

## Actual Version of the Project 20120206

### 1.1. Project Title

#### ALPINE HERBS AND HOME REMEDIES

### 1.2. Project idea title:

Safeguarding and extending knowledge of traditional medicinal herbs and home remedies backed by science to improve health, wellbeing and prosperous sustainable economic development.

### 1.3. Priority Axis:

Priority 1 - Competitiveness and Attractiveness of the Alpine Space

### 1.4. Project Participants:

Lead Partner: Italy, Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano Alto Adige: South Tyrol

### 1.5. Estimated Budget:

Total Costs: 3.100.000 €

ERDF applied for: 1.976.000 €

### 1.6. Duration:

Starting date: 01072012

Closure date: 30062015

### 2.1. Transnational approach

Documenting, compiling and evaluating the existing reported knowledge is carried out on an international level by leading scientific institutions and expert organisations. Thus shared efforts in gaining information and evaluating reported knowledge is more cost-efficient. This common knowledge base is evaluated by the specialised institutions and provides a scientifically strengthened basis for further decisions on regional level such as to boost high quality health and well-being services and products.

### 2.2. Main problem or challenge to be addressed:

The alpine space requires action to counterbalance demographic change, loss of cultural identity, shifting socio-ethical values, new lifestyles and lack of job opportunities. [The traditional knowledge concerning health promotion and healing traditions is tending to disappear](#). Revitalizing old healing knowledge, backing with scientific findings flanked with implementation strategies, eases the pressure of an already stressed health care system across the regions. A challenge not to be missed in the wake of the intended deregulation of the health market in 2014.

## 2.3. Main objectives of the project:

### 2.3.1. Explaining the main objectives of the project in relation to the above mentioned problem

Gathering and pooling local healing traditions across the alpine region is a first step. Compilation of printed information on application of Alpine herbs and home remedies (enhancing the so called "VOLKSMED"- data base (containing already over 70.000 individual entries of traditionally passed on knowledge about herbs and healing methods), the gene-bank of AGES, Austria, and other regional data bases) and scientific assessment of important parts of the newly established common data base are main objectives. Medically crucial plants or preparations will be listed as recommendations for expert groups among Pharmacopoeias partner countries. An overview about basic and applied research of elected Alpine herbs and home remedies will be carried out. This overview provides answers to questions of scientific findings (degree of evidence) and safety based on literature and expert knowhow. Subsequently, a multilingual data base will be established containing the pooled knowledge, thereby making it accessible to the public. It will contain documented effects and approved applications of traditional healing knowledge (mainly herbs), backed with scientific findings, thereby enabling medical professionals, family doctors, pharmacists and practitioners alike in order to provide a broadened therapeutic spectrum both for chronic ailments and for those seeking improvement of their general state of health. Authorities will obtain a "green book" containing recommendations in order to facilitate implementation of corresponding guidelines into the existing legislative framework. This shall assign traditional healing practices a broader, more frequent and safer applicability.

### 2.3.2. Explaining the main objectives of the project in relation to the Alpine Space Programme strategy:

Handing back "processed" traditional knowledge to the people offers an incentive to rediscover endangered cultural heritage and at the same time benefit from an expanding market for "softer" therapeutic means. Pristine alpine environments provide ideal settings for the cultivation of high quality products and offer a sound platform to establish small to medium sized enterprises among municipalities that would otherwise have to deal with rural exodus. Establishing local centers of competence for herbal remedies and healing methods in the form of rehabilitation centers, leisure and tourism facilities that focus e.g. on the silver economy, increases attractiveness of the alpine region. Linking these institutions with centers of competence (universities, clinics, etc.) assures that innovative healing methods can be further elaborated. Such revitalization of alpine municipalities, makes them more attractive, provides jobs and increases competitiveness in a globalized world.

### 2.3.3. Explaining how our project will contribute to growth, job creation and sustainable development:

The project's contribution along with legislative backing provides the basis for skilled jobs that regard the well-being/welfare economy, training and education professions serving in local centers of competence. With production and application within reach, a sustainable local economy can be formed. Scientific backing and ongoing research in cooperation with academic institutions facilitate discovery and development of new therapeutic applications and will lead to new products and services.

## 2.4. Capitalisation of results:

Information if explanation how our project is building on results of projects implemented under Interreg III B or other programmes:

This project integrates results of former research initiatives like the VOLKSMED database (University of Vienna), containing more than 70.000 entries of the traditional usage of wild plants, of CAMBRELLA (RP 7), and the AGES gene-bank (Linz) housing seeds of herbal medicinal plants. It complements the

efforts of other regional projects focusing on high quality services like the ARGEALP project NURA, using natural alpine resources to help persons suffering from allergies, or ALPSHEALTHCOMP.

## 2.5. Main activities and their location:

- collecting ethno-botanic knowledge across the alpine regions via participating member states using audio-visual tools along with a standardized questionnaires; selected target groups will be approached to obtain the required information about methods of cultivation and transfer of medical utilizations. Pilot projects and field surveys will be set up in South Tyrol and Salzburg along with the French partners.
- Pooling and exploitation data collected during field surveys will be used to build a multilingual database (DE, EN, I, F) for medicinal plants of the alps which will comprehend detailed information about characteristics, cultivation and use of the herbal plants; the gathered data will be centrally stored using the AGES infrastructure (Linz, AT). This also involves preparation of plant extracts for scientific evaluation (in cooperation with the French partners). The data will then be adapted and presented via an on-line platform that will also be multilingual. This will be done with partners of the SILMAS project (an already established alpine space initiative) to provide a working multilingual knowledge map.
- The Swiss approach already utilizes many alpine herbs for medical / therapeutic applications. The Swiss partners are already in the process of compiling this knowledge into a handbook.
- Traditionally used plants along with expertise gathered in plant monographs (AFSSAPS, France, Volksmed Database of the University of Vienna, and other universities) will yield data for integration into transnational pharmacopoeia. Existing industrial ties will be used to screen (via biological tests) alpine herbs for benefit / risk evaluation. Indeed bioactivity and safety; evaluation of medicinal plants for their use in health care and for their potential as source as new drugs. Here, mostly in the identification of the active ingredients and of their mechanism of action.
- Traditional knowledge about medicinal plants and other healing methods (aqueous inhalation therapies, characteristics of particular wells that are assigned healing properties), along with quality standards and personalized mixtures regarding these remedies will also be investigated with modern physical means which will be done at the University of Salzburg. Collecting orally passed on knowledge in Southern Germany (Freiburg) carried out as a regional survey by the University Center of Complementary Medicine in Freiburg.
- Besides standard classical methods of scientific investigation about medical usability, cultural anthropology is capable to illuminate the qualitative depth in its practical application. It relates the value of a given tradition to person and the social structure in which this knowledge is embedded. An aspect that shall be assigned to thesis projects across participating universities.
- Establishing training and educational initiatives, such as those planed by our Swiss partners who are working in establishing a post-gradual Master in herbal medicine.
- University of Salzburg: Overview and findings of basic research regarding ecologic requirements for the preservation of medicinal plants; strategies for reducing stress to biotopes housing medicinal plants; suggestion to redeem the effects that result out of changes in land usage / production methods as well as ecosystem instability (e.g. anthropogenic airborne pollution load, increasing stress burden as a result of modified microclimatic conditions, seasonal leisure activities, etc.); incentives to increase the value both for healing practices regarding inhalation of aerosols and uptake of waters from certain wells that are known to locals in having beneficial effects).
- Initiative for networking and education cooperation: Prof. Zauner-Dungl (Danube-University Krems): on three levels: medicinal (medical doctors; others), non medicinal and (medicinal) lay persons

- From an ecological, economic, cultural and health supporting point of view, it is appropriate to widen applicability of regional plants and other natural resources for cosmetic products; i.e. (aqueous solutions for wellness / welfare purposes, rock salt, fat and oils etc.). At present, small, handicrafts producers in Austria set up a broad spectrum of natural cosmetics. Yet with regards to applicability, most products often do not have the proper legal basis. An issue that should be tackled in order to provide incentives on the jurisprudential front.

- Creating information material for tourism based on possible incompatibilities and (cross-) sensitivities for people suffering from food intolerances and allergies.
- Pilot projects to implement relevant knowledge regarding wellbeing, health and healing methods in relation to alpine herbs: especially in the fields of prevention, health promotion and nutrition counselling with alpine herbs.
- Pilot project SALK (Hospital of the province of Salzburg, University Clinic in Salzburg): healthy nutrition in the hospital with alpine herbs in the kitchen.
- Trieste: Scientific information center re medicinal herbs: scientific informations for advisors and patients
- “Arche Noah” for Alpine Herbs: South Tyrol.
- Launching a stakeholder dialogue (provided by ESIHR and with experts from European networks of scientists and practitioners) to integrate research, practice and the public sector for an exchange of experience between groups of stakeholders and between regions, to find out best-practice examples and to record different approaches and perspectives in the regions (including legal regulations): Discussing and developing joint strategies in the fields of health and quality of life Alpine Herbs and home remedies, as well as consideration of relevant impacts on tourism (health- and wellness tourism) and sustainable added value enhancing processing of alpine herbs:
- Integrating scientific findings (from basic research and applied research) including incompatibilities and (cross-)sensitivities (for people suffering from food intolerances and allergies).
- Outlining intermediate results of the projects in particular backing traditional knowledge using scientific means (degree of evidence) and safety of the evaluated alpine herbs and home remedies.
- Depiction of the findings via scientific verification regarding effectiveness, advisability, safety and cost effectiveness. Issues covered are also the choice of Alpine herbs for further investigation and pilot projects - as well as the setting up of a list of suggestions for research topics and questions for the 8<sup>th</sup> European Research Programme.

## 2.6. Main expected Outputs and Results:

2.6.1. Please inform on the main expected outputs and results of our project and quantify each time it is appropriate:

The main outputs regard surveys carried out among local experts. Providing an overview and the transfer of the scientifically backed knowledge to professionals and the general public: The overview will combine the findings and recent works from basic and applied research in regards to alpine herbs and home remedies – mostly to be done by the university partners. Evaluating written knowledge to present scientific findings regarding Alpine herbs and home remedies which are used as part of health promotion campaigns aiming at cure and prevention as an integrative part of health practitioners` therapeutic spectrum. Along with scientific backing, basic therapeutic knowledge and an extended view about the knowledge of what health will be made available to practitioners.

The data will then be adapted and presented via a multilingual on-line platform. This can be achieved with the partners of the SILMAS project (an already established alpine space initiative) to provide a working multilingual knowledge map.

- The Swiss approach already utilizes many alpine herbs for medical / therapeutic applications. The Swiss partners are already in the process of compiling this knowledge into a handbook.

- Traditionally used plants along with expertise gathered in plant monographs (University of Vienna, AFSSAPS, France) will yield data for integration into transnational pharmacopoeia. Existing industrial ties will be used to screen (e.g. via biological tests) alpine herbs for benefit / risk evaluation. Indeed bioactivity and safety; evaluation of medicinal plants for their use in health care and for their potential as source as new drugs. Here, mostly in the identification of the active ingredients and of their mechanism of action. In the project we use a standardized method that facilitate a multilingual communication, enabling political decision makers, professionals and the public to be informed in a comprehensive way by this tool in a transregional, efficient and up-to-date way. This offers a systemically and demand-orientated presenting of expert know how. Outputs of this program include:
- A graphical rehashed knowledge map to recognize connections, to navigate/research/learn that covers the whole knowledge area, in the languages of the project partners as a base for transferring the relevant knowledge and at the same time safeguarding traditional knowledge.
- A shared knowledge base for exchanging experience and as a platform for information and learning for regional workgroups (scientists and practitioners alike).
- A multilingual website for scientists including glossary and specialized dictionary for stakeholders / experts, both for professionals as well as the lay community. Furthermore providing a structured ground work for a Wiki-like system to promote and shape the dynamic as well as interactive dialogue of the regions involved.
- Compiling and editing of therapeutic monographs;
- “Greenbook” of alpine Medicinal plants: preliminary assessment regarding effectiveness and tolerance (assortment of medicinal plants used in the alpine space).
- Guidelines for popular remedies including clear understandable explanation approaches regarding their effectiveness. Transregional data base “alpine plants and household remedies”.
- Didactic and training material, information material.
- Recipes for medicinal plants and / or substances with high added value identified in alpine herbs
- Providing incentives for the transposition of positive economic initiatives to our local context

Information channels will also include specific affinity group media, adult education institutions, museum, schools, medical practices, pharmacies, and tourism associations (including “Give-aways” designed for special occasions). Also a self-explanatory exhibition will be designed which will – flanked by information events - tour across the pilot regions. A web-based training module will be set up like „10 theses about traditional healing knowledge in the Alps“. A specific focus will be given to cooperation and pilot projects with tourist associations and the like.

Pilot projects like that at the University Clinic of Salzburg (SALK) will launch a model concerning healthy nutrition in an hospital setting using Alpine herbs in their own hospital-kitchen and establish a showground with Alpine herbs. Information in five languages will be provided for these gardens, for a touring exhibition and for a permanent exhibition in an “Arche Noah”-like manner for Alpine herbs (finally situated in South Tyrol). The whole collected knowledge will be also accessible for professionals and experts in scientific advisory centers like the one planned in Trieste.

#### 2.6.2. Please explain how and by whom the outputs and results will be used:

Collecting and evaluating the traditional knowledge is an output of itself - which will also stimulate relevant research. Monographs will be a scientific base for future research and appliance. Single citizens will get, respectively regain, healing methods (and easy-to-find-experts) which are

sustainable, often quite cheap and match to the culture they live in.

The population as a whole could adopt alpine herbs and home remedies as a cultural “object of identification” which is not only a symbol but an object able to spend well being and well feeling. Politicians and executive members of health insurance funds will get a broadened decision-making basis re medicinal approaches.

Members of medicinal professional groups will get an additional healing approach based on the patient’s self-regulation on a big scale.

Experts and employees of the tourism and the gastronomy sectors will get additional possibilities to meet the expectations of modern people seeking not only entertainment and delicacy but also wellbeing.

Schools and training institutions will be supported with appropriate syllabus.

The regions as a whole will have an attractive “object of collaboration” and – by using important project tools like the knowledge map – tools and approaches suitable for further and future fertile cooperation.

#### 2.6.3. Please inform how they will be transferred to influence the political decision making process:

As – in democracies – the political decision making process is done by many participants of the social, cultural and economic systems, as much important members as possible of these systems could be addressed. Therefore the targeted political/decision making bodies could receive information to appreciate health promotion and healing approaches based on traditional European and regional knowledge and regional resources based on outcomes of scientific findings.

In the stakeholder dialogue process an exchange of experience between research, practice and the public sector can be provided as well as an exchange of experience between regions to find out best-practice examples and to record different approaches and perspectives in the regions (including legal regulations): Discussing and developing joint strategies in the fields of health and quality of life regarding Alpine Herbs and home remedies, as well as consideration of relevant impacts on tourism (health- and wellness tourism) and sustainable added value enhancing processing of alpine herbs will be themes in the dialogue process. Central themes:

- Presenting and integrating scientific findings (from basic research and applied research) including incompatibilities and (cross-)sensitivities (for people suffering from food intolerances and allergies).
- Outlining intermediate results of the projects in particular showing the degree of evidence and safety of the evaluated alpine herbs and home remedies.
- Depiction of the findings via evaluation regarding effectiveness, advisability, safety and cost effectiveness. Issues covered are also the choice of Alpine herbs for further investigation and pilot projects - as well as the setting up of a list of suggestions for research topics and questions for the 8<sup>th</sup> European Research Programme.

#### 3.2. General Information:

##### 3.2.1. Please present the partnership which will implement the project. Specify if the partnership has a cross-sectoral and integrated approach and if it is building on previous cooperations:

The Province of South Tyrol by law provides complementary medicine and is interested in strengthening regional medicinal approaches. In Switzerland complementary and alternative medicine passed its 2nd evaluation period, and Swiss universities are interested in relevant research including healing plants. ESIHR wants to bring together research, practice and the public sector. It aims for a structured dialogue process of relevant stakeholders and establishing a competence cluster. AGES

safeguards plant seeds in a database and also publishes the relevant knowledge. This safeguarding will also secure healing approaches building upon these plants. Health institutions join the project to benefit from the relevant knowledge and to prove the effectiveness of traditional medicine by implementing it in pilot projects. Tourist associations are interested in attractive offers and to take account of ill people. The diversity of regions facilitates different views and joint implementations.

3.2.2. Please explain the relevance of the partnership for achieving the objectives of the project:

Prof. Saller (University Hospital of Zurich) is a leading expert re multicomponent mixtures. The University of Zurich has an outstanding reputation regarding botanical knowledge.

Outstanding Experts like Prof. Saukel (University of Vienna) will provide their database, compile written knowledge about alpine herbs and home remedies and provide scientific assessment.

AGES will extend the data base of the gene bank regarding medicinal Alpine plants in several languages.

ESIHR will use their informal european network of research experts / institutions and will maintain the stakeholder's dialog process to connect experts from research, praxis and public authorities in sharing the information between them and the regions. They will also be involved in good practice and present common regional strategies as well as discussion and developmental strategies. Experts present their findings about the extent of scientific evidence (based on literature analyses and expert know-how), tolerance and safety, questions of effectiveness, practicability and risk assessment. Issues that will be covered – among others – regard the choice of Alpine herbs for further investigation and pilot projects fur future studies as well as the setting up of a list of suggestions for research topics and questions with a particular focus at the 8<sup>th</sup> European Research Programme.

Communications experts like Prof. Luger and the WissenschaftsAgentur of the University of Salzburg, will play an important role in the dissemination of the knowledge.

The Province of South Tyrol has got the political will to implement and foster complementary medicine.

In general, universities will contribute to the basic research activities and clinics will apply the research along with applicability of traditional methods using a scientific approach. Regional initiatives will have the capabilities to reintroduce traditional knowledge into cultural life of their citizens and will enrich their economies with the application of this knowledge.

#### Project partners:

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