

Interreg IIB Alpine Space
ALPTER Project
'Terraced landscapes
of the alpine arc'

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Winemaking Congress in Maribor (SLO).

The 3rd Slovenian Wine-making congress will be held in Maribor on the 15th and 16th of November.

www.kongres.slovino.si

Workshop about Environmental projects and participation

The international workshop about participation in environmental projects will be held on the 6th and 7th of December in Sierre (CH).

www.cipra.org/zukunft

ALPTER Project final conference

The final conference of the ALPTER project will be held on the 14th and 15th of February 2008 in Ljubljana (SLO). Info and call for papers on the web-site www.alpter.net

The tourist exploitation of terraced landscapes has been developing only during the last decades, thanks to the efforts provided in many regions to explore new forms of usage for these sites. Such a process started after the decline of the primary sector that occurred also in the Alpine region, during the 20th century. Deep social changes came (o occurred) together with this decline, caused by industrial development first and diffusion of tertiary sector later.

Currently the main problem that inhabitants from many terraced areas have to face is to identify a land use capable of supporting the population, also by combining different functions. The land use model should also enable the establishment of a new relationship between the landscape and the local community, taking into account the social changes, e.g. in lifestyle, it has been subject to, particularly under the influence of the media. .

Tourism can offer, on these new bases, a different form of use of terraced areas, since these sites are suitable to be promoted in the perspective of cultural and nature tourism, while in the past they were perceived only as productive resources for the primary sector.

The present tourist trend includes diversification through alternative forms and this process encourages the development of terraced areas: eco-tourism, as well as cultural tourism, are sensitive to the appeal of these landscapes for their natural and historical value, beyond the overall landscape quality they offer. In this way, by applying the most suitable strategy in each area, tourism activities may provide additional sustenance for local population. Such initiatives could be integrated with high quality agricultural production, to achieve the goal of territorial sustainability.

This different way of looking at terraced landscapes can be useful also to establish a new relationship with the current society, searching for a strong public perception of places and their enjoyment on a global scale. The development of tourism activities in terraced areas could let them enter the mass society, receiving the first benefits from it. It could be a step forward to reach a balance between protection and development, that is necessary for the sustainable landscape management.



Tourist promotion in terraced sites: results of a research

A survey was carried out by IREALP (Institute for economic and ecologic research in the Alps) among the ALPTEP partners, to evaluate the tourism offer and the potential appeal of their research areas. The survey involved eight partners and was done through a list of questions; seven partners answered, out of the eight which were contacted.

The results show that in these areas the main appealing elements are obviously the mountains, followed by sport and culture activities, while wine and food tasting can be found only in few sites. Data about tourist arrivals in the settlements near the research areas show that the presence of tourist centres neighbouring to the terraced sites have a positive effect on them. The presence of terraced landscapes, on the other side, can be useful to promote tourism in periods outside the main season.

Most of the areas have a pathways system and accommodation facilities (restaurants, hotels), while structures for wine and food tasting are again lacking in most cases. A further indicator is the number of local promotion events: only few events have been registered in the study areas and they are often not directly related to terraced landscapes. In most areas there is also a lack of specific promotion materials, i.e. maps, brochures, etc. Because of this, taking advantage of the advertising documents published in neighbouring tourism centres can be also a solution.

Generally speaking, the results of the survey point out a lack of development in the tourism sector for the examined areas. In particular, promotion of terraced landscapes as a typical local character is often missing, also with regard to the wine and food aspects. Considering the present situation, an integrated tourism management strategy could be the best solution, to promote terraced areas as part of a wider tourism offer at regional level.

These results must also be evaluated considering the actual trend for the tourism sector. Rural, nature and cultural tourism hold a great development potential. These are the sectors where terraced areas find their natural placement.

Thus, tourism development should be considered among the goals in managing terraced sites. To this end, the research points out the opportunity of creating an integrated tourism system, which resulted to be the best system for valorisation.



The potential of tourism development in the Ligurian Region (I)

The Spatial Planning Department of Regione Liguria in collaboration with the LAG (Local Action Group) Appennino Genovese has analysed the relationship between tourism and terraced landscapes at regional level. The two study areas were Cinque Terre, in the south-eastern part of the region, and Finalese, in the north-western part. These two areas present a different tourism development level. The Cinque Terre is recognized as the symbol of Ligurian terraced landscapes and the main rural tourism destination, while the Finalese registered a significant tourism growth in the last years.

The goal of this research was to verify whether terraced landscapes represent an obstacle or a resource for the development of sustainable tourism. The analysis takes into account the role of farms and agritourisms. The data have been integrated through field surveys, which allowed to gather information about the existing tourism infrastructures, to interview tourism operators and carry out a review of best practices in farm management (e.g. educational farms).

The results show that in the area of the Finalese exist 22 agritourisms, with an average farming surface of 3,4 ha. In the Cinque Terre there are only 7 agritourisms with an average surface of only 1,3 ha, but Cinque Terre gathers nearly 2 millions visitors per year. The tourists stay in Bed&Breakfast and in accommodation facilities located in the villages along the coast or arrive for daily trips from the main tourism centres.

Among the best practices in managing terraced areas with a positive effect on tourism development, it is worth mentioning the one that the Cinque Terre National Park undertook in the hills around. Merging several abandoned terraced plots allowed to have a farming surface of 8 ha, with a significant agricultural production. Beside the improvement of accessibility, the park introduced a sustainable mobility system inside the park areas. This initiative shows the feasibility of promoting both recovery of terraces and development of sustainable tourism.

Generally speaking, the studies carried out in Liguria point out that different settings may largely influence the tourism development of terraced areas, but the results show also that small farms and agritourisms can be an effective way to combine agriculture and sustainable tourism, and they offer an example of good practice for other regions.

Assessment of tourism demand for terraced landscapes in Upper Austria

A quantitative assessment of tourism demand in terraced areas has been carried out by the University BOKU of Vienna. The analysis integrates visualisation tools into sociological methodology, allowing a broad alternative scenario building.

Study area

The tourism demand for terraced landscapes was assessed for a terraced site in Upper Austria, which is located in the community of Ulrichsberg and covers an area of about 7.6 km² and is situated on a north-oriented slope at an altitude of 590 to 750 m above sea level. A part of the terraced landscape is under nature conservation since 2002. About 46% of the area are meadows and pastures, 38% forests and 12% agricultural fields. Many terraces used for grain productions have been transformed into meadows and forests during the last decades.

Method of assessment

An image-based stated choice approach was used to investigate landscape preferences and destination choices depending on landscape scenarios. Such a visual multivariate approach was needed because it can control for several landscape features. This allows quantifying tourism demand for existing landscapes, for various hypothetical or ongoing landscapes changes, or planned developments, for example in tourism.

Landscape scenarios were developed by manipulating one representative image of the terraced area. The resulting 128 landscape scenarios represented various levels of potentially possible transformations into more forested landscapes, more or less agriculturally intensively used landscapes, landscapes which are heavily used by tourism, landscape more or less valuable for nature conservation, and the existing situation. Landscape scenarios were generated in Adobe Photoshop, following a statistical design plan containing six attributes, each with at least four levels. Factors potentially influencing landscape preferences and destination choice included number of slopes ranging from the existing terraced-rich situation to a situation with only one slope left, several levels of amount of hedges covering the slopes, various shares of land uses, i.e. forests, fields, meadows, the presence of orchards and pastures with cows, different signs of current agricultural use, i.e. agricultural tractors and hay bales. Hay bales were depicted in white and in green because of the long-standing discussion in Austria how impacting white-coloured hay balls

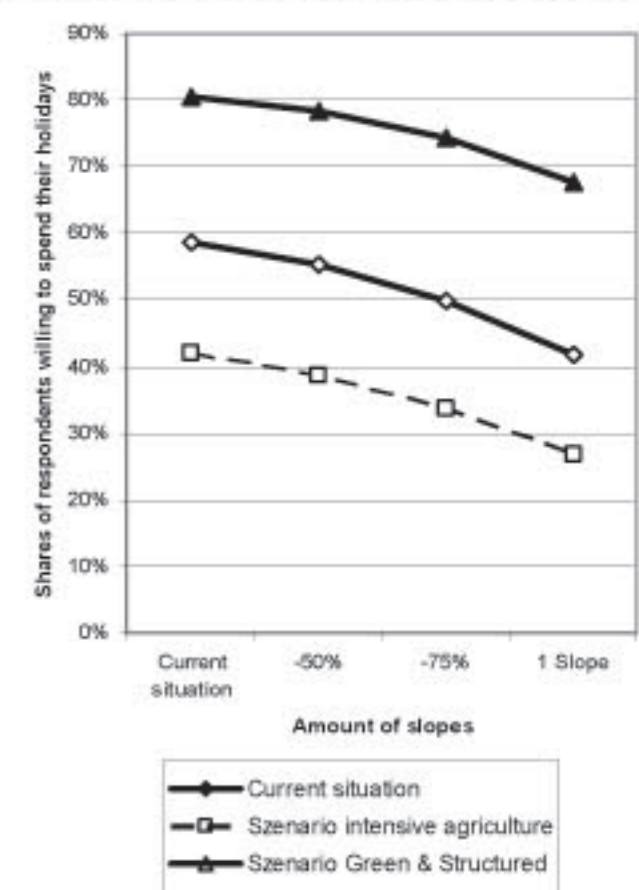
might be on landscape aesthetics. The last attribute described potential developments in tourism including tourism infrastructure and tourism use intensities.

The assessment has been carried out as a questionnaire, which was conducted among the Viennese population as potential tourists for this area between September and October 2006. Destination choices were assessed by asking 410 people whether the landscape scenarios were so attractive that they would stay in such a landscape for holidays, and for how long. A binary logit analysis identified the influence and relative importance of each factor on the respondent's choice of a landscape scenario for vacation. The predictive capacity of the binomial logit model was used to explore the likely effects of different landscape changes on summer tourism demand and to identify the tourism potential.

Results and Discussion

All attributes included in the images contributed significantly to destination choice. Results indicate that terraces attract the landscape. A change from the existing amount of terraces to one left would reduce the willingness of respondents to stay for vacation of 17%. Slopes with hedges covering 40% of their length, attract 10% more of the respondents. The presence of pastures with cows and orchards, and high shares of forest cover increase the willingness to stay, whereas agricultural vehicles, hay bales, a field- and meadow-dominated landscape, and high numbers of visitors as well as a restaurant in the landscape are detracting from its attractiveness. Terraces covered with hedges have a strongly positive influence on the destination choice, and are therefore important not only for nature conservation, but also for summer tourism. Maintaining the terraced landscapes should be of highest priority, although these are difficult to manage because of slopes, narrow fields and constraints in access. One strategy to assist farmers maintaining terraced areas is to earn additional income from tourism. Prerequisite is, however, that such terraced areas, particularly the slopes and walls, are attractive for tourists. When a demand is given then strategies can be developed for tourism. This approach has shown the given tourism demand for such areas.

(The text summarizes the contribution written by Dr. Arne Arneberger of BOKU University of Vienna for the incoming publication of ALPTER Project, 'Atlas of terraced landscapes of the Alpine arc')



A VISIT TO THE TERRACED VINEYARDS OF THE LOWER AOSTA VALLEY (I)

The 8th Meeting of the ALPTER partners was held on the 18/19th of October in Montjovet, in the lower Aosta Valley. This meeting gave the opportunity to the participants to visit some interesting agricultural areas on terraced sites, in addition to discuss the ongoing project activities.

The Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources of the Regione Valle D'Aosta led the group to visit several local wine producers, while the researchers from the University of Turin explained the studies carried out in the framework of the ALPTER project.

The visit started in the village of Arnad, where the group could see various examples of the typical dry stone works and observe the draining systems which ensure the water flow in this terraced site. Later the group reached the village of Perloz to see a chestnut wood planted on terraces, where a local cooperative is in charge of harvesting manually. The visit ended with a walk through a completely terraced slope near Pont St.Martin, which can only be accessed through pathways and monorails.

The visit showed the significant steps which have been done in this area during the last decade towards a sustainable land management. The recovery and maintenance of terraces was enabled by merging land plots and cultivating them, but this improvement originates also from the marketing activities and the innovative management systems, like farmers cooperatives, which were introduced in the area and enabled to sustain the agricultural production.

The final work session of the project partners was held in the Castle of Baraing. Here they discussed about the final project publications and the conference to be organized in Ljubljana for February 2008, but also about a future cooperation initiative aiming at continuing to work on terraced areas.



INFORMATION & CONTACTS

web site: www.alpter.net

e-mail: info@alpter.net

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PROJECT PARTNERS

- Regione Veneto
Urban Planning Department (IT)
- Regione Liguria
Spatial, Landscape and Environment Planning Dept. (IT)
- I.R.E.A.L.P.
Institute for Research on Ecology and Economy of the Alpine area (IT)
- BOKU University
Inst. of Landscape Development, Recreation and Conservation Planning (A)
- University of Ljubljana
Faculty of Architecture (SLO)
- A.D.I.
Association for Informatic Geographical Development (FR)
- Regione Valle d'Aosta
Agriculture and Land Prof. Department (IT)
- Regione Bregaglia (CH)

Observer partner:

- U.N.E.S.C.O. - Regional Bureau for Science in Europe (ROSTE)

Other partners:

- Slow Food - Foundation for Biodiversity