96.2% of businesses have less than 10 employees**. There are significant opportunities for them to improve their competitiveness, and policy-makers can provide support in this regard. Finally, people today attach a growing importance to their **quality of life**. Many people would like to live in a mountain area if only they could find the job they look for and were able to access essential services. With the development of ICT, many businesses that once needed a central location can now operate from anywhere. This is a key chance

for mountains to develop their economy and for the distribution of European population and wealth to reach a better balance, for the benefit of all.

The service sector, in particular, is growing in importance and is the biggest employer in many European mountain areas. In this sector, there is room for the creation of many businesses and the provision of modern jobs for younger generations.

What do they need in order to contribute?

First, there is a need to recognise that mountain areas represent a **potential for growth** and that it is worth investing in these areas, also with Structural Funds. Specifying that any action regarding SMEs located in rural areas should be funded only by EAFRD is not really a promising signal in that respect! In addition, financial engineering instruments need to be better adapted to rural SMEs.

The competitiveness of mountain SMEs, including farm and forest businesses, is hampered mainly by **higher production costs** due to **physical characteristics,** by **remoteness** from markets, lack of accessibility and **sparsity of businesses**, which means that transport costs are high and economies of scale are limited. At times when innovation is considered to be the first driver of economic growth, good connections between people inside mountain areas, and between them and people outside, are absolutely crucial. This requires physical accessibility by road, rail and air of course. But more and more, connectivity via ICT is considered to be a key driver: **the roll out of next generation broadband has to be prioritised in mountain areas**. Support to investment in buildings and specific adapted machinery is also crucial, as high investment costs are often a great obstacle to business start-up.

In addition, companies need to be supported in the development of value chains that compensate higher costs with higher added value. Quality development and certification, shorter supply chains, excellence and innovation will help mountain businesses to succeed.

Finally, **succession planning from one generation to the next** is probably one of the biggest challenges for mountain economies. The average age of entrepreneurs is higher in mountain areas than in the lowlands, and many companies are in danger of not being transferred. APEM estimates that 20% of entrepreneurs will retire in the coming 10 years in the Pyrenees, and 39% of them envisage no business transfer at all. In parallel, business creation rates in the same area are above national average. These trends call for an active and concerted policy for economic renewal.

Example of actions/practices/policies/projects which could deliver on this objective

The following measures are already implemented in some mountain areas and are likely to deliver good results in other mountain areas across Europe:

- Support **diversification at SME level** :
  - o A good example, echoing the example of MEDLAINE, is the **Ardelaine** cooperative in Ardèche, Massif Central, France. In the declining, traditional sector of wool processing, a group of workers of a closing enterprise combined in a cooperative to reorganize the factory in 1982. They decided to accentuate the **heritage value** of the buildings they inherited, the **traditional aspects of wool production**, **new methods of product creation** and **selling methods**. Further they diversified into the cultural sector (creation of two local museums) and tourist activities. *See PADIMA good practice guide on economic diversification, p. 134.*

- Support **entrepreneurship** through education from an early age :
  - o In Hedmark (Norway), the SANN - *School, employment, local environment, innovation -* initiative (PADIMA Good Practice 39 on education), developed by the County and the

Koppang High School, focuses on giving students in their first year of high school the opportunity to create products in work-related situations, not only in an educational environment. Students do short internships with a specific innovation-related objective. The programme has had great success in terms of both involvement of young pupils (+200% growth in numbers) and teachers, and increasing pupils' self-confidence and capacity to create a business.

- Give particular attention to the potential that **women** represent for mountain areas:

    o The *Womeninnovation* initiative from Buskerud, Norway (presented in the PADIMA project) has put the accent on the specific creation of business by women – in a context where, at national level, only 28% of the entrepreneurs were women, and much less in mountain areas. The initiative involves several aspects and is about **development of competences, networking** and **product release** on the market.

In the field of **agriculture and food production**, we identify the following actions as prominent to improve the competitiveness and economic viability of the mountain farming and food sector:

- Support for the **structuring of added value supply chains** using:
    o **Quality development**, especially – though not only - in relation with the uptake of the new optional quality term « mountain product »: EAFRD Article 17 measures must be used to develop quality mountain products;
    o **Training of farmers and supply chain actors** to improve their technical and marketing skills;
    o Support to **cooperation for the development** of new products and new processes, cooperation between farmers and with other supply chain actors;

        ▪ In the Pyrenees, a territorial supply chain has been developed in order to support the production of an old potato variety ('Pays de Sault'). Potato production has been combined with other production (especially of bovine meat) in order to sustain the agricultural economy of the region. This area is one of leading mountain territories for young people to start farming.

    o Support to **cross-fertilising strategies associating food and tourism promotion;**
- Support **young farmers** who wish settle in mountain areas, with particular attention to newcomers which do not have direct access to family capital and machinery;
- Support for **research and advice** improving the efficiency of farming practices in mountains;
- Support for **investments in buildings and in machinery**, looking at all innovative ways to organise this support, including financial engineering which should be better suited to rural SMEs and be better used in both ERDF and EAFRD (with extended scale and scope of rural finance tools as low-rates loans and capital-risk insurances);
- Support for **diversification into other activities and to pluri-activity.**

In the field of mountain **forestry and wood supply chains**, competitiveness and value added can be increased by:

- Support for all stages of **local projects,** including the preparation phase, so that they are adapted to the local context, using integrated approaches, e.g. at mountain range level, and taking into account the whole wood sector, not just one part of the supply chain in isolation;
    o The project UNCI'PLUS, implemented by FORESPIR in the Catalan Pyrenees (Spain) aimed at improving multifunctional management of mountain pine forest and at characterising the properties of wood from mountain pines to diversify marketing opportunities and increase added value.
- Making **tools available** and the **legislative context favourable**: possibilities of training, branding and certification;

- Providing **adequate funding:**
  o CAP, by maintaining support for forest investments and for replanting;
  o Complementarity between ERDF, EAFRD, ESF;
  o Funding or financial solutions provided at local level;
  o Look for solutions to finance also investment, infrastructures, for property guidance activities and the mobilisation of owners;
- Support for **research & advice** improving the efficiency of forestry practices in mountains;
- Support for **investments in buildings and machinery**, looking at all innovative ways to organise this support, including financial engineering schemes better suited to rural SMEs ;

In the field of **tourism**:

- Support the development of **new tourism products** (packages, specific experiences) and services that help to improve revenue, employment and numbers of visitors throughout the year:
  o In Extremadura (Spain), the Optitur company provides tourism operators with advice on how to target and build specific tourism products for different target groups;
  o Tourism networks and routes – such as the Cheese route in Austria, the network of churches in Scotland, and the bike trail in Switzerland – are the types of actions which could find support under these priorities;
  o New forms of interpretation at nature or cultural heritage sites;
- Support development of **strong territorial branding strategies** with territorial brands applying transversally to products and services :
  o In Entlebuch, a Biosphere Reserve in Switzerland, the brand 'Echt Entlebuch' respects clear specifications elaborated in partnership with local businesses, and applies to both products and services. Restaurants serve locally-produced food.

In the **health & care sector**:

- Support the development of a **highly innovative care sector**, especially exploring the potential of ICT and e-health:
  o IFREMMONT is a centre of excellence in mountain medicine created in 2005 in the Mont-Blanc area with the support of Rhône-Alpes Region (France) and the EU. Four poles have been developed, serving local people and mountain professionals. http://www.ifremmont.com/
  o Several projects have looked at e-health, such as IMMODI (www.interreg-immodi.net and RESATER (http://www.observatorioresater.eu/) : they demonstrated that development in e-health increases the attractiveness of health care professions in mountain areas and is likely to create jobs, with positive impacts on migration trends. In Aragon (Spain), 108 jobs have been maintained or created thanks to such an initiative (funded by INTERREG IVB SUDOE).

Finally, mountains are the ideal place to support eco-innovation and development of related businesses: supporting SME development in the field of renewable energies and life sciences for example will contribute greatly to EU objectives (see priorities 4 to 6).

More ideas on competitiveness of mountain SMEs:
- PADIMA good practices on economic diversification
- Euromontana position paper on mountain farming
- EuroMARC policy recommendations, guidelines and brochures
- Euromontana study on forestry supply chains
- Euromontana recommendations on sustainable tourism

4. SUPPORTING THE SHIFT TOWARDS A LOW-CARBON ECONOMY IN ALL SECTORS

What does EU want to achieve

The EU aims to have an **efficient low carbon economy by 2050** and to **cut emissions by 80-95% by 2050** compared to 1990 levels. In the shorter term, it has set the following targets for 2020:

- **Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20 %** compared to 1990 levels, or by 30% if the conditions are right;
- Increasing the **share of renewables** in final energy consumption to **20 %**
- Moving towards a **20 % increase in energy efficiency**

How?

Under this priority, the EU wants the CSF funds to contribute via a leveraging effect. The priority is put on incentives to private investment and on compensating only market failures. According to the European Commission, **financial engineering** should be used in priority.

How can mountains contribute?

Mountain areas are rich in renewable energy resources. Mountains can make key contributions through the use of their resources - such as water, sun and wind - from which they can produce low carbon energies. For some resources, the potential for development is still huge. For others, such as water, which has been exploited in most of Europe's mountains for more than a century, the challenge is related more to using the resource more effectively. The potential of mountain areas **to deliver significant amounts of renewable energy** to society must be recognised **and rewarded**.

Furthermore, **mountain areas have always had an interest in energy efficiency as their needs are high due to climatic and geographic constraints.** There is still great potential to reduce energy, electricity and heat consumption in mountain areas and use energy resources more efficiently for public, private and business purposes. This applies to **housing, businesses** (including tourism) but also to **transport**. Mountain people are not always offered many opportunities when it comes to collective transport. There is room for **innovation and the reduction of carbon emissions in mountain areas using smart approaches to sustainable transport.** Mountains can lead the way for all remote territories in designing and implementing new promising solutions.

This also extends to **e-services, e-learning, e-government and remote work**: people living in remote communities often have to drive long distances, individually, to access work, services, schools or leisure: reducing transport needs through ICT can greatly contribute to EU targets.

The **climatic constraints can also be seen as advantages**: some industries which require cooling can benefit from a cooler mountain location. Young people have suggested that the heat generated in data centres can be used to heat industrial or public facilities. Their proximity to their clients is unnecessary if broadband connections are sufficient, and these industries can provide jobs locally.

Last but not least, 41% of the area of Europe's mountains is covered by **forests** (EEA, 2010), and farming systems using **pasture and grassland** dominate over other types of farming systems. Forestry represents a great potential both for biomass production and for carbon storage, especially with increased growth in a warmer climate with more CO_2 in the atmosphere. Pasture farming systems are **low-input farming systems:** they use few nitrogen fertilisers and are less mechanised. Maintaining and optimising these production systems means favouring **carbon storage** and **low carbon food production systems**.

What do they need in order to contribute?

In its position paper on energy released in 2009, Euromontana produced 9 recommendations to better support the development of energy efficiency measures and of the use of the potential of the mountain renewable energy sources.

- **Energy saving.** Reducing consumption while increasing quality of life.
- **Area surveys and energy cadastres.** Evaluation of the population's energy needs, and the area's potential for supplying resources that can be used to produce energy.
- **Proper compensation for natural resources.** Mountain regions can not only be energetically self-sufficient, but can also use their resources as engines for development and sources of income.
- **Combined natural resources produce energy and revenue.** The combined use of different natural energy resources (solar, wind, geothermal) can be a source of future income.
- **Quality certification to consolidate processes.** Environmental certification must include energy-use certification. A systemic framework for the energy policy of mountain areas is needed (integrating questions of transport, environment, etc.) referring to the regional scale.
- **Training.** Training tools need to be better suited toward the creation of a common standard at the European level.
- **Sharing information.** The European institutions and Member States must encourage the creation of information networks and centres in mountain areas.
- **Energy desks at the municipal level.** Mountain municipalities must be supported for setting up their own « energy desks » where citizens can go to get information, develop projects, etc.
- **EU credit lines.** Euromontana specifically suggests that the European Union's budgeting process should include specific strategies in the areas of energy savings.

When it comes to improving sustainability and decreasing carbon emissions in the field of transport, mountains need investments in innovative solutions, such as **alternative fuels** and **all forms of collective efficient organisation of transport adapted to seasonality and the density of population** of the relevant areas.

When it comes to **reducing transport needs** via development of digital applications and remote work, mountains primarily need the **roll-out of next generation internet to be prioritized** in these areas. Then they need to be supported in their investments in applications, training and uptake of new technologies by businesses and administrations.

Improvement of infrastructure is also likely to **facilitate the installation in mountain areas of industries** which would have an interest in being located there for environmental reasons (temperature, purity of air, proximity of renewable energies) but suffer from too limited connections with markets. For example, the municipality of Covilha (Portugal) [has obtained a contract for creation of a data centre which will create 1500 jobs](#) in mountain areas.

Support is needed in the **field of forestry to improve carbon efficiency of wood production** systems while optimising carbon storage in mountain forests.

Finally, **pastoral farming systems** require all forms of targeted support that will allow these economic systems to remain viable: from investment to support to creation of high added value supply chains, diversification and strategic business monitoring.

Example of actions/practices/policies/projects which could deliver on this objective

In the field of energy:

- Developing **sustainable energy action plans (SEAPs) in mountain communities and smart grids.** The SEAPs should follow the basic idea of working on a concept of self-sufficiency for mountain communities, from small villages to small or medium-sized cities, and should take into account all aspects related to energy (energy saving, use of renewable energy) in all sectors, starting with actions in public sector. Electricity grids should be reconfigured to integrate more dispersed forms of energy production. This would imply significant upgrades to transmission and distribution grid systems.

- **Fostering the development of new types of construction** with new technologies using traditional materials that are available locally (wood), new ways of doing business, new professions, and new trades. The Autonomous Province of Trento (Italy) instituted, between 2000 and 2008, multi-sectoral policies on energy savings, focusing on residential buildings and the establishment of an « Energy District ». The objective is to make progress towards future building techniques with "zero impact".

- **Developing the use of renewable energies**. For example:
  - **Biomass energy systems.** In Scotland, the Clim-ATIC project included the launch of a wide-scale wood energy development programme called "[Low Carbon Cairngorms](#)", to develop all aspects of the wood industry, from production through to consumption, by involving all relevant stakeholders.
  - **Solar energy**. In Aveyron (France), the sloping barn roofs of cattle breeders are used to produce energy for their own use and to sell on the market.
  - **Wind energy**: In the United Kingdom alone, production has been multiplied by a factor of 300 since 1990 and has tripled between 2000 and today. 25% of the power production (188 MW) has been installed in the Highlands of Scotland.

In the field of transport, we provide examples under priority 7 although they could also be considered as relevant to this priority. In the field of e-services as well, we provide many examples under priority 2 but most can equally be considered as contributing to this priority.

In the field of agriculture, the following actions could be beneficial:

- Supporting **investment in agricultural and livestock buildings** which responds to high energy efficiency criteria and/or integrates energy production (solar panels, co-generation, biomass…). The level of support must be adequate, considering that construction costs are already 2 or 3 times greater in mountain areas compared to lowlands;

- Support the **optimisation of livestock management systems** to ensure energy efficiency and maximum carbon storage in pastureland;

- Provide **economic support to managers of pastures, grasslands and peatlands**, especially in mountain areas where lower profitability might lead to land abandonment: payments to areas with natural constraints, agri-environmental measures supporting existing beneficial practices, support to investment in new territorial added value supply chains, and valorising quality development are all measures likely to contribute to maintaining pastures.

For mountain areas in South-Eastern Europe, support to the mountain farming sector is crucial to ensure continuation of delivery of environmental services and a low-carbon economy.

In the field of **forestry**, some actions could deliver on this objective such as:

- Support development of **new forestry technologies;**
  - The NewFor INTERREG Alpine Space project seeks to improve the accessibility of mountain forests, to achieve greater efficiency in forest harvesting and transport of timber products, in the context of sustainable forest management, taking into account the needs of the timber industry and all issues related to climate change and sustainable adaptation;
  - Support the development of innovative technologies on the supply side (e.g. thermal treatment technologies) as well as technologies used for delivery further down the supply chain.

- Support **forest replanting** where it is appropriate:
  - Financing could be through leveraging the capabilities of the European Carbon Fund. Currently, all funded projects are located in developing or emerging countries. The opportunity for projects not specifically targeting emerging or developing countries and aiming at financing actions or positive measures to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases should be studied. In this case, this fund could particularly be used to finance activities such as forest replanting.

- Support **climate-friendly management of new and existing forests:**
  - The Bosque modelo Urbion is an example of sustainable forest management rewarded by a label in Spain.

More information:

Euromontana study: "The mobilisation of wood and on the organisation of wood supply chains in mountain areas - Examples of good practices from Europe"

Euromontana thematic page on energy

Euromontana position paper on Energy and its summary.

5. PROMOTING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND RISK PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

What does the EU want to achieve ?

- Developing the knowledge base
- Integrating adaptation into EU policies:
    - Increasing the resilience of health and social policies
    - Increasing the resilience of agriculture and forests
    - Increasing the resilience of biodiversity, ecosystems and water
    - Increasing the resilience of coastal and marine areas
- Prevent natural and man-made disasters and strengthen the European disaster response

How?

The EU aims to support **strategies, management plans, investments, prevention and mapping tools, disaster management systems, water and soil management systems, and genetic diversity** which all contribute to adaptation to climate change and risk prevention. Member States and regions benefit here from a broad flexibility to use the different funds: ERDF is the main funding source; EAFRD cover needs in the field of agriculture and forestry; ESF is identified as a source of funding for training, education and skill development activities; EAFRD is used in the field of farm advisory services. Complementarity with the LIFE programme will also be sought.

How/why mountains can contribute?

Mountain areas are recognised as being among the most vulnerable areas sensitive to climate change (COM 2007-354): fast rising temperatures, significant melting of glaciers, changes of precipitation levels and of water courses, changes in habitats, etc. Mountain economies will be among the most severely affected by climate change due to dependence on snow for winter sports, changes in resource availability, changes in plant species and diseases, and higher vulnerability to natural disasters. This requires a strong adaptation policy for mountain communities and for Europe as a whole, as the impacts of climate change in mountains will influence all of Europe.

According to the EEA (2010), *"the climate of Europe's mountains has changed over the past century, with temperatures and snowlines both rising. […] It is likely that temperatures will continue to increase, especially at higher altitudes, and that summer precipitation and wind speeds will increase in northern Europe and decrease in Southern Europe. In the Alps and the Pyrenees, snow fall and snow cover increased during the last century and these trends are predicted to continue. The lower elevation of permafrost is likely to rise by several hundred meters. All these changes will significantly affect diverse ecosystem services and economies across Europe. "*

The EEA also refers to mountains as being "*Europe's water towers*" because the precipitation that falls on them, as snow or rain, flows downstream to provide water for domestic, agricultural (especially irrigation) and industrial uses. Thus, "*Changes in land use, hydropower development and climate change may all affect the provision of ecosystem services related to water.[…] Floods often originating in mountain areas are the most common natural disaster in Europe, leading to widespread impacts*".

Mountains must therefore be seen as a **strong asset for Europe when it comes to mitigating and adapting to climate change:** the places where action will lead to a better situation for all of Europe.

What do they need in order to contribute?

In order to contribute, mountains need to be able to invest in climate change adaptation:
- Development of mountain **climate change observatories** and **risk prevention** and **disaster management** systems, particularly for floods, landslides and fires;
- Adaptation of **tourism strategies** to become climate-friendly and year-round;
- **Maintaining mountain forests** in a good state to prevent natural hazards, helping forest businesses to adapt to changes in species (or, in some cases, plant new species) and diseases;
- **Maintain pastoralism activities** so that they can continue playing their roles in natural risk management (fires, avalanches, landslides, erosion);
- **Increase the water efficiency of irrigated permanent crops.**

Example of actions/practices/policies/projects which could deliver on that objective

- **Investment to prevent damage and increase resilience of the built environment:** invest in flood defences and spatial planning to minimise construction in zones identified as risky.
- **Developing and maintaining observatories of climate change in mountain areas**, to promote knowledge exchange and information sharing, prepare adaptation policies with stakeholders and share best practices for adaptation in mountains. See the example of the [Pyrenean observatory of Climate change](#) (OPCC) created by French and Spanish regions and Andorra, or the [STRADA](#) project.
- **Improve risk prevention systems and disaster management systems:**
  - The INTERREG IVB **PYROSUDOE** project has elaborated common tools to improve prevention of forest fires in South-Eastern Europe; the project [AlpFFIRS](#) – "**Alpine Forests Fire Warning System**", created a network aiming at reducing the impacts caused by fires in the Alps.
  - The **Flood Early Warning System for the Rhine** (FEWS-Rhine) has been developed by a Swiss-Dutch-German Consortium, enabling flood forecasts and warnings; **MINERVE** for the Rhône.
  - A **people-centred early warning system** for extreme weather events (e.g., avalanches, floods) was developed in Sogn og Fjordane, Norway, as part of the [Clim-ATIC project](#).
- **Supporting pastoralism to enhance its capacity to prevent natural hazards:**
  - The managers of the [ski resort of La Peyragude](#), France, have concluded an agreement with farmers, so that their animals graze the ski slopes in summer, reducing the risk of avalanches in winter and allowing the resort to save on costly investments in avalanche barriers.
  - In many mountain areas, sylvo-pastoral systems decrease the likelihood of **forest fires**.
- Improving **water efficiency** and **erosion control** of mountain permanent crop systems;
- **Support conservation and exploitation of traditional varieties and breeds**: Mountain farming systems still use many traditional breeds and varieties which can respond well to changing conditions and be resistant to increased water stress or new diseases.
  - In Torino and Trento (Italy), old apple varieties are efficiently cultivated and marketed;
  - Mountains still host a wide variety of sheep and cattle breeds which produce milk, meat or both and are particularly well adapted to the harsh mountain climate;
- **Better exploiting mountain forests to maintain them**. Solutions exist to harvest wood on slopes which, in some areas, can help to achieve better protection functions.
  - Enterprises like the [Gurndin Company](#) (Trento, Italy), harvest wood using cable yarding.
  - The Alpine Space [MANFRED](#) project defined management strategies to adapt Alpine Space forests to climate change risks.
- **Support strategies for adaptation to climate change of mountain tourism destinations**:
  - The project [CLIMAlpTOUR](#) – Climate Change and its impact on tourism in the Alpine Space – provides sound knowledge of the different aspects of the climate change on alpine tourism.

More information: Euromontana thematic page on [environment](#) - [Research on climate change in mountains](#)

6. PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND PROMOTING RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

What does the EU want to achieve?

The EU wants the key goals of its Biodiversity Strategy and its Framework Directives on water, birds and habitats, soil, air quality and waste to be achieved:

- Protecting water resources and the aquatic environment
- Waste prevention and treatment
- Halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services by 2020, and restoring them as far as is feasible
- Nature protection
- Protection and sustainable use of soil resources
- Improving ambient air quality and provide cleaner air

How?

The EU would like to primarily finance investments in **resource management** (water supply, treatment and re-use, waste management), in **green infrastructure** for protection and restoration of biodiversity, and in actions to reduce transportrelated air pollution. The ERDF should also support diversification of local economies in both rural and urban contexts. The EAFRD will invest in the restoration of ecosystems and biodiversity and in improvements in water and soil quality.

How/why mountains can contribute?

The European Environment Agency (EEA) described mountains as an "*underestimated ecological treasure*", highlighting the many environmental functions they fulfil: water towers, which service lowland areas; recreational uses and aesthetics of the landscape; and areas of high biodiversity and many important habitats (EEA, 2010). Mountains are very rich in biodiversity and a crucial reservoir of species for Europe. The EEA (2010) identifies 42 mountain habitats and 256 species endemic to mountain ranges. The forests, the landscapes, the purity of air and water, the rich biodiversity of these areas benefit not only mountain people, but Europe as a whole.

Mountain farming and forestry and land management play major roles in enhancing the environment. The positive contribution of mountain agriculture to the environment is widely recognised and supported by a comprehensive body of literature. Throughout the EU, mountain agriculture, including the production of food, plays a central role in the preservation of both biodiversity and natural landscapes. It also tends to use relatively few chemicals (fertilisers, pesticides), which is critical, particularly because the water that flows from Europe's mountains is of high quality and is vital for a large proportion of Europe's population.

The climate, topography, and natural and human history of mountains explain why they have specific ecosystems. These are often **fragile and threatened in particular by changes of human activity** (e.g. changes of land use) and by climate change. Protecting the environment in mountain areas means supporting traditional land-use models, pasture and grassland-based farming practices and also the forests, permanent crops and terraced fields which constitute unique cultural landscapes.

It is in the interest of all Europeans to protect the mountain environment by avoiding or overcoming threats to activities which benefit the environment and by limiting the expansion of harmful practices.

What do they need in order to contribute?

Mountains need to be recognised for the public goods and ecosystem services they deliver to Europe and to be rewarded for them. The activities which contribute positively to the environment need to be strengthened; protection against harmful practices is also essential.

In many mountain areas across Europe, traditional farming practices are at risk of disappearing due to their lower profitability compared with more competitive lowland farming systems, as well as the ageing of the farming population. This leads to the abandonment of less productive and/or less accessible land and the intensification of agriculture in valley bottoms. Reversing this trend requires **support to these forms of environmentally-friendly farming**. The same situation applies to mountain forests, in which harvesting costs are greater than in the lowlands. In more densely populated mountain areas or those close to agglomerations, the **loss of agricultural land** through urban sprawl and **fragmentation of land parcels** is a major problem which needs to be overcome.

Example of actions/practices/policies/projects which could deliver on this objective

- **Improve water and waste treatment infrastructures**: mountain communities must have the capacity to upgrade their infrastructures to cope with their needs (especially tourism needs);
- **Improve energy efficiency in mountain buildings**:
  - The Alphouse "Alpine building culture and ecology" project worked on combining preservation of traditional building culture with acceptable energy performance building in the Alpine area, looking at local know-how and skills, local materials and techniques and promoting the competitiveness of the territory, transferring these competences to the refurbishment and restoration sector.
  - The INTERREG SUDOE EcoARQ project worked on restoration of built heritage in touristic areas using ecological practice, and organising workshops and training exercises, especially in Portugal and Spain.
- **Support land managers in their production of public goods**:
  - In areas facing high pressure on land, controlling urban sprawl, especially on the most productive land and land of high value for providing ecosystem services, such as biodiversity and flood control;
  - Payments that compensate the on-costs of production of mountain farming (LFA payments) in order to prevent land abandonment.
  - Agri-environmental measures: in mountain areas, these should reward the continuation of existing beneficial practices:
    - Maintenance of pastoralism activities including grazing less productive land;
    - Water efficiency of farming systems based on permanent crops;
    - Maintenance of terraces;
    - Adoption of practices protecting against erosion;
    - Support mowing of meadows and grassland by hand, rather than machines;
  - Development of quality supply chains that contribute to the provision of public goods, ensuring links between the protection of the environment and the marketing and added value of the products.
- **Improve energy efficiency and transport alternatives:** as described under priorities 4 & 7, mountain communities have high energy needs and, at present, few energy choices. Investment in renewable energies and sustainable and alternative forms of transport is also essential.

- **Develop sustainable energy action plans** and **energy cadastres (see priority 4).**
- **Rationalize the use of energy through industrial ecology, which can be realised in the mountains:**
  - Hallingdal Trepellet is a wood pellet production company in Buskerud, Norway, that uses the heat from a neighbouring waste incineration plant, the raw material from the surrounding forests, and waste from nearby paper pulp mills.
  - In the Achen valley (Bavaria, Germany), a "biomass farm" has been created, with both a wood pellet production plant that transforms local raw material and then supplies companies, individuals and surrounding heat networks, and a biomass information centre.
- Protecting and enhancing **cultural heritage**: cultural landscapes, traditional food production, and ensuring valorisation through economic activities such as tourism;
  - The mountain community of Valle Trompia (Italy) created a strong and vital integrated cultural system through the SIBCA project (Integrated system for Cultural and Natural Heritage of Valle Trompia), able to connect its own territory, its population and public users, involving them in a cultural path to create the conditions for social development. Rediscovering and improving the peculiar local culture such as 'Geosites' was key.
  - In Soca Valley (Slovenia), a European Destination of Excellence in the field of tourism, the 'walk of peace' was created to valorise heritage from the World War I Isonzo front and foster sustainable development. A signed 100-km pathway between the Julian Alps and the Adriatic Sea connects 6 outdoor museums, fortifications, cemeteries and natural heritage sites. A historical study and research centre was also created.
  - In the Neamţ mountains (Romania), cultural and natural heritage are promoted and used as a tool to develop specific types of tourism while protecting the environment.
  - In the framework of the programme of regional and local parks in Norway, a dynamic, long-term, committed relationship platform for communities, governments and businesses with an interest to preserve and develop natural and cultural assets in a defined landscape and identity area has developed. Valdres natur- og kulturpark in Oppland and Nærøyfjorden in Sogn og Fjordane are good local examples.
  - In the Pyrenees, the Plan for support to the agro-sylvo-pastoral economy helps to maintain traditional agro-systems and pastoral sheds.
- **Improving environment protection and resource efficiency in forestry:**
  - **Including environmental concerns within all activities** (e.g. biodegradable oil for forestry machineries);
  - Better design of forest roads (or use of cable technologies) to minimise water pollution;
- **Halting the loss of biodiversity through target actions :**
  - The Alpine Space project SILMAS - Sustainable Instruments for Lakes Management in the Alpine Space - facilitated dialogue between the different institutions involved in managing Alpine lakes. Over a three-year period, scientists, academics and technicians from the public authorities in charge of managing the lakes have pooled their knowledge, with a particular focus on three main areas: the effects of climate change on the lakes, resolving conflicts between the different uses of the lakes, and educating the public in sustainable development.

More information:

Euromontana thematic page on environment - Euromontana thematic page on energy

Euromontana report "Mountain development based on environmental and cultural assets"

7. PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND REMOVING BOTTLENECKS IN KEY NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURES

What does EU want to achieve

- Competitive and resource-efficient transport system
- Reduction in greenhouse gases of at least 60 % by 2050 compared with 1990

How?

Unfortunately, the priorities and key actions identified in the Common Strategic Framework totally **overlook the need for targeted action in the field of transport in rural areas.** The proposed actions have two dimensions: Trans-European transport facilities and urban sustainable transport. With regard to the consumption of fossil fuels, the measures mostly mention implementation of the polluter-pays principle. However, there is no consideration of providing alternatives to the citizens of Europe who are not currently offered public transport alternatives and/or have limited chances to see public transport being supplied to their remote communities. EAFRD is identified as the fund that should bring solutions to what seems to be treated as a marginal problem. However, EAFRD will not be able to cover all needs. ERDF must also tackle rural problems.

How/why mountains can contribute?

Mountain people are not always offered a wide range of opportunities for collective transport. There is room for **innovation and the reduction of carbon emissions in mountain areas via a smart approach to sustainable transport,** and mountains can lead the way for all remote territories in designing and implementing new promising solutions. Euromontana, together with 12 partners, is currently working in the field of sustainable transport in sparsely populated areas in the framework of the Move On Green project (INTERREG IVC). After only 11 months of work, many solutions have already been identified. Where people are most reliant on individual forms of transport, as in mountain and other sparsely populated areas, collective organisations are likely to bring many benefits for Europe by reducing emissions from transport.

As mountains are major tourist destinations, the development of alternative forms of transport can also benefit tourists, as well as decreasing emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases, thus contributing to priorities 5 and 6.

What do they need in order to contribute?

First, mountains need strategies for improving transport in relation with their specific contexts. Where Trans-European Network corridors cross them, which happens quite often, they need to benefit from **efficient connections** to these. Second, they need to invest in **alternative forms of local transport**. If support is not provided for rural transport under this priority, priorities 4 to 6 could provide room for investment in the field of mountain mobility.

Example of actions/practices/policies/projects which could deliver on the objective

- **Develop solutions for sustainable transport in mountain areas**: the ACCESS project has worked on transport needs. In addition, more than 50 good practices are being identified in the Move on Green project (www.moveongreen.eu). These solutions include:
  - o **Energy efficiency and alternative fuels**. Eg. free training courses in Teruel (Spain) on efficient sustainable driving delivered by CIRCE - promotion of a new driving style and reduction of fuel consumption up to 15% in comparison to conventional driving. www.e4aragon.com/transporte
  - o **Car-sharing and Car-pooling** and other innovative "sharing" formulas (private and public). Eg. car-sharing in Epirus Region (Greece) through project LIMIT4WEDA- Light Mobility and Information Technologies for Weak Demand Areas.
  - o **Cycling promotion**. Eg. the regional bicycle rental system in West Pannonia (Hungary) includes 10 stations for taking and returning bikes in different places in this cross-border region. The aim is to increase the number of cyclists among tourists and local residents.
  - o **Transport on demand**. Eg. the experience in Burgos (Spain). The public transport line is activated when a user books transport, at least one day in advance.
  - o **Dedicated transport** (leisure bus, discobus, health bus,etc). Eg. Community Coach in Burgenland, Austria. These initiatives focus on people - mainly old and young - with limited access to individual mobility in low density rural areas. The regional government co-funds the purchase of buses and operation costs.
  - o **Intermodality**. Eg. Plans to closing valleys (Gorenjska region, Slovenia). Two municipalities have projects to close their remote valleys, aiming to exclude traffic from protected areas but still assure accessibility. This is an intermodal approach for replacing motorized traffic with more efficient public transport and environmentally friendly vehicles, electrical mini buses and taxis, boats, smart systems etc.
  - o **Redesign of existing services**. Eg. coordination and simplification of transport offers in neighbouring territories in Auvergne, France. This involves voluntary work to coordinate the 13 authorities in charge of transport in the region.
- **Improve understanding and strategic analysis of transport needs and transport policies through data creation and management:**
  - ▪ Through the SITT project in Lombardia, Italy, a web-based trans-boundary transport information system was created for on-line registration of sensitive waste transport permits, real-time monitoring and control of registered transports by GPS and a GPRS data transmission system allowing the trailers' traceability.
  - ▪ The Alpine Space Alpine mobility check project also included creation of a database including relevant data on transport to inform policies.

More information:

www.moveongreen.eu; www.facebook.com/MoveonGreen

http://www.access-alpinespace.eu/

8. PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORTING LABOUR MOBILITY

What does the EU want to achieve?

The EU wants to achieve a rate of **75 % of employment for women and men aged 20-64**. A special focus is put on groups that at present are most severely touched by unemployment: young people, older workers, low-skilled workers and legal migrants.

How?

Primarily by supporting **job creation**, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises. The CSF acknowledges that rural areas have generally a lower employment rate than the average, and recommends the EARDF (but hopefully not only) to focus on job creation in rural areas.

Member States are also encouraged to **modernise their employment services**. These should be able to provide efficient assistance for workforce transition, in particular towards emerging sectors in the renewable energies, as well as care and health sectors. The **creation of networks with employers and education institutes** has been recognised as an efficient tool for matching the gap between the supply of, and the demand for, jobs. A **better integration of young people in education schemes and/or the labour market** should also be achieved through **collaboration between education institutes and businesses** and should be approached through apprenticeship-type vocational training, more widespread internships as a first step to work, and better support for entrepreneurship by school-leavers.

How can mountains contribute?

Mountain areas have a **lower average percentage of working age people** than other areas. However, these low unemployment rates are often the result of exodus to other areas: only those who had a job stayed. The available jobs are also often **seasonal** or **low qualified jobs**. As these jobs are unattractive to young people on a long-term basis, they tend to leave. Mountains are also facing the selective departure of women.

However, some **mountain territories have developed strategies** to attract working age people to their areas and to involve them in the local economy. Platforms that map job offers and competences available, better networking between education centres and employers, integrated strategies for restructuring jobs, and the integration of migrants have already been experimented with in mountain areas, with positive results. People surveyed during the PADIMA project replied that they would like to live and work in mountain areas. Many enterprises and businesses could flourish if barriers were removed. Investing in these areas is likely to create employment.

What do they need in order to contribute?

The challenge in mountain areas is two-fold: helping those who need employees to find the right ones, and helping the unemployed to find jobs matching their expectations.

Both require the creation of conditions for economies to function successfully and for people to be able to live the modern way of life they seek. This requires improvement of accessibility by transport and access to latest generation high-speed broadband, housing and services of general interest.

A further need is the **provision of training and education** opportunities (cf priority 10) corresponding to regional, specific needs; such opportunities may have to be created. Skills are essential in order to reach a 75% rate of employment; but this is also required for the **creation of new businesses**. In

agriculture and forestry, training can improve the strategic design of professional projects carried out by unemployed people.

Finally, authorities must seek to build economic development with local people or with people who will move in and **stay for a long time, to occupy a stable working position**. Official support must be provided to **encourage governmental departments and company branches to relocate some of their activities**, even small branches in remote territories away from the metropolitan areas.

Example of actions/practices/policies/projects which could deliver on that objective

The Interreg IVC project PADIMA has looked at good practices in the field of economic diversification and territorial marketing which can help create employment in mountain areas and better market employment opportunities to suitable potential workers. Below are a few examples of successful practices.

- **Create platforms of collaboration between business and education centres** with the aim of closing the mismatch between education and economy and ease employment:
    - The **DalaWux** initiative, in Dalarna, Sweden, conducted competence analyses of 1,000 workplaces and 5,000 unemployed individuals. The results were used to adapt existing courses and to increase the employability of local people. The skills that meet the needs of industry and society have been taught during in-school training and on-site internships.

- **Create direct relationships between enterprises and schools to ease local recruitment of staff and help young people to find jobs:**
    - The wood sector in Norway had more and more difficulties in attracting young people, and the young people wanting to stay in their home regions did not manage to find jobs. Thus, in Buskerud, 43 manufacturers of furniture, interiors and wood products took the [initiative](#) to meet students from secondary schools and present job opportunities. Wood industry representatives presented their professions and encouraged young pupils to design small pieces of furniture. After the meeting, students sent 30 applications for new jobs to companies. Companies selected the best students and employed them.

- Support the **creation of a wide variety of new activities, not sectorally focused:**
    - The Province of Teruel, Spain, launched the 'mineral plan', supporting business development in alternative sectors after the mines had closed. The Association for the Promotion and Business Development of Teruel Ltd. (SUMA) was created with the aim of supporting investments and cash flow for (new) companies and business involvement in the region (more info in PADIMA [good practice guide on economic diversification](#) p. 110)

- **Map better the competences existing locally** and **help partners of migrant workers to find a long-term job.** A new worker will only stay for the long term if both partners of a couple moving into the mountains have satisfying professional opportunities. Integration of partners can be achieved through specific training solutions and support to the creation of businesses for partners of workers (newly) settled in mountain/rural areas or through initiatives aiming at easing recruitment.
    - In the Dalarna region, Sweden, the Teknikdalen Foundation and some businesses have created a public-private association 'The Recruitment Consultancy' which aims to facilitate the recruitment of husbands/wives of people already working in this mountain area. Every company from the region is encouraged to provide the Recruitment Consultancy with information about the partners of their employees who are looking for a job. After a personal meeting, the Recruitment Consultancy helps the candidate to target the right companies in

the area and forwards the application to them with a recommendation (More info in PADIMA guide on Territorial marketing, p. 43).

- Help **people who move in the area to find housing** in the area:
  - o In Buskerud County (Norway), an initiative called "Light in windows" has enabled to improve the occupation rate of rural buildings and houses to the benefit of new migrants.

- **Increase employability of legal migrants (from abroad)**: some specific actions are needed for foreigners in terms of language training, competence equivalence and cultural integration:
  - o Teruel Province (Spain) and Dalarna region (Sweden) have developed **specific training courses** for immigrants who arrived recently in the country and need language classes or specific competencies to find a job easily (good practices 6 and 20 on education).
  - o In terms of **cultural integration** and help with competence equivalence, several newcomers in the study areas of the project have stressed the role of "immigrant hosts" working within municipalities in mountain areas to help newcomers to settle down (through assistance in administrative tasks, but also facilitating contacts with inhabitants of same profile, etc. good practice 22, on territorial marketing).

- **Encourage youth entrepreneurship:**
  - o Local development agency PINS in Croatia implemented the "**YES**" project (see info in EN or HR) through which they educated 50 young people to become entrepreneurs. After a short period, 10 of them started to work as tourist guides, and another 10 - mostly young women - started with different entrepreneurial activities and are still active.
  - o Ungt entreprenørskap (UE) is a national Norwegian non-profit organization that works with entrepreneurship in schools and to stimulate collaboration between schools and businesses. UE has organisations in most counties of Norway. One of the activities organised in this framework in mountain region is the "SUM" or "Creative youth fair": the mountain Regions of Hedmark/Sør-Trøndelag organise, in collaboration with EU and Fjellregion, a yearly large event where young people show their work in enterprises, and where ordinary businesses come to meet the young people.

- **Facilitate business creation in remote areas**:
  - o The idea of a 'Regional agency for mountain settlements' has been piloted in the area of Canavese, Piemonte Region (Italy), with the support of EAFRD LEADER funds. The agency aims at implementing social and economic development by sustaining the creation of new enterprises, attracting resources towards marginal areas and increasing the number of enterprises that operate in mountain context. 11 businesses have been created as a result.

More information:

PADIMA – Education and training - Final report - Good practice guide - Newsletter
PADIMA – Economic diversification– Final report - Good practice guide – Newsletter
PADIMA – Territorial marketing – Final report– Good practice guide – Newsletter
European mountain Convention 2012, Chambéry, France '**Youth to the top: the mountain path to the future'** : Declaration – Conference page and presentations

9. PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMBATING POVERTY

What does the EU want to achieve ?

Promoting social inclusion, in particular through the reduction of poverty, by aiming to **lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and exclusion**.

How?

Member States are invited to tackle this thematic objective by **active inclusion** of people who are excluded from the labour market, including marginalised communities such as the Roma, through **better support and guidance**, **access to general and vocational education, and modernisation of social protection systems**. They want to achieve, in particular, better coordination of education, social protection systems, and labour market policies. They also want to **promote access to sustainable, high-quality services of general interest, including health care**.

The ESF can provide income complements but only as part of an integrated pathway to the labour market and for a limited time. Public employment schemes can be supported only as a transitional measure with the aim of increasing the skills, competences and qualifications of people and thus help them reintegrate the labour market. Member States are invited to create, update and make use of **maps of poverty** when designing and implementing integrated strategies to support the most disadvantaged groups and areas. These maps need to be elaborated at the relevant scale to highlight the particular challenges of mountains as much as is feasible.

How can mountains contribute?

Mountains are both home to marginalised communities and welcoming territories for refugees and migrants from all over the world:
- Home to **marginalised communities** because people living in many poor mountain villages, especially in the East and South of Europe, have very difficult conditions. In the most remote parts of the Carpathians, access to water and electricity is not guaranteed. People live from semi-subsistence farming and are very sensitive to any environmental or social change.
- **Welcoming territories** because some remote territories have developed initiatives to welcome an increasing variety of new inhabitants. These can be **refugees**, **migrants** from abroad in general or, more and more with the economic crisis, people who had moved away and **are moving back to the mountains,** turning a holiday home (often their old 'family home') into a permanent home. A further group consists of people who are not from the mountains and move there in search of a **better, quieter and healthier life,** sometimes after losing their job in the city. All of these types of people may start to farm (again) or create a small business. For mountain areas, these people are new inhabitants who can dynamise local development in a context of depopulation.

Other problems are related to **employment that is seasonal and/or requires low qualifications**. People employed in such jobs can suffer from social insecurity, especially young people, and particularly in tourist areas where living standards and costs of living are quite high.

Finally, mountain areas are often **facing difficulties to maintain existing services** due to their poor profitability and the need to respond to new or changing needs of the local population. The on-going territorial concentration of services of general interest (SGI) leads to a vicious circle of further deterioration in the quality of provision which, in turn, decreases demand for the existing services.

What do they need in order to contribute?

Poverty and social exclusion in mountain areas stem from depopulation, slow **dismantling of communities** and **related services, and low income** and **insecure jobs**. Needs and strategies to address those needs vary from one mountain range to another. Services are critical in most mountain areas, as well as the modernisation of the agro-food sector and development of market access which forms the vital basis for other economic activities, especially in the **poorest mountain areas of South-Eastern Europe and some Mediterranean mountain areas**. In these economically deprived areas, **modernisation of the agro-food and forestry sectors, through measures described in priorities 1 to 3,** are essential to build a mountain economy providing more secure and income-generating activities for local people and to slow down the on-going exodus, especially of younger generations.

Nearly everywhere, and aside from territorial development policies, mountains need **legislation that prioritises Services of general interest** (SGI). Legislative frameworks must be put in place specifying which services must be provided and the minimum standards for their supply. As technologies and customer needs evolve over time, **constant adaptations of the requisite frameworks are required**. As mentioned several times before in this document, **next generation broadband & ICT should first be rolled out in mountain and rural areas** to improve their accessibility and economic potential. Changes in legislation in this field should be preceded by a **territorial impact assessment** taking into account the specificities of mountain areas. **Independent regulatory authorities** should be installed to verify whether the SGI are provided as foreseen by legislation. In addition, **state aid rules must facilitate the development of innovative solutions** for the provision of services. It is necessary to focus on the spatial distribution of services within a region. A sound spatial planning policy can contribute to fostering SGI, and **decentralised economic activities** will help to maintain demand for services. Finally, **new and innovative approaches to provide services need to be developed** proactively. Best use must be made of ICTs, possible synergies of different networks, and inter-municipal cooperation as well as multi-functional offers.

Once these conditions are in place, mountains need to be **supported in their integrating functions**, through sound **welcoming policies**, fostering the **social economy**, helping people to integrate and **improving the social condition of mountain workers**, especially young people. They need better education and lifelong learning programmes to help people get the competences needed to improve their competitiveness in their economic activity or find jobs, at all ages (as discussed especially under priority 10).

They also need support to their territorial marketing and communication campaigns at both territorial and sectoral levels, to improve their attractiveness. This could benefit the production and marketing of quality foods and artisanal products from mountain areas, as well as other sectors.

Example of actions/practices/policies/projects which could deliver on that objective

- **Enhance access to sustainable, high-quality services of general interest, including health care** – some interesting initiatives have been implemented**:**
    - **Transport:**
        - Sogn og Fjordane County (Norway) is a member of the "European Safe Communities Network (ESCON)". One programme implemented in this framework, called "*Safely home for 50 kroner*" targets young people between 16 and 24, the group of people most often involved in accidents. Bus lines run on

Saturday nights (the day with highest accident rates) from most urban centres that have an upper secondary school to the rural areas, including the mountains.

- In the Central Doubs area (France), a transport-on-demand system, TADOU, has been developed to allow inhabitants of this sparsely populated area to move within the area and to bus stations connecting to the nearest town.

o **Daily needs:**

- The "Wolfach bringt's" initiative (Germany) was designed to improve accessibility to basic goods, strengthen the local pattern of retail and services and generate new ways how to distribute groceries. 8 to 15 local retailers participated, including small supermarkets, bakeries, butcher shops, pharmacies and direct selling farmers. Local residents could order groceries by internet as well as by phone, fax or catalogue. The local geriatric nursing service delivered once a week, picked up the goods at the different suppliers and distributed them.

- The MERKUR programme in Norway has been established to support retailers in areas with population decline and long distances to other retail opportunities. 11 counsellors throughout the country fulfil a range of services aiming to support business development, provide advice on how to obtain better bulk prices when ordering products, choose products, and devise new offerings. They also help mobilizing communities to support their local shops by sufficient purchases to try and counterbalance the attraction exerted by shopping centres in nearby towns.

o **Health:** mountain people are often remote from health care centres and hospitals. In the most remote locations, emergency procedures must be in place to ensure quick transport to the nearest hospital. Apart from emergencies, provision of health care services must be professionalised.

- In the Dalarna region, Sweden, through the initiative Health and Social Care College, private employers, training providers and public authorities have decided to face the challenge of providing on-site very high quality services for retired people. The initiative aims at developing and adapting the skills of existing staff and training younger generations so that they can excel in care service.

o **Post:** The pilot project Post Partner Kooperation im ländlichen Raum (Post Partner cooperation in rural areas) was realised by the Carinthian Government (Austria) together with the Carinthian Chamber of Commerce and the Austrian Post Corporation. It aims to maintain an area-wide provision for postal services in the Carinthian municipalities, through the establishment of common "Post.Partner" services by local retailers.

- **Improve the social condition of seasonal workers by:**

o **Multi-skills training**: some mountain schools have developed "multi-skills qualifications" where young people are educated in different professions: they increase their employability throughout the year.

o **Combining several jobs with one umbrella employer**: in the municipality of Luchon (Pyrenees, France), local employers (ski stations and a paper factory), wanting to have permanent staff have signed year-long contracts with people who work in the ski resort in winter, when the paper factory is closed; and in the paper factory during summer, when the ski station is closed. Staff is hired by an intermediary organisation representing both employers.

- Support entrepreneurship and job creation, particularly through **specific training solutions and support for the creation of businesses for partners of workers** (newly) settled in mountain areas. In these territories, the concentration of jobs is low and so are the chances

for both partners to find a long-term job. In particular, the jobs available for women are not very diversified and they encounter many difficulties in finding a job. **Their involvement in the local economy needs to be fostered**.

- **Improve access to housing, including in touristic areas**: provide social housing and housing for young people and seasonal workers to rent (e.g. Youth housing in Rhône-Alpes, France);

- **Facilitate integration of migrants and "returnees"**:
  - o In Buskerud County, Norway, through the "**placement and immigration programme**" (PADIMA Good Practice 19 on territorial marketing) six municipalities have put their efforts together to create a platform of job offers available for people who look for a job in the region. This platform permits many unemployed partners to find a job and has been very successful.
  - o In the province of Teruel, Spain, immigrants are helped to undertake a competence review and, depending on this, and job needs in the area, they follow a fast--path training that helps them to get a job quickly. Men get a faster training and obtain a job more easily in the sectors of maintenance, as drivers, and in agriculture; and women in the tourist and health care sectors. These are not the only sectors hiring, just the ones which integrate people best.

- **Facilitate integration of women on the labour market**: PADIMA partner regions support the development of niche sectors in which women can get a job/create a business.
  - o The initiatives Albergo Diffuso di Ornica Bed & Breakfast, in Lombardy region (Italy) and the Route of the Iberians in Southern Aragon (Spain) have contributed to the employment of women in the tourist sector, developing at the same time the profile of the area.

- **Promote the social economy and social entreprises:**
  - o The "**Deaf School**" in Al, Norway, has developed expertise in teaching programmes for deaf children. Back from a trip to Kenya, Marit Kolstad Bråten (leader of the "Deaf Aid project") joined forces with the ICT expertise at Al Folk high school. They developed support and assistance to school children without education in Kenya and the desire to develop a professional development organization in Al, leading to business development in Hallingdal.

- **Community-led local development:**
  - o The "FlyttHit" or 'Move Here' project in the mountain regions of Norway has been started based on a local initiative, where all the municipalities in the region work together to make them attractive, so people will move there.

- **Infrastructure investments in healthcare, childcare, elderly care:**
  - o In the province of Torino (Italy), some farms have jointly established on-farm agri-schools for infants aged 0-6 years old. Compensating for the lack of childcare infrastructure in the mountain area, 3 schools were established, providing services to 18 families and preventing depopulation, with public funding only in the first stages of the process.

- **Small-scale infrastructures in rural areas:**
  - o In the Region of Aragon (Spain), the three provinces of Teruel, Zaragoza and Huesca collaborate on the « Multiservicio rural project » in which they work together with the provincial chambers of commerce and the Regional Government to guarantee the maintenance of commercial activities in the smallest towns. They seek to avoid rural depopulation, help entrepreneurial people to settle in the territory (most of them come from urban areas) and to guarantee a basic commercial structure combined with tourist services.

More information:

Euromontana position paper on services of general interest

PADIMA good practice guide on economic diversification

10. INVESTING IN EDUCATION, SKILLS AND LIFELONG LEARNING

What does the EU want to achieve ?

- Reducing school drop-up rates below 10%
- Achieve a proportion of 40% of people aged 30-34 with tertiary education

How?

- By reducing early school leaving and promoting access to good quality, early-childhood primary and secondary education
- Improving the quality, efficiency and openness of tertiary and equivalent education
- Enhancing access to life-long learning, upgrading the skills and competences of the workforce and increasing the labour market relevance of education and training systems
- Fostering lifelong learning and vocational training in the agricultural and forestry sectors

According to the CSF, ERDF should fund infrastructures, and ESF the education activities themselves in all sectors apart from agriculture and fisheries, for which training should be funded by EAFRD and EMFF.

How can mountains contribute?
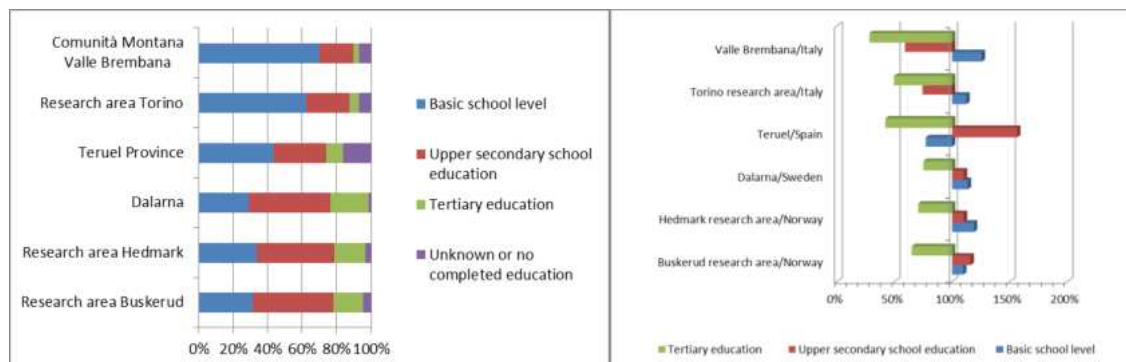
Education and training are among the most urgent needs for mountain communities.

PADIMA has shown that people aged 16 and above in mountain areas **have a low education level compared to EU targets and a lower education level compared to current national averages**. Pupils have to travel quite far to get to school and may have to leave home at the age of 14-16 to attend school. Many school classes, and even entire schools, have closed in areas which are sparsely populated or where there are very few children.

PADIMA has also identified a **mismatch between young people's aspirations, the supply of educational opportunities, and needs in the local economy**.

This situation leads young mountain people to leave their areas. They often stay where they have studied. Those who do not leave tend to start working early in jobs requiring low qualifications.

Much progress can be achieved in developing the human capital in these areas, resulting in a better capacity to take advantage of mountain resources and innovation potential. There are positive examples of innovative and high-quality education supply systems throughout European mountains which could be replicated.

What do they need in order to contribute?

In order to develop their human capital, the **authorities responsible for mountain areas need to invest in education and training** systems for all parts of the population. They must be provided with the necessary competence in this respect.

In terms of infrastructures that should be financed under ERDF, there is a need to **relocate branches of Universities or specialisations in the rural and mountain areas** : positive examples can be seen of successful mountain universities like the *University of the Highlands and Islands (Scotland)* and *higher education in Hedmark* (Norway).

In terms of educational activities that can be financed by ESF, mountains need actions in the following fields:

- **Rethinking the education system** using opportunities offered by ICT, at all levels of education and training. Positive examples include :
  - Creative use of ICT in kindergartens in Hedmark, Norway ;
  - Setting-up of distance learning in Dalarna (Sweden) ;
  - The High North Academy : http://www.highnorthacademy.com/
  - The University of the Highlands and Islands in Scotland delivers a part-time on-line MSc in Sustainable Mountain Development, available to students anywhere in the world. Some of its graduates are from small communities in mountain areas in other parts of Europe.

- Promoting **equal access to good quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education**: For young families to settle and work in remote mountain areas, access to kindergartens and nearby primary schools is essential. Solutions addressing school transport and organisation must be considered and innovative ideas can be used, such as *Collective kindergartens organised by medium farms in Torino (Italy);*

- Improving the **supply of higher education in mountain areas, by:**
  - Diversifying the supply of education and training by providing education in traditional sectors as well as in highly innovative sectors *such as engineering, environment, nature-based and cultural tourism, e-health, energy, care for the elderly people, bio-economy…*
    - In the province of Teruel, Spain, rich in archaeological sites, specific training has been created for young curators and restorers, to work on Paleontological issues (PADIMA Good Practice education and training no 5). This has become a well-known diploma, with many exchanges with major universities.
  - Promoting mobility between mountain schools and universities and other schools and universities (using the ERASMUS/Leonardo/ EVS programmes):
    - One example is the CliChaMor two-week summer school, on climate change in mountain regions. Another is CIPRA's annual training courses.

- **Increasing the relevance of education and training activities for the labour market**:
  - Encouraging **actions linking schools and businesses,** as in Buskerud, Norway :
    - Wood industry companies were concerned about their ageing workforce and the negative image of their profession. They went to schools to present their profession and encouraged students to design a small piece of furniture (see also priority 8).

- o Developing **traineeships and apprenticeships ;**
- o Using **ICT to provide access to a wider range of content ;**
- o Providing **on-site targeted training to companies** : people working for Very Small Enterprises and SMEs in remote areas cannot necessarily travel to distant training centres.
  - Chambers of Commerce in the Massif Central (France) developed a range of 300 training programmes that they can organise on-site, in companies. These programmes have been elaborated in close connection with companies in order to reply to their expectations. Courses are proposed then to several companies at the same time to decrease costs (ESF funded).

- o Providing specific training in **specialised economic sectors which are well represented in the local economy of mountain areas**, such as tourism, natural resources management, food or wood industry ;
  - The University of the Highlands and Islands (Scotland) offers a [Bachelor degree in adventure tourism management](#).
  - The Politecnico di Milano, with the support of ERSAF and Advocacy Europe, developed a Masters on "Planning for sustainable development in mountain areas and politics for mountains of the European Union": its objective is to train specific professionals for the development of territorial projects in mountain areas, in the fields of economy, tourism, education, territorial planning and valorization of environmental and cultural goods.

- o Support **skill development of specific populations such as migrants and refugees**, fostering their integration and employability:
  - As mentioned earlier [Teruel](#) (Spain) and Dalarna (Sweden) developed specific courses for migrants, in languages and specific skill development helping to find a job easily.

Finally, with regard to skill development in the field of agriculture and forestry, Euromontana has identified important needs in the following fields:

Agriculture
- Development of entrepreneurial skills in business management and marketing of food products, with a focus on the specific situation of pluri-active small mountain farms; training in legal affairs and finance schemes for farmers and development actors;
- Training to support the development of quality food supply chain ;
- Training and skill development in environmental management and environmentally-friendly practices;

Forestry
- Training and information for forest owners and managers for the maintenance and exploitation of forests, with the promotion of management plans:
- The match between existing training opportunities and the real needs of companies must be improved, with more on-the-job training (e.g. sandwich training courses, internships or practical in-company training sessions) and with training in the knowledge and the practice of specific and advanced techniques such as cable yarding.

More information :
PADIMA – Education and training – [Final report](#) – [Good practice guide](#) – [Newsletter](#)
The [declaration of Chambéry on Youth](#)

11. ENHANCING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND ENSURING AN EFFICIENT PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

What does the EU want to achieve?

Strengthening institutional and administrative capacity at all levels in all fields and promoting good governance principles.

How?

By investing in **institutional capacity** and in the efficiency of public administration and public services and in **capacity of stakeholders to mobilise for reform.**

How can mountains contribute?

The particular geographies of mountains do not necessarily fit administrative boundaries – whether municipal, regional or even national. Many mountain areas are also border regions. Their governance requires a specific approach and the effective organisation of public administration. The forms of governance that have been experimented with in mountain areas can bring useful lessons for other areas.

One example is the inter-regional operational programmes for massifs in France, such as the [Massif Central], or [Alps]. Another is the Plan for support to mountain economy in the Pyrenees, which operated in a multi-fund context. In several mountain areas of Italy, integrated development has been delivered successfully. In fact, examples are too numerous to be quoted!

What do they need in order to contribute?

To improve institutional capacity to deliver policies positively, mountain areas need:

- An **evidence-based approach,** working at an **adequate scale** using indicators mapped at that scale.
- A bottom-up approach respecting the **partnership and subsidiarity principles**: all actors must be involved with the process of developing, implementing and monitoring policies;
- Specific governance allowing an **integrated approach** to development :
  - o Better coordination between **different administrative departments.** Better **coordination between different layers of governance** i.e. multi-level governance: national, macro-regional, regional, infra-regional, functional areas, local.
    - ▪ Lombardy region and Province of Sondrio (Italy) promoted a "Regional territorial plan for middle and High Valtellina" aiming to promote a path of strong integration and participation, trying to foster balanced territorial development through effective synergy between economic development and environmental sustainability.
  - o **Macro-regional strategies** at massif scale(e.g. the Alps), where they can provide better orientation and coordination of policies implemented by several authorities;
- To develop **formal participation of young people in developing political strategies and in decision-making bodies:**
  - ▪ In [Scotland] and in [Norway], young people are formally represented via a youth council. The Highland Council even provides a one-year, paid 'youth convener' position in the local council, which allows young people to voice their ideas in the decision-making process.
  - ▪ In the Alps, a [Youth parliament of the Alpine Convention] has been developed.
  - ▪ In Rhône-Alpes (France), "[Montagne 2040]" was launched in 2011 to engage with young people to discuss the future of mountain areas in the region.

CHAPTER 3: Presentation of further steps for « Toward Mountains 2020 »

We consider that this first step of compiling experiences from our Euromontana projects or experiences reported by our members from their own projects has been completed. To ease dissemination and updating, we will now transfer the contents of this document into a webpage:

And we would like to launch the following phase '**Step 2: Enriching the mountain vision for 2020 and building alliances**'.

This second step has three objectives:

- **To keep enriching our vision** by adding more examples and details of what can be done in mountain areas and how they can **contribute to the EU 2020 strategy ;**

- **To federate all actors, organisations, regions**, who care for the sustainable development of European mountains ;

- To **deepen our analysis** by going into detail in the process of the development of programmes in every Member State, region, and mountain range.

If you would like to join us in this process, you can:

- **Contribute additional examples** and ideas to enrich the collective vision for European mountains, and be active in dialogue on further developments;

- **Communicate about 'Toward Mountains 2020'** via, inter alia, web links, and were possible, translations;

This step 2 shall be completed by the first half of June 2013 when we intend to organise, together with the Italian Network for Rural Development a conference in Rome, on mountain policies for the future programming period.

Further steps will have to be discussed with Euromontana's members in the coming weeks but we foresee at least the following steps:

- **Step 3: 'Supporting concrete preparation of programmes'**: in this phase, we will implement actions that answer needs expressed by the members to help in feeding preparation of programmes with new ideas. This step will start in June 2013 with the conference in Rome.

- **Step 4: 'Supporting concrete preparation of local development strategies'** in mountain local action groups or local development initiatives.

Different **events will be organised as milestones** of the process.

We call upon all authorities, individuals and organisations interested in sustainable mountain development to join this process for successful programming for mountain areas!

OVERVIEW OF EUROMONTANA MATERIAL 2007-2013 USED TO ELABORATE THIS DOCUMENT

European mountain conventions (preparatory documents, conference pages and declarations)

- 2008, Brig, Switzerland 'How to generate added value from Europe's mountains?' : Declaration – Conference page- Proceedings
- 2010, Lillehammer, Norway 'European mountain regions : a spirit of innovation' : Declaration – Conference page and presentations – Conference booklet with 11 initiatives - Proceedings
- 2012, Chambéry, France 'Youth to the top: the mountain path to the future' : Declaration – conference background paper - Conference page and presentations – 'Mountain Youth' Blog

Other Euromontana annual conferences

- 2007 Pietra Neamt, Romania – « Towards integrated Mountain Areas Development and its recognition in the Common agricultural policy - Shaping the New European Space » - Report
- 2009, Arantzazu, Basque Country, Spain 'Europe's mountain bonus : how land management produces positive externalities and the related policies and opportunities'– Conference background paper – report – page with presentations
- 2011, Inverness, Scotland 'Sustainable active tourism : mountain regions leading Europe in finding innovative solutions'– Conference background paper, Conference recommendations on sustainable mountain tourism – conference page with presentations

Euromontana thematic position papers

- Agriculture and rural development : response to consultation 2011 on the CAP - summary (2011)
- Territorial cohesion and regional policy : Response to consultation 2011 on Vth Cohesion report – Preliminary study: The role of mountain regions and territorial cohesion (2008)
- Energy in mountain areas : Full position paper – Summary (2009)
- Services of general interest : Full position paper – Summaries for policy makers or stakeholders (2011)
- Revision of regional aid guidelines and state aid rules: Taking into account mountain areas (2011)

Euromontana studies on mountain areas

- Exchange of experience on development initiatives regarding services of general interest (2006)
- Challenges of pastoralism: exchange of innovative experiences for a sustainable future (2007)
- Develop attractiveness of rural territories through collective strategies: culture and tourism (2008)
- The utilisation of mountain wood and the organisation of mountain wood industries (2012)

Project webpages & publications

- Project EuroMARC – Policy recommendations – Guidelines for stakeholders (2010) – NL 1, 2, 3, 4
  - December 2009, Maribor, Slovenia Final EuroMARC conference proceedings
- Project PADIMA – Policies against depopulation in mountain areas :
  - Education and training (2010-2011) : Good practice guide – Final report – Newsletter
  - Territorial marketing (2010-2011) : Good practice guide – Final report – Newsletter
  - Economic diversification (2011-2012) : Good practice guide – Final report – Newsletter
  - Final report « How to improve attractiveness of mountain areas » (2012)
  - Dissemination brochures : A brighter future for young people in mountain areas – Attracting more working people to mountain areas – Increasing attractiveness for retired people (2012)
- Project Mountain TRIP – Communication tools in particular brochures on Carpathian fine foods (2011)
- Project CYBERSUDOE - ICT good practices of relevance to mountain areas (2011)
- Project Move on Green – Newsletter 1 – Newsletter 2 (2012)
- Project DANTE – Good practice guide – Newsletter 1 (2012)

Other links and information were provided by Euromontana members. Some translations are available on our website www.euromontana.org