



Evaluation of SMEs and entrepreneurship policies

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GRAND PARADIS FOUNDATION

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1. SMES PROFILES IN AOSTA VALLEY

1.1 . LA CHÈVRERIE – GOAT DAIRY FARM

LA CHEVRERIE – GOAT DAIRY FARM

La Chèvrerie is a family-run goat dairy farm set in Valsavarenche, in the territory of the Gran Paradiso National Park. Anna Rotella, the owner, breeds 54 goats and produces and sells goat cheeses and eggs.
Meeting with Anna Rotella, owner of the business

1. How long has the business been operating?

I started this business 7 years ago.

2. How many employees?

I'm alone in this business, I do everything by myself, from breeding and milking goats to producing cheeses. Next year my husband will probably become my partner in the business.

3. Who has established the business?

It was me who established the business.

4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea?

My strong passion for animals and my desire/curiosity to try to start such kind of business by myself.

5. What made you select this location?

Because I like Valsavarenche very much and the climate here is perfect for breeding goats.

6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else?

Absolutely not. Some years ago I tried to move my business to Piedmont, but a great part of the goat cattle fell sick and died. I had to come back here; probably, being in the National park, the air and the grass are less polluted. Here my cattle is fine and produces good milk that makes me able to produce quality cheese.

7. Is the landscape important to your business operation?

Yes, see question 6.

8. Do you think there is something unique about your business?

I think that what makes my business unique is the fact that it is authentic/genuine. Goats are my life and I like what I do very much, even if running this business alone is very tiring.

9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business?

Next year I'm planning to enlarge and concentrate the buildings of my "farm" and I hope I will benefit from regional fundings to do it.

10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success?

I think that the only threat (a part from the risks for the cattle health) is the decrease of tourists' number in the area but, since now, I decided not to wait for tourists in my farm but to join them in markets and all along the country ski tracks in Valsavarenche; I don't know why, but they like buying my cheese while skiing!

11. Did the business have state help to start?

Yes. When I started I benefited from a regional contribution for young farmers (I started it as a part time job) of 15,000 euros. I used this money to buy the plants and the equipment for the stable and for buying my first goats.

12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates?

It wasn't difficult, it only took a very long time to get it.



13. Did you find getting help or support easy?

Yes.

14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy?

See question 12.

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15. What help would improve your business now? The only help I need is the one my husband can give me joining me in the business.
16. Do you have an environmental management? The project for the new structure of the farm is eco-friendly: the structures will be self sufficient from an energetic point of view and the stable will have a grass roof and, therefore, it will have a low environmental impact.
17. How many customers/visitors do you have? I don't know; managing the business by myself and selling my cheeses in market and on the country ski trails I'm not able to count costumers.
18. What kind of customers do you have? My customers are keen on nature and genuine products. They are mainly tourists or Aosta Valley inhabitants coming to Valsavarenche for skiing or hiking.
19. What is your turnover? I think it is of about 20,000 euros per year.
20. the address of an internet site No internet site
21. please include some electronic photos <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
22. Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview <p>What emerged from the interview is that Anna Rotella deeply loves her job and her goats (during the interview she said "Goats are my life"). She is also very interested in protecting the environment and she also participates to a market called "mercato a km 0", where local producers only sell products of our territory.</p> <p>Although she hasn't a website and his seat is difficult to find (and usually she is not there, but breeding or milking her goats so customers have to call her on her mobile and wait for her coming back) she is known because of her quality cheeses, so she doesn't need, according to her, to promote herself on the web (also because she wouldn't be able, working alone, to produce great quantities of cheese).</p> <p>La Chèvrerie is partner of a network of local producers called <i>Atelier du Goût</i>¹.</p>



¹ The *Atelier du Goût* is both a network of local producers and a showcase for their products owned by *Fondation Grand Paradis*. The aim of this network is to promote the products of our territory and to stress the relationship existing between products and land.

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1.2. LO TRIOLET – GRAPE-GROWING AND WINE-PRODUCING BUSINESS, AGRITOURISM

LO TRIOLET	
GRAPE-GROWING AND WINE-PRODUCING BUSINESS; AGRITOURISM	
<p>Lo Triolet is a typical and ancient construction in stone set in the village of Introd, only 5 km away from the Gran Paradiso National Park. The 3 hectare farm engaged in extensive cultivation, as well as orchards and vegetables, proposes a relaxing vacation away from the city in two cozy apartments with independent entrance that have been recently restored. Lo Triolet, grape-growing and wine-producing business, opens its cellar to guests to taste and buy its wines.</p>	
<p>Meeting with Marco Martin, owner of the business</p>	
1. How long has the business been operating?	We started this business in 1993 (year of our first grape harvest)
2. How many employees?	I work alone but I have two employees who work with me part-time in the high season and during the grape harvest.
3. Who has established the business?	I established this business with my mother Emilia Millet; from 2000 I'm the owner of the business.
4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea?	Thanks to my previous job I discovered the world of wine producers and I found out that I was very kind on it. I therefore decided to try to start to produce wine and, by the time, I became strongly fond of it.
5. What made you select this location?	First of all because I already had a house and vineyard in Introd; secondly because, at the beginning, it was a hobby, so I needed a location not too far from Aosta, where I worked. By the time I decided not to move, also because I had restored the buildings.
6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else?	As far as the agritourism is concerned I think that moving it out of the park would decrease the number of customers. On the other hand I'm aware of the fact that, until there won't officially be a park brand, there are no differences between vineyards in the park and outside the park in Aosta Valley.
7. Is the landscape important to your business operation?	Yes, but only as far as the agritourism is concerned.
8. Do you think there is something unique about your business?	I think that what makes my wines unique is the fact that they are simple, genuine and authentic.
9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business?	The participation to national and international fairs, making us able to sell our products on an international market.
10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success?	I think that the only threat to my business could be the economic crisis but, until now, people haven't stopped buying my wines; I think that the reason is that, especially in a period of crisis, people choose quality products.
11. Did the business have state help to start?	Yes, I benefited from European funds for young entrepreneurs.
12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates?	It was easy; the restriction is that I can't close the business until 15 years from its opening.
13. Did you find getting help or support easy?	Yes.
14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy?	No, they took the normal length; yes, it was easy .

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<p>15. What help would improve your business now? I think that the Aosta Valley Region should increase the value of wine in our region (I'm talking about the image of wine, not the quality). The wine production in Aosta Valley is a young/recent kind of commerce, so they should promote it both in Italy and abroad.</p>
<p>16. Do you have an environmental management? As far as the wine production is concerned we use the least agro-medicines possible; I'm planning to install solar panels to give energy to the agritourism.</p>
<p>17. How many customers/visitors do you have? The average number of customers of the agritourism is 320 per year</p>
<p>18. What kind of customers do you have? As far as the agritourism is concerned the customers are mainly young couples or families but, in general, they are people keen on nature. Concerning the wine production we sell our wine to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people coming to visit our cellar and tasting our wines • restaurateurs • Italian retailers • Foreign customers
<p>19. What is your turnover? It's about 15,000 euros per year.</p>
<p>20. the address of an internet site no internet site</p>
<p>21. please include some electronic photos</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
<p>22. Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview In 2007 Lo Triolet was awarded for its white wine Pinot Gris ("3 bicchieri Gambero Rosso") and Marco Martin is very known for the quality of the wines he produces. He is also very known (both in the local community and among tourists) for the wine tastings he organizes, serving it with local cheeses and bread. Lo Triolet is partner of the above mentioned network of local producers <i>Atelier du Goût</i>.</p>

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1.3. LO SABOT - AGRITOURISM

LO SABOT – AGRITOURISM

The agritourism “Lo Sabot”, a typical rural house rebuilt in the Aosta Valley style (made up of wood and stone), is open all year round and offers its guests a nature-based holiday and a homely atmosphere. It is located in Rhêmes-Notre-Dame, at the borders of the Gran Paradiso National Park and near the country ski trails.

Meeting with Ottilia Anselmet, owner of the business

1. How long has the business been operating?

We started the business in 1992.

2. How many employees?

We are four employees, all members of the same family.

3. Who has established the business?

I founded the business with my husband; we started as a farming, then we transformed our business into an agritourism.

4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea?

We needed to be able to maintain ourselves thanks to our job; it wasn't possible with farming, so we decided to try with the agritourism.

5. What made you select this location?

The reason is that we already had both the house and the stable in Rhêmes-Notre-Dame.

6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else?

Yes, but the fact of being very next to the Gran Paradiso National Park (our business is next to the borders of the park, not inside) increases the number of tourists.

7. Is the landscape important to your business operation?

Yes, see question 6.

8. Do you think there is something unique about your business?

I think that what makes our business unique is its authenticity and the organic certification of the milk and cheeses we produce.

9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business?

I think that the biggest opportunities we have are:

- The regional funding for restructuring the farm and the building
- The Aosta Valley website and brochures to promote our business

10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success?

I think that the biggest threat for the future of our business is the fact that the health laws are the same for both hotels and agritourisms, but actually we are very different from hotels. I think that the Region should introduce some laws to protect the small agritourisms and to maintain the specificity of local agritourisms, that are obviously quite different from the ones of other Italian regions.

11. Did the business have state help to start?

I don't remember, but during the years we have benefited from regional funds to restructure and buy the furniture for the agritourism.

12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates?


It was easy but it took a long time to get it.

13. Did you find getting help or support easy?

Yes.

14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy?

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Yes, see question 12.
15. What help would improve your business now? Our business would improve if, as already told before, agritourisms were protected and separated from hotels.
16. Do you have an environmental management? We used regional funding to install a photovoltaic power system and woodchips heating.
17. How many customers/visitors do you have? We have, on average, nearly 1000 customers per year.
18. What kind of customers do you have? Our customers are mainly families and, in spring, ski touring lovers.
19. What is your turnover? Our turnover is, on average, of 40,000 euros.
20. the address of an internet site no internet site
21. please include some electronic photos 
22. Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview What emerged from the interview is that Ottilia Anselmet carries out her activity because she really likes it, not because she needs it. They have a loyal clientele and they are promoted on the regional website. They are a good example of a business focusing on the quality of the products they offer and on offering guests a relaxing holiday.

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1.4 . RESTAURANT VALNONTÉY

RESTAURANT VALNONTÉY	
Bar restaurant set in Valnontéy (Cogné), in the heart of the Gran Paradiso National Park. This family-owned restaurant serves local dishes in a homely atmosphere.	
Meeting with Joelle Cunéaz, one of the owners of the business	
1. How long has the business been operating?	The business was started in 1943.
2. How many employees?	A part from 2 partners (my mother and me), we have four employees who work full-time with us during the off season, while in the high season we have got 10 full-time employees.
3. Who has established the business?	The business was established by my great uncle Efisio Perret.
4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea?	He had traveled around the world and he had already managed two hotels; he was a far-seeing person and had foreseen that, starting a business in Valnontéy, inside the Gran Paradiso National Park, would be a success.
5. What made you select this location?	Because it is inside the Gran Paradiso National Park.
6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else?	No, I don't think it would work if located somewhere else.
7. Is the landscape important to your business operation?	The landscape and the location are our strong points.
8. Do you think there is something unique about your business?	See question 7.
9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business?	I think that, for us, the biggest opportunities are the regional fundings for restructuring the buildings and for buying the equipment we need.
10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success?	I think that, a part from the economical crisis, the greatest threats are the taxes, that are becoming higher and higher, as well as the price of the employees.
11. Did the business have state help to start?	Actually I don't know, it was started too many years ago.
12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates?	
13. Did you find getting help or support easy?	
14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy?	
15. What help would improve your business now?	I think that we seriously need a reduction of the tax burden
16. Do you have an environmental management?	We pay particular attention to the environment protection; as we are in the park we try to produce the least rubbish possible, we make the separate collection of rubbish and try to sensitize our clients on the importance of the environmental protection.
17. How many customers/visitors do you have?	During the low season we have got a maximum of 20 people per day, while in the high season the maximum number of customers is 200.
18. What kind of customers do you have?	

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Our customers are families/couples/singles who like nature and tranquillity. In June, July and September we have a lot of foreign customers eating at our restaurant. Luckily we also have a consolidated local clientele.

19. What is your turnover? No data available

20. the address of an internet site
no internet site

21. please include some electronic photos



22. Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview

The Restaurant Valnontey is a business handed down from generation to generation; nowadays it is only opened in summer (usually from May until the end of October), as it is the highest tourist season. Therefore, during the rest of the year, the owners maintain themselves through other jobs, but they still carry on the family restaurant. They have a loyal clientele made up of both tourists and local people, so they are very known for their genuine products and for the homely atmosphere of the restaurant.

1.5. CONSORZIO OPERATORI TURISTICI DELLA VALLE DI COGNE (CONSORTIUM OF COGNE VALLEY'S TOUR OPERATORS)

CONSORZIO OPERATORI TURISTICI DELLA VALLE DI COGNE (CONSORTIUM OF COGNE VALLEY'S TOUR OPERATORS)

The Consorzio Operatori Turistici della Valle di Cogne (The Consortium of Cogne Valley's tour operators) aims at promoting the development of the Valley of Cogne, at coordinating the activity of the member businesses and at improving their efficiency and their productive capacity. It also contributes in the organization and realization of local events.

Meeting with Filippo Gérard, president of the consortium

1. How long has the business been operating?
The business was started 10 years ago.

2. How many employees?
We are: 1 president, 1 employee in charge of the office, 2 full time employees for the data processing centre and 1 full time employee for the winter period.

3. Who has established the business?
Originally this business was an association called "Les Amis du Paradis" and it was founded by my

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	father. In 2000 it was transformed into a consortium.
4.	What was the inspiration behind the business idea? As we are in Cogne, which is a small and quite isolated location, it was the need of creating an association of different businesses in order to improve our productive capability to inspire the business idea.
5.	What made you select this location? Because the aim of our consortium is to promote nature based tourism in the park, therefore Cogne is the perfect place!
6.	Would this business work if it was located somewhere else? No.
7.	Is the landscape important to your business operation? Yes, it is very important for our business operation.
8.	Do you think there is something unique about your business? The location.
9.	What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business? I think that, as far as the consortium is concerned, the biggest opportunities are the regional fundings to organize events and to promote our reality (50 % of the expenses). As far as the hotels are concerned the best opportunities are the regional subsidized loans and the free grant loans.
10.	What do you think are the greatest threats to future success? I don't see any threats to the future of our business. If there is any problem, we will simply shift from the consortium to an association. As we are an aggregation of entrepreneurs there is no competition, we are very united and we have a lot of voluntary workers.
11.	Did the business have state help to start? Yes, we benefited of a municipal funding of 17,000 euros. The municipality also contributes to the payment of the press agency and in the organization of events.
12.	If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates? It was easy.
13.	Did you find getting help or support easy? Yes.
14.	Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy? No.
15.	What help would improve your business now? I think that, at a national level, we should promote different realities, including Aosta Valley, in addition to the classical ones like Venice and Rome.
16.	Do you have an environmental management? It depends on the hotels; some of them have an environment management whilst some of them are still working on it.
17.	How many customers/visitors do you have? Not applicable
18.	What kind of customers do you have? Our customers are mainly Italian, foreign tourists are still the minority.
19.	What is your turnover? Not applicable
20.	the address of an internet site www.cogneturismo.it
21.	please include some electronic photos

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22. Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview
Thanks to its high representativeness the consortium has a critical mass enabling it to create buying groups of goods and services. The philosophy of the consortium is of cooperating instead of competing.

1.6. LES AMIS DU BOIS


LES AMIS DU BOIS

Les amis du bois (the friends of wood) is a small company producing wooden objects and carvings typical of local tradition. The workshop, housed in a classical Aosta Valley building made up of stone and wood, is set 16 km far from Aosta, in the hamlet of Villes Dessus in the village of Introd.

Meeting with Corrado Brunet, one of the owners of the business

1. How long has the business been operating?
We started our business in 1974.
2. How many employees?
We are three full time employees (working partners)
3. Who has established the business?
I started the business with my two partners, Fusinaz and Ollier.
4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea?
We were already keen on wood manufacturing and we decided to stop working as employees to start our own business.
5. What made you select this location?
We decided to locate our business in Introd because I'm the owner of this building, so I decided to transform it into our workshop and shop.
6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else?
I think that having our business located in a municipality whose territory is partly inside the Gran Paradiso National Park jurisdiction is important. However, I think that few people are aware of the existence of the park, therefore I think that our business would work also if it was located somewhere else.
7. Is the landscape important to your business operation?
See question n. 6
8. Do you think there is something unique about your business?
I think that what makes our business unique is the fact that we carry out an ancient tradition and we try not to change it by using the same kinds of wood.
9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business?
I think that the best opportunity for our business is the possibility to participate, thanks to the help of IVAT (Aosta Valley Institute of Traditional Craftmanship), to national and international fairs. Fairs are a very important tool to have our products known and sold out of Aosta Valley.
10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success?

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I think that the only threat to the future of our business is the fact that young people are not keen in craftsmanship anymore and, therefore, I fear that we won't find somebody to carry it on.
11. Did the business have state help to start? Yes, we benefited from regional fundings for the business start up.
12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates? It was easy and, of course, it restricts the way of operating of our business.
13. Did you find getting help or support easy? Yes.
14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy? No, I don't think so.
15. What help would improve your business now? I think that nowadays, for such a business like ours, bureaucracy is too complicated. We spend half of our time in filling into forms and queueing to submit them and, sometimes, it is hard to understand what we are supposed to do. I think that our business would improve if the bureaucracy was simplified.
16. Do you have an environmental management? We use the wooden waste materials for heating the shop and the workshop. We are not planning to invest money in installing solar panels or other devices as we think that it is still profitless.
17. How many customers/visitors do you have? We don't monitor the number of clients.
18. What kind of customers do you have? We sell our products directly here in the shop to tourists but the majority of our customers are Italian and French retailers and wholesalers.
19. What is your turnover? Following the economical crisis our turnover has slightly decreased but, on average, it is of nearly 300,000 euros per year.
20. the address of an internet site www.lesamisdubois.com
21. please include some electronic photos 
22. Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview What emerged from the interview is that Corrado Brunet and his two partners are very keen on their job. They are aware of the importance of the Internet in order to reach and attract customers and they have a very updated website.

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1.7. HABITAT – COOPERATIVE SOCIETY

HABITAT – COOPERATIVE SOCIETY

HABITAT is a cooperative society operating on the sector of nature based tourism and of environmental education.

Meeting with Roberto Giunta, president of the cooperative society.

1. How long has the business been operating?

The society was founded in 1986, but they actually started acting in 1990, when they started managing the visitors centres of the Gran Paradiso National Park.

2. How many employees?

Until 2002 there were 6 employees working on the visitors centres of the National Park. After 2002 we stopped managing those structures and, consequently, the number of employees varies depending on the periods of the year. Nowadays we are two working partners (with VAT number) and 21 partners who cooperate occasionally.

3. Who has established the business?

The cooperative society was established by 9 partners, who were biologists or simply keen on nature.

4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea?

The founders of the society wanted to transform hiking into an occasion to learn “reading” the territory in all its aspects: observing animals in their natural environment, recognizing their traces, learning the names of flowers and trees (environmental education).

5. What made you select this location?

We chose to establish the seat of our society in the area of the Gran Paradiso National Park for two main reasons:

- First of all because we wanted to be members of the *Consorzio Gran Paradiso Natura*, whose aims concern the promotion of tourist development and improvement of the local economy;
- Secondly, because the fact of acting in the National Park increased the tourist and clients appeal

6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else?

As we are in a small region in which there are both a National and a Regional Park it would probably not be a problem having the seat out of the park but, if we were in a bigger area the business wouldn't work if located out of the protected natural area.

7. Is the landscape important to your business operation?

Of course, it's fundamental. Nevertheless what makes the strength of our business is the matching of nature and culture.

8. Do you think there is something unique about your business?

I think that what makes our business unique is our passion for our job and the strong belief that it is possible to “live” dealing with the environment. At the beginning it was actually possible to maintain ourselves only by working with nature; nowadays it is becoming more and more difficult and this is the reason why, a part from the two working partners, all the other members of the society cooperate with us as a second job or in their free time.



9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business?

I think that the biggest opportunity for our business is that, being an enterprise, we have the possibility to improve ourselves thanks to refresher and specialization courses.

10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success?

The fact of being a private enterprise is, in Aosta Valley, also a problem. In our area, in fact, Public

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<p>agencies give the assignments to the best offering and do not reward quality; thus, the small enterprises risk to loose the majority of the job opportunities.</p>
<p>11. Did the business have state help to start? At the beginning we benefited from the law helping cooperative societies by financing the purchase of furniture, etc. We still benefit, for instance, from fundings for buying vehicles.</p>
<p>12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates? It was just a little bit long to get it, but it didn't restrict how we operate.</p>
<p>13. Did you find getting help or support easy? Yes</p>
<p>14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy? See question 12</p>
<p>15. What help would improve your business now? I think that, from the tourist point of view, we would be helped if the Region started promoting Aosta Valley not only as snow/ski and high mountain hiking but also as nature based tourism. As in the last decades the number of school trips has sensibly decreased I think that schools should be sensitized of nature based tourism and environmental education should be strongly promoted (on both regional and national level).</p>
<p>16. Do you have an environmental management? We are all members of environmental associations and we sensitize children of the importance of environmental protection. As we work in the park and we use the park structures we are bound to use organic products and to try to reduce the quantity of rubbish we produce.</p>
<p>17. How many customers/visitors do you have? We have an average of 10,000-12,000 customers per year.</p>
<p>18. What kind of customers do you have? We have a range of customers spacing over children and young people (until 20-year-guys) and people older than 35; there is therefore a gap between teenagers and adult people, which is more and more increasing over the years.</p>
<p>19. What is your turnover? Our turnover is, on the average, 150,000 euros per year.</p>
<p>20. the address of an internet site www.ambientenatura.com</p>
<p>21. please include some electronic photos</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
<p>Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview. The Habitat cooperative society is very active and able to adapt itself to the market. Roberto Giunta and his partners are very prepared and aren't strictly bound to the National Park in their job.</p>

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1.8. STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF AOSTA VALLEY

Table no 1

AOSTA VALLEY	2000	2005	Last available year with statistics 2009
Employed in agriculture/total employment	6,2 %	4.5 %	4 %
Employed manufacturing/total employment	21.9 %	25.5 %	24 %
Employed services/total employment	71.9 %	70 %	72 %
GDP per capita (PPP)	EUR 31,625	EUR 34,861	EUR 33,037
Unemployment rate	4.5 %	3.2 %	4.4 %

Table no2

ITALY	2000	2005	2009
Employed agriculture/total employment	2.7 %	4.3 %	2.3 %
Employed manufacturing/total employment	52.1 %	30.1 %	39.2%
Employed services/total employment	55.2 %	65.6 %	58.5 %
GDP per capita (PPP)	EUR 20,909	EUR 27,736	EUR 25,263
Unemployment rate	10.1 %	7.7 %	7.8 %

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2. ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE SMES IN AOSTA VALLEY

2.1 GRANTS IN SUPPORT OF TOUR OPERATOR ASSOCIATIONS AND CONSORTIUMS

Grants in support of tour operator associations and consortiums (Regional law number 19 of the 4th of September 2001 – Chapter IV)

1. short description of support scheme	A free grant for tour operator consortiums that present a project to improve the services offered by their associates. The grant covers up to 50% of the project's costs. Eligible initiatives must concern the creation of projects for tourist development and for the marketing and promotion of tourist attractions. To apply the project's costs must be between 10,000 and 135,000€.
2. Level (local, regional, national)	Regional
3. Managing institution & internet site	Aosta Valley Regional Council http://www.consiglio.regione.vda.it/banche_dati/leggi_regolamenti/dettaglio_i.asp?pk_lr=2637
4. Objective	To promote and sustain the development of tourism and commerce in the Aosta Valley Region and to promote enterprises aimed at strengthening the tourist and commercial activity.
5. Target	Tour operator consortiums recognised by the Regional Law 6/2001, article 10.
6. Examples	Consorzio Operatori Turistici della Valle di Cogne, a consortium of tour operators in the Valley of Cogne, in Gran Paradiso National Park.
7. Additional information	

2.2. GRANTS FOR THE SUPPORT OF AGRITOURISM (FARMS WHERE TOURISTS CAN BOARD OR EAT LOCAL PRODUCE)

Grants for the support of agritourism (farms where tourists can board or eat local produce) (Regional law number 29 of the 4th of December, 2006)

1. short description of support scheme	Grants and financing for the starting up and the development of agritouristic activity connected and complementary to the farming activity. The maximum amount of the grants or financing is of 50,000€.
2. Level (local, regional,	Regional

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national	
3. Managing institution & internet site	Aosta Valley Regional Council. http://www.consiglio.regione.vda.it/banche_dati/leggi_regolamenti/dettaglio_i.asp?pk_lr=3781&versione=S
4. Objective	<p>a) To promote development and re-establish the equilibrium in agricultural areas.</p> <p>b) To facilitate agricultural entrepreneurs to stay in rural areas, by improving life conditions and increasing income.</p> <p>c) To promote multi-functionality in agriculture and the diversification of agricultural revenue.</p> <p>d) To favour the conservation and the protection of the rural architectural (edilizio) heritage, of the environment, of traditions and of cultural initiatives in the agricultural scene.</p> <p>e) To create employment for the relatives of the agricultural entrepreneurs.</p> <p>f) To increase the value of local agricultural produce.</p> <p>g) To expand the range of tourism products.</p> <p>h) To increase the relations between urban and rural culture.</p>
5. Target	Agritourism farms.
6. Examples	Agritourism Lo Sabot Agritourism Lo Triolet
7. Additional information	

2.3. INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF YOUNG FARMERS.

Initiatives to support the establishment of young farmers. (Programme for rural development- PSR 2007-2013 measure 112).	
1. short description of support scheme	Aid in the form of a capital contribution (maximum 40.000€) or of an interest subsidy (maximum 15.000€), for the new establishment of farmers under the age of 40 who present a business plan to be carried out in a three-year period.
2. Level (local, regional, national)	Regional.
3. Managing institution & internet site	Aosta Valley Regional Council http://www.regione.vda.it/gestione/gestione_contenuti/allegato.asp?pk_allegato=3428
4. Objective	To facilitate the starting up of young farmers and the adjustment of their farms. To encourage the creation of a generation of entrepreneurs aware of the importance of the sector's professional requalification and of the production of quality goods.
5. Target	Young farmers under the age of 40, who are establishing themselves for the first time as owners of an individual company or of a farming society.
6. Examples	Lo Triolet, a grape growing and wine making company. La Chêvrerie, a family-run goat dairy farm.
7. Additional information	

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2.4. INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT BUSINESS

Initiatives to support business (Regional Law number 19 of the 4th of September, 2001 – Chapter III).

1. short description of support scheme	Grants and financing for small and medium enterprises that plan on creating, restructuring, expanding, modernising or improving the infrastructures used or to be used for the company's activity.
2. Level (local, regional, national)	Regional
3. Managing institution & internet site	Aosta Valley Regional Council http://www.consiglio.regione.vda.it/banche_dati/leggi_regolamenti/dettaglio_i.asp?pk_lr=2637
4. Objective	To promote and sustain the development of business and tourism in Aosta Valley.
5. Target	Small and medium enterprises open to the public (bars, restaurants, hotels, etc.), dedicated to commerce or that carry out other activities in the services industry.
6. Examples	The Ristorante Valnontey, a family-owned restaurant working since 1943
7. Additional information	To be eligible for the grants in the form of capital contribution, the project must cost between 5,164.57€ and 1,032,913.80€. To apply for the aid in the form of a subsidized loan, the project must cost between 50,000€ and 3,000,000€.

2.5 GRANTS IN SUPPORT OF COOPERATIVES

Grants in support of cooperatives (Regional law number 27 of the 5th of May 1998 – Title IV, Chapter I)

1. short description of support scheme	Grants for cooperative societies and their consortiums for productive investments, for organisational expenses and for capitalisation expenses.
2. Level (local, regional, national)	Regional
3. Managing institution & internet site	Aosta Valley Regional Council http://www.consiglio.regione.vda.it/banche_dati/leggi_regolamenti/dettaglio_i.asp?pk_lr=2488#articolo_42_
4. Objective	To promote and consolidate cooperatives through interventions aimed at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stimulating the establishment of cooperative bodies. - Increasing the development of cooperative bodies' activity and their entrepreneurial and productive ability. - Strengthening the professionalism and specialization of the operators.

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5. Target	Cooperative societies and their consortiums, working in the Aosta Valley region
6. Examples	Cooperativa Habitat, a cooperative working in the fields of naturalistic tourism and environmental education.
7. Additional information	

3. SOLUTIONS OBSERVED DURING THE STUDY VISITS IN 2010

3.1 SOLUTIONS FROM AUVERGNE (FRANCE)

Auvergne: We were strongly impressed by the amount of public money invested in natural and touristic sites in Auvergne, particularly as far as the Vulcania site is concerned.

Aosta Valley: In our region we haven't got an attraction that have benefited from an amount of public money comparable to the one Auvergne invested in Vulcania; nevertheless there are lots of businesses that benefit from regional fundings and a lot of public attractions (i.e. parks and ski resorts) generating profits for private businesses.

Auvergne: The French state's "Grand site de France" label, that guarantees that the site is conserved and managed following sustainable development principles, and its network of 35 Grands Sites. This is a good idea that could be applied in other realities too.

Aosta Valley: We haven't got anything similar; this is the best practice we have found out in Auvergne and we would like to apply it in our region.

Auvergne: We have found the "Instants d'absolu" ecolodge very interesting. Although this accomodation was not completely as we expected it to be (the idea of ecolodge we had was a more eco-friendly one), we think that the idea of proposing such an accomodation in a "continental" country is a very good one, and could be applied to some of our local tourist structures, perhaps paying more attention to the eco-friendly aspect.

Aosta Valley: The structures we have visited are very nice and built in the typical Aosta Valley style (made up of wood and stone) and some of them have an environmental management, but we haven't any ecolodge in Aosta Valley. Perhaps, the Gran Paradiso National Park label will represent the occasion to introduce structures with the ecolodge characteristics in our area.

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3.2. SOLUTIONS FROM OURENSE PROVINCE (SPAIN) AND ALTO TAMEGA REGION (PORTUGAL)

Ourense/Alto Tamega: The Parador Santo Estevo hotel, the converted Benedictine Monastery in Nogueira de Ramuin, near Ourense/ The Spanish Paradores, hotels for luxury accommodation in Castles, Palaces, Fortresses, Convents, Monasteries and other historic buildings. What we found particularly interesting is that the hotels in the Parador Group were set up by the state to use quality tourism to act as guardian of the national and artistic heritage of Spain and to assist regions with fewer economic resources.

Aosta Valley: Unluckily in our area we haven't got structures and management similar to the Parador Group and its hotels. Despite having lots of monuments, in fact, in Italy it is not possible to use them for private businesses as there is a strict separation between the preservation of cultural heritage and the private operators.

Ourense/Alto Tamega: We have appreciated the Thermal Spas of Outariz and Chavasqueira (The Miño Thermal project) and, particularly, the fact that, being very cheap and opened until late, they can be used by both young people and older ones, but also by working people during their lunch break. This is a good way to promote thermalism not only as a curative tourist attractive but also as a free time activity for the local population.

Aosta Valley: In Aosta Valley we have thermal baths in Pré St Didier and in Saint-Vincent. A lot of hotels also have a Spa centre. In Cogne there is a hotel which offers his guest a particular offer: they can reserve the Spa and enjoy 1, 5 h of complete relax and privacy. This is a very effective business venture.

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4. SUMMARY

Companies operating in natural areas in our region are common practice (it is worth to consider that, for instance, the whole Valsavarenche valley is inside the National Park jurisdiction).

In our area the dominant economic activities of businesses operating in natural areas are involved in the services sector and they mainly deal with tourism.

The Regional policies encourage businesses to operate in the entire valley, paying particular attention to young people and to women and they are effective. Despite not having policies to encourage businesses to operate in natural areas the Aosta Valley Region gives financial contribution to institutions like Fondation Grand Paradis to help and promote businesses operating in the protected areas.

What emerged from the interviews is that some of the entrepreneurs would like the policies to be more focused on the different kinds of structures, as they are too much generic and, for instance, they group together a 3-bedroom agritourism and a 100-bedroom hotel. They would also like the bureaucracy to be simplified.

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