



“Commercial services and mobility in sparsely populated mountains: examples from Aragon”

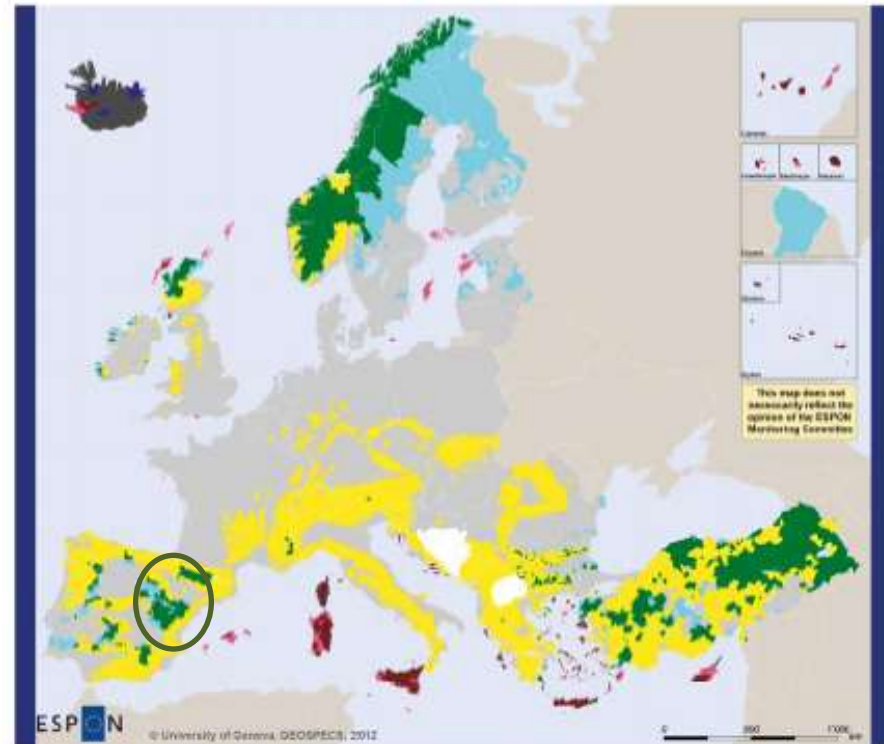
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La vitalità delle montagne europee
nella programmazione 2014-2020

Roma, 6-7 giugno 2013

TERRITORIAL CONTEXT : Aragonese mountains

- Aragon: 1.400.000 inh.
- Average density: 28 inh/km²
- Density Teruel: 10 inh/km²
- Rural/mountain and sparsely populated!



ESPON © University of Geneva, GEOSPECS, 2012

Geographic specificities identified in each LAU 2-unit



Roma, 6-7 giugno 2013

La vitalità delle monte
nella programmazione

ESPON, Geospecs, 2013

Map 2 Demographic sparsity, mountainousness and insularity

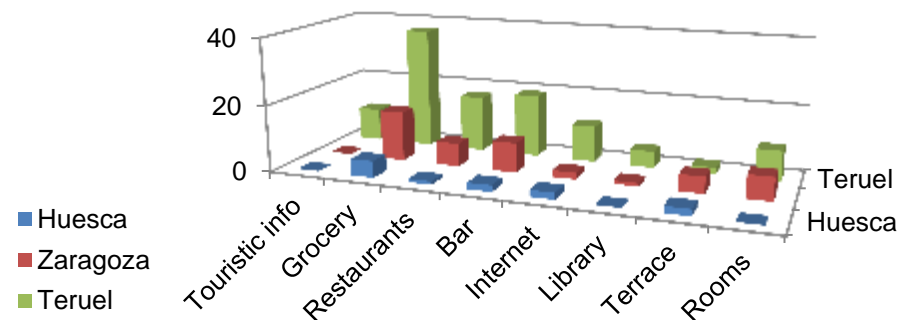
SERVICES & MOBILITY : THE PROBLEM

- Demographic challenges:
 - Sparse and seasonal population: most villages < 200 inh. 3X more in summer
 - Ageing population: av. age 53, 38,5% above 65 → mobility issues, access to daily needs, health, social interaction...
- Economic challenges:
 - Shops have closed, sometimes 10-15 km to find a shop
 - Ambulant shops only in summer time or once/week



HOW DID IT START?

- Three women, one village, one innovative idea:
 - Blancas, 2001: Esther, Aurora and Encarna went to the Chamber of Commerce of Teruel with the idea to re-open the grocery store of their village, with **'a bit of everything'**
- 2002: scheme created in Teruel
- 2006 → Zaragoza
- 2011 → Huesca
- 2012: **62 rural multiservices** in Aragon
 - Teruel: 42
 - Huesca: 4
 - Zaragoza: 16



MULTI-SERVICIO RURAL: WHAT IS IT?



- A **municipal** building, transformed into ...
- ... a **social + market place** with a grocery store, bar, restaurant, rural Internet, library, touristic information and in some cases accommodation
- Main objectives:
 - Provide services to a depopulated area
 - Attract new inhabitants, including youth and tourists
- Opening hours:
 - Normal in summer
 - Reduced in winter (2-4h)



SUPPORT PROCESS

Selection of beneficiaries: municipalities with less than 300 inhabitants + no private shop or bar left

Initiative of a municipality offering a building and seeking financial support

Viability study by the Chamber of Commerce

Investment for building renewal and adaptation (Province + Region funding)

Public procurement for selection of a service manager





FUNDING AND ORGANISATION

- **Management:** Chambers of commerce
- **Funding:** shared between Provincial and Regional governments: 2.300.000€ in total
 - Teruel funding 2012 – 2013: 170.000€ (for around 9-10 shops)
 - Until 2011 the main granted part was from Regional
 - No EU funds because we are not FEDER territory
- **Investment costs:**
 - Range from: 30k€ to 250k€ depending on nb of services (from simple shop around to a hostel, restaurant, bar, grocery...)
- **Functioning costs:** the manager pays a rent and receives no operating grant: it has to be economically self – sustained!

WHAT RESULTS? DOES IT WORK?

- Yes! Significant development since start
- Positive impact on population, population increase in some cases, attractiveness for 'second home' owners and tourists → revitalisation
- Some shops closing as well
- Perspectives depending on local dynamics
- Great advantage for people without cars

Conditions for success :

- Manager is from the village or can access a cheap accommodation
- People play the game!
- Tourism potential
- Commitment of the manager

Difficulties:

- Not always profitable as one-only job → income must be completed
- People are happy having a meeting point but... keep buying in supermarkets a bit too much



PERSPECTIVES FOR THE NEXT PERIOD

- **Development perspectives:**
 - Where it works, development of accommodation (added value ++)
 - Room for development of local products sales (limited so far!)
 - Raise awareness at population level
- **Reflection on sustainability and financial support:**
 - Private activity disappeared as it was not profitable: can it be maintained without operating aid?
 - Northern countries → usually operating aid + possibility of specific services: postmail, lottery, pharmacy...(Norway); legal aspects
- **Spain:** so far, no possibility of operating aid
- **Wish to maintain the scheme** in the following period (Funds and programming to be defined)

Other initiatives on mobility: a few ideas

- Province of Teruel Lead Partner of 'Move on Green' INTERREG IVC.
<http://www.moveongreen.eu>
- Comprehensive reflection on mobility
- One example: **ISEAL**
- Service for **transporting disabled people** and their accompaniment in rural areas of Aragon.
- Began in the previous **ESF program** (2007 - 2008) and it will continue until 2013.
- Has created **68 new jobs in the regions**. The vehicles are vans with 10-12 seats and acquired through leasing
- About **600 people / year** use the service regularly.

Thank you for your attention any questions?

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