



# **ACTION PLAN FOR THE CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME ALCOTRA 2014-2020**

*The mountain of Piedmont restarts from chestnuts and villages*

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## 1. INTERREG EUROPE PROGRAMME

Interreg Europe Program helps regional and local governments across Europe to **develop and deliver better policy by creating positive environment and opportunities for sharing solutions to common challenges.**

The goal of the Program is to ensure that government investments, innovation activities and efforts lead to integrate impact for people and places.

Thanks to Interreg Europe local authorities can share ideas, experiences and solutions on public policies improving quality of life of their citizens.

CRinMA project partners applied to Interreg Europe Program aware of the need of effective and operative cooperation among mountain local administration.

The common aim that moved the partners was related to the difficulty of remote mountains area to be in contact, to share experiences and to take part in European projects and initiatives.

Alpine area, Carpathian area and Spanish – Portuguese mountain area, through Interreg Europe, have the possibility of sharing common problems and defining innovative solutions that will enable local stake-holders to make more competitive European mountain areas and, in future, will permit also to mitigate the great social transformation conditioned by climate change.

UNCHEM took with enthusiasm this great opportunity offered by INTERREG PROGRAMME to develop new concepts and share new experiences in the field of **promotion of cultural heritage in mountain areas.**

In fact CRinMA Project has provided the opportunity of learning important lessons during the study visits and to exchange concretely with the involved people new forms of management and promotion of mountain heritage.

## 1.1 UNCEM AND MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT

UNCEM Piemonte, as Association made of the **550 Municipalities** located in Piedmont mountains, is in charge of representing local authorities promoting local sustainable development.

It has experienced important projects in mountain sustainable development, promotion of environmental resources, support to accessibility and traditional skills including the maintenance of local tradition facing the challenges presented by innovation and competitiveness.

For what concerns cultural heritage UNCEM has promoted special plans and dedicated projects financed by European Funds Leader, finalized to rehabilitate and restore traditional mountain villages, including the valorisation of traditional materials, landscape, typical productions and innovation technologies - “Borghi Alpini”

Concerning Innovation and ITC technologies, Uncem, aware of the importance of combining tradition and innovation, supports the connectivity of mountain areas and operates all possible initiatives to make more accessible all municipalities through broad band technologies and services.

In particular, to promote the cultural heritage and mountain peculiarities, UNCEM organizes training courses, seminars and publishes a dedicated monthly magazine “*PIEMONTE*” and has also created an online shop called “*Bottega dell’Alpe*”.

During the last decades UNCEM has also experienced significant results in the field of transnational cooperation thanks to the European Programmes ALPINE SPACE and ALCOTRA.

This experiences permitted to the Local Authorities involved to exchange and share policies and practical solutions to common problems. Furthermore Alcotra permitted a significant growth of competences of Uncem the staff, as well as of the stakeholders of the piedmontese mountain areas.

This ability in taking advantage from territorial cooperation was strategic during CRinMA project. In fact during the study visits and transnational meetings Italian Partners took part actively at all activities and collected concrete examples and positive experiences on the field to be replicated in their territories.

## 1.2 AIMS OF CRINMA PROJECT

Based on the requirements of INTERREG Europe Programme CRinMA project has, as main goal, **the improvement of public policy instruments in mountain areas**, namely the European cross border Cooperation Programs, **through the promotion and preservation of cultural resources material and immaterial including local typical activities combining tradition and innovation;**

CRinMA takes in consideration cultural heritage, including themes like **architecture, traditions, music, gastronomy, natural values, landscape, handicraft**, etc.

For achieving above mentioned goals, the project activities include a wide and concrete exchange of knowledge and experiences between European mountain areas, promotes the design and the adoption of best practices finalized to mountain social and economic development including the maintenance of local tradition using innovation and technology.

## 2. ACTION PLAN

Following CRINMA project proposal any mountain cross-border area has to develop an Action Plan concerning the impact of the three Cross Border Territorial Cooperation Programmes that insist in the 3 mountain regions.

For what concerns UNCEM the analysed programme impact is the Territorial cooperation Programme Italy - France ALCOTRA.

Following its experience, and based on the common methodology, UNCEM has structured the analysis of the ALCOTRA impact as follows:

- Cross - evaluate the results of the support provided to cross-border mountain regions cooperation projects in culture, regarding the promotion of cultural resources;
- Contribute for the discussion of future guidelines and public policy tools, regarding the creation of new programs, priorities to support cultural projects in cross-border mountain areas;
- Define the type of projects admitted, type of promoters, minimum and maximum budget for Project, cross sectorial projects, culture and entrepreneurship;
- Define the relation with other regions, multi cross-border regions projects, among other questions.

### 2.1 GOOD PRACTICES

CrinMA partners analysed their most significant mountain territories and best practices in order to propose positive and constructive examples to be shared and implemented with other European partners.

UNCEM, in particular, analysed the situation of the whole regional territory after a deep analysis of cultural policies and innovative instruments specifically dedicated to mountain development, selected, as more adequate area, to be

involved in the project activities, the “Unione Montana ALTA LANGA” as pilot area of the project.



The choice was motivated by the evidence of the following factors:

- a mountain area very dynamic in general from the cultural, economic, associative point of view;
- a territory rich of cultural traditions, gastronomic and natural resources already exploited and still to be discovered;
- a strong pride of belonging and a diffuse entrepreneurship network among its inhabitants.

The presence of these three aspects permitted the organisation of very effective study visits and training activities as foreseen in the Application Form in Cortemilia on September 2017 and Bossolasco in April 2018.

The main aspects analysed in the pilot area and used as examples to be transferred to other partners are listed as follows:

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- *Langa Stone “Pietra di Langa”* – techniques of restoration of old rural building and revitalization of villages.
- *Rural and religious buildings* – Church of Innovative Apps and tools to promote and ease the visit of buildings in remote areas without a permanent guide. Church of San Rocco in Mombarcaro.
- *Castles* – Perletto, Prunetto, Grinzane and Cortemilia – Diversification of usage – Public and Private collaboration for Castles management and promotion.
- *Dry Stone terraces with vineyards and hazelnuts landscapes* – Experience of cooperation among Agricultural IGP and DOP products and Cultural sectors. Food and Promotional activities. Involvement of Cheese Makers Murazzano Association and Hazelnut Association.



- *Innovation technologies used for cultural heritage fruition.* Use of social Networks and dedicated App promoted by the Unione Montana Alta Langa.
- *Cultural Parks* - Literary Park, Literary Prizes dedicated to writers and poets born in the Mountain area and nowadays important attraction for tourists (Beppe Fenoglio and Cesare Pavese)
- *Eco Museums Dei Terrazzamenti di Cortemilia* - important point of reference that provided and collected interesting ideas from other Eco Museums of the other partners' Areas.



Considering that good practices should respond to the strategic vision to be developed after meetings and seminars held with local stakeholders, UNCEM identified the following objectives as main areas for future interventions:

- *To have* more people / tourists visiting mountain areas for leisure and holidays;
- *To develop* wider and professional attention for cultural consumptions and events;
- *To attract* tourism demand and investment;
- *To motivate* local people to participate in cultural activities, especially in traditional ones;
- *To foster* the access of persons with disabilities to cultural heritage and activities;
- *To support* deeper cooperation between cross-border mountain areas
- *To promote* ICT investments in cultural and touristic economy

Based on Alta Langa cultural heritage 3 Best Practices have been selected to give the opportunity of better understanding the potentialities for future employment potential and economic development.

The 3 Best Practices were presented to the partnership in advance during the partner meeting with Power Point presentations in order to prepare the study

visit held in Cortemilia in 2018. During the Study Visits partners get in touch with the responsible of the maintenance, governance and promotion of the structures.

A particular attention has been given to the ECOMUSEUM by all Partners. In fact in all territories partners have put in evidence the presence of the Ecomuseums as key factor for the support of local economic dynamics and as tourist attraction.

### 1) **ECOMUSEO OF DRY STONE AND TERRACES**



## 2) LITERARY PARK CESARE PAVESE AND BEPPE FENOGLIO WRITERS



## 3) GREAT TOUR OF ALTA LINGA "GTL"



## 2.2 ACTION N.1

### **Progetto Uncem Piemonte: RESTART CASTAGNO**



#### **Source of inspiration for Good Practices from CRINMA project:**

##### ***CHESTNUT: Valuing territory on the basis of endogenous resources.***

The main objective of the practice was valuing territory on the basis of endogenous resources in order to boost rural economy through keeping cultural tradition. The project consisted two parts: building a Development Centre to research and test new varieties; and creation pilot actions. This Center is financed by itself, it provides different services, like advises for farmers, making tests and others agricultural issues. Also the pilot actions gave useful information for advices service. The area of intervention was rural, with

specific features: low density, lack of capable organizations. The project got an important achievement that was joined chestnut producer to boost their plots (261 ha with around 38.000 chestnut trees) and of course their benefits. The beneficiaries are the producer themselves and the business which can get better product.

Other sources of inspiration:

- *Rete delle Città del Castagno (Italia)*
- *The Ecomuseu de Barroso is located in Montalegre. Visit 22/25/01/2019*
- *Natura Xures- Geres Identified by Montalegre Municipality (PT), during two visits in PT and ES, project supported by the POCTEP Programme (Crossborder Cooperation programme in the CRINMA project). Visit 29/01/2018, 02/02/2018*
- *During the Visit in Chamonix 22/24/05/2018, Alpine Museum in Chamonix, visit of the House of the Lieutenant to Servoz, Ecomuseum of Wood and Forest in Thônes*



### **Reference framework and reasons for the importance of the project:**

A chestnut project is proposed as it is believed to have positive effects on the mountain economy, on the cultural enhancement of the natural heritage and the landscape, on the employment and income of the local populations.

Still the chestnut woods, **representing the forest category with the largest extension in Piedmont**, (about 204,000 ha of which 10,000 ha of fruit chestnut trees equal to over 23% of the forest area), remain with the use of coppices the

main source of wood biomass obtainable and provide the market with high quality fruits. Since the twentieth century the history of this species has been marked by successes, abandonments, phases of decline and attempts to recover and enhance, closely related to the events they have characterized the cultural, social and economic evolution of the Italian rural world in the last 100 years. In the past, it was a fundamental source of food, of sawmill, construction timber for poles and stakes, but also of firewood, today chestnut, in addition to experiencing a crisis in the jobs, has serious survival problems.

The adversities that currently afflict them chestnut formations are probably due to the combined effect of abandonment culture, now decades old, of the cinipid, of more recent advent, of cortical cancer by now dated introduction, and climate change. In most of the populations it is in old age, sometimes close to collapse and this affects the production of chestnuts and wood. The Piedmont Region, which has always been sensitive to the problem, with Regional Law 4/2009 established the Regional Center for Chestnut Growing, synergistically collecting the contributions of local authorities, University of Turin and IPLA, aimed at giving technical answers to the various problems of chestnut growing. Uncem believes that an action to revitalize the whole chestnut growing sector - starting from the cultural, social and landscape value - is necessary in order for large chestnut areas in Piedmont to be soon removed from abandonment, the prolongation of which could have unforeseen consequences also on the stability of the slopes and, consequently, on the hydrogeological structure.



### **Actions planned by Uncem Piemonte, to be developed:**

1. *Promotion of a network of Ecomuseums on chestnut, called "the bread tree"*
2. *Realization of training initiatives and presentation of the history of chestnut in primary and secondary schools*
3. *Implementation of a training plan at the Castanicoltura regional center*
4. *Enhancement of information actions through media and meetings with municipal administrators, forestry companies, citizens*
5. *Analysis of scenarios on the diffusion and seriousness of the phenomenon of the deterioration of chestnut trees in Piedmont (200 thousand hectares)*
6. *Experimental management for the recovery of fruit stands and heavily perishable coppices*
7. *Promotion of a market for low quality timber (onion, dead standing)*
8. *Promotion of outlets for quality timber*
9. *Associationism and support to the fruit, wood and non-wood products supply chains*

### **Stakeholders involved by Uncem Piemonte:**

1. *Municipalities (553 mountain bodies in Piedmont), mountain unions of municipalities (56), provinces (7)*
2. *Mayors and city councilors (7500 in Piedmont)*
3. *Forestry enterprises (45)*
4. *Schools (23 in the Province of Turin and Cuneo) for a total of 800 students*
5. *Piedmont Region (Mountain Development Sectors, Forests, Ecomuseums and Cultural Heritage)*
6. *Regional Center of Castanicoltura*
7. *Institute for Timber Plants and the Environment*
8. *University of Turin, Department of Forestry Sciences*
9. *Montagne Italia Foundation*



*Project implementation times:* **April 2020-December 2021**

*Cost:* **1,200,000 (thousand) euros**

*Funded through:* PSR of the Piedmont Region, Alcotra Interreg Project, Funds of the Piedmont Region, Own Funds of Municipalities and Mountain Unions of Municipalities

## 2.3 ACTION N.2

### ***Progetto Uncem Piemonte: RETE DEI BORGHI ALPINI***



#### **Source of inspiration for Good Practices from CRINMA project:**

Stimulating activity: the project had as its main objective the protection and conservation of the natural, cultural and architectural resources of the Euro Region Galicia-North of Portugal, in particular of the Parque Peneda-Gerês (which crosses the border being a park on both sides of the border). The project had several successful activities such as the implementation of cross-border pedestrian paths with the development of guides and reporting of paths and architectural heritage.

Through this activity it was possible to articulate the network of pedestrian paths in both territories and also to have an articulated and more efficient promotion. Other activities have been the publication of guides, with information on the cross-border territory (architectural, heritage and environmental), This project has also promoted the local economy through the promotion of accommodation (hotels, traditional tourist accommodation, hostels, etc.) . It was an inspiration for the connection of the Alpine villages project, both for the protection and their enhancement and recovery.

#### Other sources of inspiration:

- *LETOHRAD (Lustschluss) – joint promotion of restored castles in Prešov region*
- *Visit attractive places like Castle in Stará Ľubovňa or Museum in Ždiar House. Visit 18/20/09/2019*
- *The Ecomuseu de Barroso is located in Montalegre. Visit 22/25/01/2019*
- *Natura Xures- Geres Identified by Montalegre Municipality (PT), during two visits in PT and ES, project supported by the POCTEP Programme (Crossborder Cooperation programme in the CRINMA project). Visit 29/01/2018, 02/02/2018*
- *The Ecomuseu de Barroso is located in Montalegre.*

#### **Reference framework and reasons for the importance of the project:**

The work carried out by Uncem Piemonte, Union of Municipalities, Communities and Mountain Bodies, around the recovery of the Alpine and Apennine villages, started ten years ago and wants to continue in the coming years. The Piedmont Region, Uncem in 2008 built the call for measure 322 of the RDP 2010-2014, focused on the redevelopment of mountain villages. 33 million euro of public investment on as many alpine villages, another 20 million of co-financing by private individuals and local authorities. New businesses and new future for those villages.



New beauty. Then a sewing phase, knowledge, in-depth analysis, territorial marketing, work with the Municipalities and with businesses in identifying new forms of financing, new investments. A lot has started to be said about villages throughout Italy. It cannot be said that the path was born only and only here in the northwest, but certainly a decisive push to the path was given. Uncem wants to continue the path taken by creating a network of alpine villages capable of combining cultural, tourist, economic, social and anthropological paths.

### **Actions envisaged by Uncem Piemonte, to be developed:**

- 1. Creation of a network of Alpine and Apennine villages in Piedmont*
- 2. Increase the fund for the revitalization of the Alpine villages in the PSR of the 2021-2027 Programming*
- 3. Implementing programs for Smart Villages (EU) and the villages of the future in Piedmont (Strategy for the digitization of Italy)*
- 4. Identify in the RDP 2014-2020 and then in the RDP 2021-2027 resources for the maintenance and construction of dry stone walls (World Heritage Site)*
- 5. Identify at regional level a fund for resettlement, for young people who choose to renovate buildings and who want to live in mountain areas (eg Emilia-Romagna Region)*
- 6. Identify in the RDP 2014-2020 new resources to "scroll" the rankings and increase the municipalities financed by the call for operations 7.2.1 and 7.4.1 on villages*
- 7. To encourage and support, at regional level, the Municipalities and the mountain Unions which initiate "territorial" programs and interventions for the revitalization of the Alpine and Apennine villages, also in agreement with Uncem, Fondazione Montagne Italia, Institute of Mountain Architecture.*

### **Stakeholders involved by Uncem Piemonte:**

- 1. Municipalities (553 mountain bodies in Piedmont), mountain unions of municipalities (56), provinces (7)*
- 2. Mayors and city councilors (7500 in Piedmont)*
- 3. Montagne Italia Foundation*
- 4. Institute of Mountain Architecture of the Polytechnic of Turin*
- 5. Caue Haute-Savoie (France)*



***Project implementation times: April 2020-December 2021***

***Cost: 800,000 (thousand) euros***

***Funded through: PSR of the Piedmont Region, Alcotra Interreg Project, Funds of the Piedmont Region, Own Funds of Municipalities and Mountain Unions of Municipalities***

### 3 INTERREG PROJECTS

Interreg Europe project's Crinma laid the foundation for an analysis of Interreg Alcotra Programme by Uncem Piemonte, for the cross-border cooperation between Italy and France. Uncem Piemonte know very well this programme, already taking part at the monitoring committee as "civil society", furthermore it has applied for several projects and it is still involved with an ongoing project (deadline foreseen at may 2020). Besides Uncem is implementing body within Piter and Pitem (thematic and territorial strategies) projects run by Piemonte region, Cuneo province and Turin metropolitan city.

The analysis carried on by Uncem move towards the evaluation of what worked and what needs to improve in sight of the new programming 2021 – 2027. Around the cross-border cooperation there are several questions to be defined and different visions between states, waiting for the permanent assignment of the Commission.

Uncem expose here few considerations about the 2014-2020 programming period.

Firstly, it is well known that the program is financing too many studies and researches. The outcome on the territory is restrained and there is not perception of the program and its results. Alcotra (but the problem is wider and include the cohesion policy too) doesn't leave a trail on the territories.

A real link between program and territory is missing, and it should be the role of the policy, which is expression of the capability to identify priorities within the territories.

The five Regions involved in Alcotra should define together at the same table the priority actions on which focus the 200€ millions placed by EU for this program.

The analysis of technical nature only are not enough, but a real mobilization and involvement at political levels.

Piter and Pitem projects started however with important delays and the evaluation has been longer than usual, without a proper implementation of the willingness behind the territories programming.

Furthermore there is few attention about communication activities and the regional communication plans to be shared with territorial actors are still unapproved. Focus on the communication is not limited at the elaboration of a communication plan that remain locked in the closet. It means to identify action lines, what makes news, the newsworthiness degree of projects and actions, what goes in the press and TV. The “medium is the message”, project need to be told by media – mainly newspaper and loval TV – otherwise they are not perceived as important or significant. Even a study or a research contains news with a good newsworthiness, they can contain stories, tales of peoples moving the project. But these elements have to be identified and submitted to local journalist; the absence of news in a project is a serious problem, and if there are no news, they need to be created. To do this we need good communicators, journalist that know techniques and objective to directly reach the audience, the people leaving in the 5 Alcotra regions.

All of the cooperation meets this wall, it cares more the logo’s position than the way to make news.

Another important element of the program, to focus on in perspective of the new programming, are the evaluations. The projects that are not approved don’t receive any evaluation – Uncem already asked for this – stopping the improvement of the idea elaboration, casting a shadow on the selection process transparency.

The evaluation should be realized by those who knows the territories. The questionnaire are unnecessarily long, they don’t facilitate the identification of really good ideas, which are diluted in tens and tens of pages, tiring who evaluate them and probably they are not really necessary, not containing those elements with a match on the evaluation grid.

During the writing and implementation of the project it is difficult to coordinate the laws and data between Italy and France: tender procedures, for example, are difficult to coordinate in practice. Databases and statistical data-sets doesn’t match. These are only two of the problems, and there is a high risk to fail and not answer properly at the project rules, which increase when national laws that regulate tender procedure and data management are involved. And when this element change during the project (as it happen often in Italy), it is much more difficult.

Finally let put on record that the preparation for the next programming is even more strategic than usual, because cohesion policy needs to be more closely linked with the other EU policies. This could be translated in a single regulation for all the Funds.

As with the previous programming, the strategy is developed around political objectives and the eleven thematic objectives of the 2014-2020 period are replaced with 5 new objective: *Smarter Europe, Greener, Carbon free Europe, Connected Europe, Social Europe, Europe closer to citizens.*

The Commission appear more flexible and open to simplification, for example: the deletion of the annual report, the replacement of the performance framework with the closing performance evaluation, simplified costs, an easier audit management, thematic concentration.

Uncem always hoped for a real simplification, tangible with facts, but this will be verified during the programming. About Interreg, the Commission had foreseen a budget reduction, but the Parliament is not satisfied and is asking more than 8,5€ billion and than the 70% Fesr proposed by the Commission.

The cooperation with regional operative programs will increase looking at their participation in cross-border actions. From now on the lack of this integration will need to be justified. On the other side it is important that Interreg program will fit better with macro-regional strategies: Alcotra already meets partially the needs of Macro-regional Alpine Strategy, but we will need to find more solutions to

enhance activities within Eusalp actions with greater effects. Alcotra have to close ties with other partners, outside the program, to get closer with Interreg actors and share with them common problems, in order to open new horizon, but European election slowed down this process.

Anyhow it is important to vote the community before adopting the final regulation because, with financial allocation, it is not possible to discuss different articles before the fixed budget.

Uncem Piemonte completely agree with the 11th July 2018 Declaration by the monitoring committee, with the awareness of the revision rules for the calculation of the allocation, is afraid of the impact that it could be on Alcotra and its territories.

Before, the allocation to the cross-border section was proportional with the population in the regions (NUTS 3 level) in comparison with the with the total population in the state.

The new proposal from the Commission foresee now that the allocation is referred to the population in cross-border region at NUTS 3 level, and the population that lives within 25 km from the border.

The partners estimate that this new approach will strongly penalize cross-border territories between Italy and France, indeed those mountain areas are poorly populated: the density of the population should not be the sole criterion.

Actually, realize cooperation project in mountain area is often difficult and expensive (few accessibility, climate risk, long travel time,...). This environment should be taken into account, in accordance with Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Otherwise, new provisions will not take into account the mountain territories peculiarities, smoothing the differences among the areas and penalizing their population and the socio-economic actors that ensure the development of these territories. These measure will bring to an homologation risk that will throw the territory into a real confusion and not understanding of the new programming.

Furthermore, the 25 km criterion has not territorial and statistic consistency. The border have effect that go beyond this edge that we can consider arbitrary, in fact there is no element that can prove it. Actually the national statistic institutions don't gather data's about the population withing 25 km from the border. The partners think that NUTS 3 level (Province/department), used until now, is the more appropriate on these territories in order to define the available cross-border population. They consider significant to focus the FEDER resource allocation according to verified data, reliable and comparable.

The new method have to be more equal and transparent.

The program underline the contradiction with the European willingness to safeguard mountain territories and protected areas poorly populated and the new method to define FESR allocation that will foster territories densely populated.



European Union  
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Montani

Delegazione Piemontese

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