

# PADIMA

Policies Against Depopulation In Mountain Areas

## Attracting More Working People to Mountain Areas

This brochure presents the strategy elaborated by PADIMA partners to increase the attractiveness of mountain territories for working people. Key actions related to **economic diversification, education and training** and **territorial marketing** are exposed.



PADIMA is a project cofinanced by:



**This brochure offers general advice for creating better conditions to maintain, attract and settle more working age people in mountain areas.**

It has been designed to the attention of:

- **Elected people** at local, regional and national level
- **Administrative stakeholders**

involved in designing public policies.

**Contents:**

<b>Are mountains attractive for working age people?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>What needs to be done?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>More entrepreneurship &amp; better diversification of the local economy</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Better child care &amp; education services</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Communicate on quality of life in your area!</b>	<b>14</b>





## Are mountains attractive for working age people?

In 2010, 17% of the European population lived in mountain areas, which represented some 188 million inhabitants. Looking at the age of inhabitants in 7 mountain areas (see the map below), we noticed that ***the proportion of working age people in mountain areas tends to be smaller than the county or country average.***

It is thus vital to attract and settle more working age people in mountain areas both for economic reasons (development of economic activities within the territory, contribution of local taxes that will support public infrastructures and services) and for maintenance of a critical mass of service users (for schools, hospitals, shops, etc.).



## What needs to be done?

When we ask people why they chose to live in mountain areas, work **opportunities** come on an equal level with **quality of life**. People appreciate the mountain environment, but to come, they need a job first!

We propose to concentrate on measures that create **economic opportunities** and **life conditions** for all working age people to come and stay on a permanent basis in mountain areas.

In brief, we recommend each region to consider the following strategic objectives when it comes to increase the proportion of working age people:

- develop the local economy via facilitating **business creation** and **transmission**;
- **foster acquisition** by working age people of the **skills** they need to find a job in the local economy;
- **ease recruitment** in the local economy: support people who are looking for a job;
- **enhance the quality of life** of working age population, especially through provision of the services they need.



More entrepreneurs  
& better diversification of  
the economy

Mountain areas economies must be as dynamic and diversified as possible if they want to be attractive to skilled workers. In the surveyed areas, as well as in many rural areas, the **share of services is increasing at the expense of employment in the primary sector**. This trend increases employment opportunities for people with university degree, even if, in general, most jobs require practical and technical qualifications skills.

**Economic diversification can be fostered through individual actions like the ones mentioned below:**

- Encouraging diversification at SME level
- Encouraging entrepreneurship and simplifying the business creation process
- Easing recruitment in local economy and helping businesses find their ideal workforce



# How to do it in practice?

## Encouraging diversification at SME level

Mountain economies are dominated by small businesses, often operating in traditional sectors. Diversification strategies can target the provision of new products by these companies; these companies can also expand their activities beyond their traditional sector.

*A good example is the cooperative Ardelaine in Ardèche, Massif Central.*

*Ardelaine is a success story of innovation: in a declining, traditional sector (wool processing) a group of workers of a closing enterprise have gathered in a cooperative to reorganise the factory (1982).*

*They have decided to insist on the patrimonial value of the buildings they have inherited, on the traditional aspects of wool production, on the new methods of product creation and selling methods.*

*Thus they have started with the production activity but diversified further in the cultural sector (creation and management of two local museums) and touristic activities (opening of a bookstore cafe and a restaurant for the visitors, management of several shops and several collaborations with the Regional Natural Park Monts d'Ardèche).*



For more information : [www.ardelaine.fr](http://www.ardelaine.fr)

## Encouraging entrepreneurship and simplifying the business creation process

A lot of reflection is on-going on these aspects considered as pivotal to boost European economy in the context of the economic crisis.

For example, the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME) should run from 2014 to 2020, with an expected budget of €2.5 bn (currently under negotiation). There are chances to take for mountain business-men and women.

*This program should:*

- *Facilitate access to finance for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)*
- *Create an environment favourable to business creation and growth*
- *Help small businesses to operate outside their home countries and improving their access to markets*



*The main beneficiaries should be existing entrepreneurs (small businesses in particular) who will be given easier access to funding for development, consolidation and growth of their business as well as future entrepreneurs (including young people) through assistance in setting up their own business. The regional and national institutions will be targeted as well with the objective of simplifying the administrative burden in business creation and creation of tools for effectively reforming policy.*

*For more information visit:*

*[http://ec.europa.eu/cip/cosme/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/cip/cosme/index_en.htm)*

**We encourage regional authorities to increase their knowledge and ownership of this programme.**

## *Easing the recruitment in local economy and helping businesses find their right workforce*



*In Buskerud County, through the “placement and immigration programme” (GP19 WP2) six municipalities of the mountain region have put their efforts together to create a platform of job offers available for people who look for a job in the region. People working on the initiative have reported that the biggest challenge has been to get involved all type of business and to propose a variety big enough of job offers (most of the offers they got were for unskilled jobs).*

Do you have difficulties in attracting qualified working force in your area?

Advertise available jobs through well updated platforms

**Platforms of available jobs** will ease the contact between business and job seekers. PADIMA partner regions have developed several initiatives in that respect. One of the success factors for this type of communication is the involvement of businesses: **they need to be involved actively, to gain ownership of the concept, and to advertise their positions systematically and easily.**





**Accompanying the partner of a person moving in to find a job or to create a business**

**Couples settling in mountain areas often need two jobs and more and more two qualified jobs. Helping the partner in his/her job search secures a longer stay.**

For the partner, distance work is not always suitable in the long run. And companies risk losing time and money with employees who would leave too soon because their partner is jobless.

*In region Dalarna, Sweden, the Teknikdalen Foundation and some business have created a public-private association The Recruitment Consultancy which has the aim of facilitating the recruitment of husband/wife of people already working in the mountain area (GP12 WP2). The company reports to the Recruitment Consultancy information about the partner of their employees who are in the search of job. Further to a personal meeting, the recruitment Consultancy will help the candidate to target the right companies in the area and will contact them as well, forwarding the application with a recommendation.*



## Better childcare & education services

The availability and quality of public services is crucial for settling the work force in one area, especially when it comes to **childcare services** and **broadband connections**, which are working age people top priorities.

We will detail here only the provision of education and training services for working age people and their children – aspects on which the project has provided interesting ideas to share:

- **Provide working people's children with sufficient childcare and education services**
- **Diversify the offer of training to allow people to improve their skills**



## How to do it in practice?

*Provide working people's children with sufficient childcare and education services*

Mountain municipalities are in general confronted to difficulties in providing education facilities in small municipalities. Although the situation can be difficult, **innovative solutions exist**, and those highlight the specificity and the quality of life existing in the mountain areas.



### *Kinder garden at the farm in Torino*

*In province of Torino (Italy), several medium farms located in the mountain area have created a service of kinder garden / nursery for children aged 0– 6 years from the villages and cities around. Farm keepers follow a specific training and the farm building needs some adjustments in order to offer a proper room for small children. This type of farms is very appreciated by parents as it offer in addition to a classical educational the opportunity to discover the environment where they live through the contact with nature (fruits, vegetables, animals..), its observation in different seasons and a development of their creativity and 5 senses. The settlement of this kind of kinder gardens in Torino was financed only by private funds (farmers); for children' families it represents no additional cost as compared to a classical private kinder garden. Thanks to a regional aid from the province of Torino equivalent to 20% reduction, it became even cheaper.*

## *Diversify the offer of training to allow people to improve their skills*

Have you evaluated the life-long learning access in your region? The "lifelong, voluntary, and self-motivated" pursuit of knowledge is today needed, for personal or professional reasons. It does not only enhances social inclusion and personal development, but also competitiveness and employability. It is **not always easy to access life long-learning in areas with a low population density and even a lower density of training institutions**. But in PADIMA areas, regional institutions have found the trick!

### **Establish specific training centres**

*In Dalarna, Sweden, the Salen learning centre offers diverse possibilities for life-long training (GP 28 - WP1). This learning centre became necessary in the context of the area's development as major touristic area, with important needs to recruit and to retain skilled staff. The learning centre offers locally a large choice of secondary education for adults and students, with particular accent on skills and certifications for the touristic sector. Thanks to the complete offer of training some people have been able to cumulate several competencies and to find jobs all year round within Salen municipality. In Hedmark County, Norway, Trysil Academy (GP34 WP1) offers a wide range of competence rising courses with the same objective as in Dalarna.*

### **Provide targeted on-site training**

As it is not always possible to have an adapted local offer of training, enterprises and individuals spend big amounts of money to obtain the needed training outside the area. This was the case in Massif Central, France where small and medium size enterprises had difficulties in sending their employees to big cities to get the training needed to continue their activities.

*The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Lozère developed about 300 training programs they can organise on-site, for local companies (GP11 -WP1). The programmes have been created in close relation with enterprises to reply to their expectations. Once developed, courses are offered to several companies at the same time to reduce training costs.*



**Encourage companies to better use ICT to offer employees professional training**

*In Massif Central, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Auvergne developed a method of remote training, preventing unnecessary travel and bringing training closer to companies (GP10 - WP1). The objective is to diversify the teaching methods and to permit trainees to follow their own rhythm and availability. This training method has been very appreciated by the business sector as effective and cheap, but users have stressed that it is effective only in specific fields (technical, related to initial training). Remote training is a complementary approach to classic pedagogy, which nonetheless can replace it.*



**Encourage adults and enterprises to diversify and to offer innovative training, taking better stock of regional strengths**

*We have underlined earlier the diversification brought by the agri-schools for young children in Torino Province. Province of Torino has encouraged as well the creation of didactic farms (GP didactic farm - WP3) which imply having farmers introducing students and teachers to rural activities (environmental education, product culture, etc.).*

*For more information, refer to the Good practice guide on economic diversification, page 94.*

Communicate about the  
quality of life you offer!

In addition to quality services, mountain areas need to improve their image and to **promote more the quality of life people can access** when they choose to live there.

**From a territorial marketing point of view, three types of actions seem essential in order to settle working age people:**

- **Promote the area as a nice place to live and work**
- **Strengthen links with people who have moved out**
- **Take care to attract and integrate foreigners**



# How to do it in practice?

## *Promote the area as a nice place to live and work*

It is essential to involve all regional and local actors in the development and communication of a **positive image of the area**, associated if possible with symbols, a logo and/or a motto, something defining an identity. Then, inhabitants must be the first ambassadors of their area: they know about their region and they should be encouraged to communicate positively about it.

## *Training Ambassadors of the area*

*In province of Teruel and in Hedmark County two training actions (GP8 in WP1, GP35 in WP1) designated to the attention of people working in touristic sector have aimed at developing firstly the knowledge people have of their own region and then, forwarding in an efficient and appetising way positive information to clients, friends, tourists, etc. These actions have encountered a lot of success firstly amongst the “students” who became prouder of their area, and had, further, positive impact on the image of the territory through contact with tourists and new-comers.*



## **Marketing campaigns and welcoming policies**

Marketing campaigns are also very useful to promote the quality of life in the area –examples from PADIMA territories are numerous in that sense, be it from France (welcoming policy in Limousin region) or from Sweden (Regional Brand of Dalarna). In addition to raising the awareness of the target audience on a territory, attracting new inhabitants within the area, marketing campaigns have a positive impact on current inhabitants as well, making them proud of living in an attractive area.

## Communicate well the job offers available in the area

We have insisted within the first part of the strategy on the interest of having a dynamic and diversified economy in order to attract new inhabitants and to settle the existing ones. The available positions must be advertised properly, both within the area and outside through **networks, job fairs, Internet platforms, social media's groups**, etc.



*Region Dalarna, through « Welcome and relocation service » (GP21 WP2) gives potential migrants information about positions within the county, housing opportunities, both using traditional channels (job fairs, newspapers) and innovative ones (phone calls, animation on social medias etc.)*



## *Strengthen links with people who have moved out*

People who have moved out are not necessarily final about their decision. They might come back. And while they are away, they talk about the region. For both these reasons, it is important to develop "institutionalised" relations with the diaspora: keep them informed about main things happening within the area, about work opportunities and main projects developed recently, etc.

*In region Dalarna, Sweden, through the campaign called "Contact" (GP3, WP2) the region has actively involved inhabitants of the region (by asking them contact data of their relatives, friends who have left the region and involving them as ambassadors of the regions in the further contacts with the diaspora).*

*The "MoveHere" campaigns organised in Hedmark have been also quite successful. Politicians from the municipalities have all called people who had moved out, on the same day, to tell them they were missed and tell them also what sort of life they could get if they came back.*

*Some people moved back as a result!*



## *Attract and integrate foreigners*

In addition to the different points highlighted here for all working age adults, some specific actions are needed for foreigners in terms of language training, competences equivalence and cultural integration. Several solutions have been identified within our good practices and we will present the most significant of them here.



*Teruel Province as well as Dalarna region have developed specific training courses to the attention of immigrants arrived recently in the country and who needed language classes or specific competencies to find a job easily (GP6 and GP 20 WP1).*

In terms of cultural integration, several newcomers in the study areas of the project have stressed the role that “immigrant hosts” working within municipalities in mountain areas have in helping new comers to settle down (through assistance in administrative tasks, but also facilitating contacts with inhabitants of same profile, etc. GP 22 WP2).

### More information

Further information on this subject can be found on the website [www.padima.org](http://www.padima.org) in the final report of the project **Strategies to increase the attractiveness of mountain areas: how to approach depopulation in an integrated manner?**

We also offer you brochures about:

- Increasing mountain attractiveness for young people
- Increasing mountain attractiveness for retired people

The content of the brochure was developed in the course of the INTERREG IVC project PADIMA (*Policies Against depopulation in mountain areas*).

**Layout:** Emmanuelle Picaud,  
Marie Guitton, Ancuta Pasca



**Contact:**

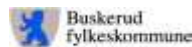
Ancuta Pasca  
Communication Officer  
Euromontana  
2, Place du Champ de Mars  
1050 Brussels

**Tel:**

+32 2 280 42 83

**Email:**

[padima@euromontana.org](mailto:padima@euromontana.org)



REGION DALRINA



The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of EU programmes.