

Soil management practices in the Alps

A selection of good practices - Case Study 9



Edited by · Andreja Nève Repe · Aleš Poljanec · Borut Vrščaj

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SOIL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN THE ALPS

A selection of good practices for the sustainable soil management in the Alps

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Editors

Dr. Andreja Nève Repe, Dr. Aleš Poljanec,

Dr. Borut Vrščaj

Reviewers

Dr. Aleš Poljanec, Elena Cocuzza,

Sašo Gorjanc, Elisabeth Schaber,

Dr. Borut Vrščaj, Jurka Lesjak,

Dr. Michele Freppaz, Dr. Silvia Stanchi,

Dr. Andreja Nève Repe

Slovenia Forest Service, Office of the Tyrolean Regional Government, Agricultural Institute of Slovenia, University of Innsbruck, Institute of Geography, University of Torino, Department of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences

English review

Miha Odar

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Alenka Šubic

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CS9.

Management of vacant spaces in South Tyrol, Italy

Plattformland:

André Mallossek

Contact:

André Mallossek

info@plattformland.org

www.plattformland.org



Country, Region:	<i>Italy, South Tyrol</i>
Organisation:	<i>Plattform Land</i>
Sector:	<i>space management: spatial planning, communal development</i>
Land uses:	<i>agricultural land</i>
Main soil threat:	<i>soil sealing</i>
Key soil ecosystem services:	<i>No focus on single services. All potential services will be considered.</i>
Summary:	<i>The negative economic, societal and environmental impacts caused by irresponsible land use demand a more effective approach to vacancy management. This ongoing pilot project explores the idea of prioritising lower land use by redeveloping empty buildings in twelve South Tyrolean municipalities. Activities include the documentation of building vacancies, raising of public awareness, digitalisation of data, and consultations regarding future activities with residents and experts. The primary goal of this project is to decrease land consumption throughout the Alpine region.</i>
Keywords:	<i>spatial planning, reduced land use, recycling of brown fields</i>



Background and description of the problem

Vacancy management as a contribution to the sustainable use of space

Vacancy management is a central aspect of intelligent land use, i.e. a responsible use of limited space in harmony with society, the economy and the environment. This is all the more true in a mountain region such as South Tyrol, where space is scarce and land is valuable.

The sealing of soils, mainly agricultural land, is limiting sustainable development. Therefore, a general awareness-raising event took place in May 2018 in South Tyrol and a pilot project regarding vacancy management in five South Tyrolean municipalities has been under way since summer 2017. The aim is to further increase the appeal of the municipalities, while at the same time reducing land consumption.

Expected improvements / contribution to better soil management

The most obvious improvement regarding soil management is decreased land use, due to prioritising the reuse of empty buildings first. In other words, as mayor of one pilot municipality put it:

“We have collected data on vacant apartments and commercial real estate. In Tramin, 37 apartments and 26 buildings are empty, which corresponds to the living space of about 340 people. If new residential zones had to be designated here, about 3.5 hectares of “cultivated land” would be needed”.

Especially the sector for restoration using old craft techniques and the energy renovation sector can profit from this initiative.

Stakeholders and knowledge transfer

- Public administrations
- Building or property owners
- Research institutions
- Companies or entrepreneurs
- Architects, planners
- Investors
- General public

Data and methods

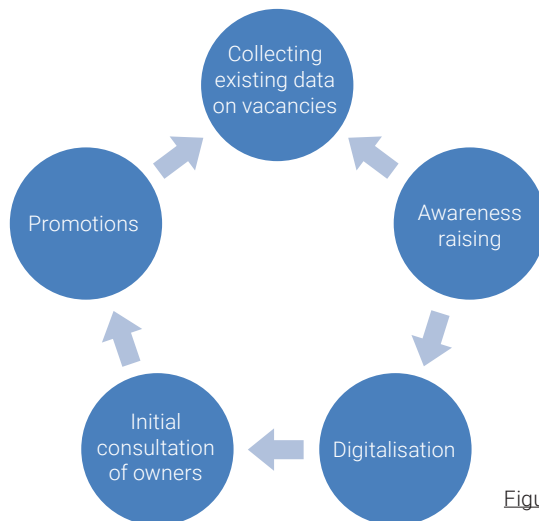


Figure 32: The 5 phases

Duration and costs of the project

The pilot project started in summer 2017 and its first phase was finished by the middle of 2018. In 2019, the project was extended to other municipalities and it also includes initial consulting of interested individuals by architects regarding renovation of old/empty houses.

Another series of local awareness raising events started at the end of 2019.

Each municipality had to cover the costs of the local contact person, the local events and coordination. It is estimated that with respect to the size of the municipality, each municipality spent a few thousand euros.

Activities

Since summer 2017, the Platform Land has been conducting a pilot project on vacancy management in five selected pilot communities in South Tyrol:

- Kaltern
- Klausen
- St. Leonhard in Passeier
- Tramin
- Truden

The focus here is on collecting information about empty buildings, raising awareness and advising target groups and communicating with owners. The approach is based on the needs of the people concerned, it incorporates the existing building fabric and the environment and concentrates on promoting action during implementation.

The work phases of the project include the following steps:

I. Recording of vacancies/building gaps in the five pilot municipalities involved according to the specifications and definition in coordination with the responsible regional authority and the South Tyrolean Association of Municipalities.

II. Raising the awareness of the population regarding the comprehensive internal development: initiation and coordination of the process with the involvement of the population and thus definition of the needs and topics for the respective internal development (active internal development). First results of the pilot project were presented at the 2018 annual conference of the Platform Land and have been presented in the form of a small exhibition.

III. Digitalisation of the data in coordination with the South Tyrol and the Association of Municipalities with regard to the uniform GIS software and its further development for vacancy management.

IV. Initial consultations of the residents concerned including experts (architects, KVV

Arche) taking place on the day of inner development, which were initially carried out in Glurns and Truden in late summer/autumn 2018.

Results

The pilot project delivered a map of the vacant buildings and spaces in each participating municipality, a poster and a short explanation for the general public, as well as a more detailed database for internal use of the vacancies in each municipality and a standardised procedure in the entire area of South Tyrol. Furthermore, about 100 local and regional decision makers took part in the awareness-raising events, while about 80 residents took part in the first local events as well.

Further information can be found on the webpage (in German):
<http://www.plattformland.org/pilotprojekt-leerstandsmanagement/>

Transferability and applicability to best soil management practice

The methods can be adapted and transferred to other Alpine regions –from the definitions to the use of tools for collection of information about vacant buildings and spaces, as well as templates for contacting owners or informing the public.

Photos / illustrations / maps

Plattform LAND
Piattaforma per il rurale

Beispiele zur Innenentwicklung

MELAP PLUS Strukturellen Defizite

Leerstand / komplizierte Rechtsverhältnisse

Verschiedenen beengte Hausgrundstücke

Mangelhafte innere Erschließung des Quartiers

Beengte Hofstelle

Leerstand Gasthof Adler

Leerstand lw. Gebäude

Erfassen, visualisieren und sensibilisieren

Beraten und fördern

Vorher und nachher

Figure 33: Examples of mapping as well as before-and-after footage of formerly vacant houses



Figure 34: Mapping of vacant buildings



Caring for Soils
- Where Our Roots Grow

