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PHENOALP: a new project on phenology in the Western Alps

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PHENOALP is a new EU co-funded Interreg Project under the operational programme for cross-border cooperation Ïtaly–France (Alps-ALCOTRA)" 2007 - 2013, aiming to get a better understanding of phenological changes in the Alps. The major goals of the project are:
1- The implementation of an observation network in the involved territories (i.e. the Aosta Valley and the Savoies in the Western Alps);
2- The definition of a common observation strategy and common protocols;
3- The involvement of local community members (e.g. through schools) in the observation activities as a way to increase the awareness on the issue of the effects of climate change.
Project leader is the Environmental Protection Agency of Aosta Valley (ARPA Valle dÁosta – IT) and the partners are the Research Center on High Altitude Ecosystem (CREA – FR), Mont Avic Regional Parc (IT), Bauges Massif Regional Natural Parc (FR) and the Protected Area Service of Aosta Valley (IT).
Project activities are:
1. Pheno-plantes: definition of common observation protocols (e.g. field observation and webcams) of different alpine species (trees and herbaceous) and implementation of the observation network; analysis of the relations between climate and phenological events; application and evaluation of phenological models.
2. Pheno-detection: remote sensing of European larch and high elevation pastures with MODIS data; multitemporal analysis (2000-2011) of phenological variations in the Western Alps.
3. Pheno-flux: analysis of the relation between the seasonal and interannual variability of plant phenology and productivity, assessed measuring CO2 fluxes (eddy-covariance technique), radiometric indexes and phenological events at specific (European larch stand and alpine pastures) monitoring site.
4. Pheno-zoo: definition of common observation protocols for the phenology of animal taxa (birds, mammals, amphibians and insects) along altitudinal gradients; implementation of the observation network.
5. Inter-pheno: integrated analysis of the relationships between plants and animals phenology and their relation with climatic and other environmental conditions.
6. Meteo-reseau: implementation of a monitoring network of temperature data in the sites where phenological observations are done.
7. Pheno-form: involvement of community members (e.g. schools, naturalistic guides, ...) in the observations and diffusion of results.
During the conference, details on project structures, methodology and expected outcomes will be exposed and discussed.