

Chapter 4

The ALAS Actions

Interregional Actions

Hjalmar Dahm & Theodora Petanidou

The actions in the ALAS Project have been carried out on both interregional and local levels according to the Project Proposal.

The interregional work was organised by a *Project Management Committee* (PMC). The PMC has met seven times, both during the main interregional events and at specific PMC meetings. It has been assisted by six supporting *Technical Working Groups* (TWG) with representatives from all four sites. An editorial committee was set up to revise all documents to be published.

Generally, the interregional actions can be classified in three categories: meetings and conferences; publications; studies and experts reports.

Meetings and conferences

1. The *ALAS Launching Conference* (Lesvos, 28-31 March 2001). The Conference was attended by 7-11 representatives from each partner site. This was the first opportunity for all partners to meet and draw up the detailed plans for the project. During the meeting the *ALAS Co-operation Charter* was signed, which fixed the aims and activities of both interregional and local actions. During these days the Project Management Committee as well as the six *Technical Working Groups* (TWGs) were established and met for the first time, in order to organise future work.
2. *Second meeting of PMC* (Pomorie, 23-24 June 2001). This was a specific meeting for

the PMC joined by 2-3 representatives from each site. The main scope of the meeting was to evaluate actions that had been carried out and to organise forthcoming ones.

3. The first *Annual Conference* and the third PMC meeting was held in Figueira da Foz, on 29 September-2 October 2001. It combined plenary presentations with workshops on specific themes related to economic, cultural and ecological aspects of salinas. The conference enabled the PMC to meet and appreciate the progress of the work.
4. The fourth *PMC meeting* took place in Lesvos, 8-10 March 2002, where the project work plan was revised and updated.
5. The second *Annual Conference*, together with the fifth PMC meeting was held in Piran, 17-20 May 2002. Lectures, debates and excursions were on the intensive programme. The participants were invited to inaugurate the exhibition on salinas and visit both the Museum of Salt-making Piran and the salt company's information centre.
6. The *PMC* met for the sixth time in Pomorie, 6-8 September 2002. This was in fact the last opportunity to regulate all final aspects of the project and try to catch up with delayed actions. The big event was the inauguration of the Salt Museum of Pomorie.
7. *Final Conference* and final (seventh) *PMC meeting* in Lesvos (29 November-2 December 2002). Over seventy people attended the Conference, students not included, in which the results from the project were presented

◀ View over the salina of Polichnitos
Author: Hjalmar Dahm

and discussed. Several international experts contributed their knowledge during both the plenary sessions and four workshops. A special workshop dealt with the history and future of the Greek salinas. The big event was the inauguration of the Salt Museum of Polichnitos. Soon after the event, the Proceedings of the Conference were published (Petanidou *et al.*, 2002).

In addition to all the meetings, there have been frequent exchanges within the network via e-mails, almost on a daily basis. Networking was mainly the responsibility of Lesvos.

Promotion and publications

The first PMC meeting (Lesvos, March 2001) defined and divided the responsibilities of the different publications and related actions:

- The *Quarterly ALAS Newsletter*. Lesvos has been in charge of the editing (executed by the assistant project manager), printing and distribution. The local partners have actively contributed to the Newsletters through articles and local reports. In total 7 ALAS Newsletters were published: three in 2001 and four in 2002.

More than 150 free subscriptions per issue have been sent out to other salt-producing sites (e.g. Guérande, Castro Marim, Sicily and Ston), to European salt museums and to organisations and experts on wetland management (e.g. Ramsar Convention, Tour du Valat, MedWet, Greek Wetland Centre), among them, many industrial salt producers (Salins du Midi, Salt Institute, FozSal, etc.). The Newsletter has been much appreciated and constituted an important link between the ALAS sites and other bodies as potential future partners.

The *Newsletter* was originally published in English. However, all issues have been locally

sent out with a summary in the partner's language (i.e. Greek, Portuguese and Slovenian), and were entirely translated into Bulgarian. Finally, as Newsletter 2 coincided with the Annual Conference in Figueira da Foz, this issue was entirely translated and published also in Portuguese.

- A permanently updated/enriched *ALAS web-site*. The web-site scheme was drawn up by spring 2001, but it started working only in December 2001. Under the responsibility of Lesvos, the web-site was prepared (material fed) and produced by two teams at the University of the Aegean. It is available at www.alas.gr or at www.aegean.gr/alas/general.htm.
- A series of *technical letters*. The production of the technical letters was the responsibility given to Piran, with the writing done by the respective TWGs. Following a PMC decision (March 2002), the number of technical letters was reduced from ten to seven by regrouping closely related letters. After a long discussion within the editorial board of ALAS, the detailed description and the layout scheme were accepted during the fifth PMC meeting in May 2002. All technical letters were published in November – December 2002. These booklets will hopefully be useful for managers – both economic and ecological – of saltworks and traditional salinas.
- A series of *general leaflets*. Figueira da Foz was in charge of these six leaflets, which were meant for a wider audience (tourists, birdwatchers, local people and decision-makers). The leaflets, written and edited in close collaboration with the ALAS editorial board, were printed in November 2002. The leaflets were destined to be translated into all partners' local languages.

- A *comprehensive printed publication*. The book at hand was the responsibility of Figueira da Foz, containing the whole experience of the ALAS project.
- A *video* with technical and popular expectations was the responsibility of Lesvos. The contents of the video were debated for a long period. Because of both the very high cost of shooting and the limited time available, finally only the material collected by the University of the Aegean (ALAS partner) was used.

The video was ready and shown for the first time during the 6th PMC meeting in Pomorie, in September 2002. The official presentation took place during the ALAS Final Conference.

The main intention was that the video can be shown in the museum facilities of the ALAS sites or other museums in Europe and the world. Further, it was also meant for schools as an introduction to a salt museum visit. The video was originally made in both Greek and English, thereafter being translated into the other partner languages (Portuguese, Slovenian, Italian and Bulgarian).

- *Proceedings of the Final Conference*. This is a Proceedings book in which all the results from the ALAS Final Conference were compiled. The Proceedings include: experiences of well-known scientists in the field; results of the ALAS project and discussions; workshops on important salt and salina subjects; description of the events during the ALAS Final Conference; round table related to the creation of the new Network of Mediterranean Salinas (under the auspices of MedWet). They are available in hard copy (Petanidou *et al.*, 2002) as well as in electronic form, together with the other ALAS documents (ALAS website).

Studies and experts' reports

The scope of these studies was defined by the 1st PMC in Lesvos, March 2001. The decision was that the partners should share the task responsibilities, as follows:

- *Project work plan*: made and regularly updated by Lesvos.
- *Feasibility check, external evaluations*: shared between all partners – this also includes the compulsory audits carried out by independent firms.
- *Compilation of economic information*: for this study, of prime importance for ALAS, Lesvos was in charge.
- *Guidelines for management plans, and compilation of the management experiences*: study prepared by Figueira da Foz.
- *Guidelines for construction/restoration and operation plans*: study carried out by Figueira da Foz.
- *Guidelines training*: study made by Piran.
- *Ideas and guidance concerning co-operative structures, compilation of experience*: study prepared by Lesvos.
- *Consultation on marketing measures*: study made by Lesvos.
- *Guidance and co-ordination of advice for the compilation of knowledge concerning salt museums*: study made by Piran.
- *Consultation concerning tourism*: study made by Pomorie.
- *Expert support on dissemination* – under the responsibility of Lesvos. This fund to support

experts that contributed to dissemination of the ideas and results of ALAS (authors, photographers and other contributors to the ALAS Newsletter, video, brochures, website, authors of articles in journals and periodicals, etc.) was finally not used. Besides, the study *Compilation of experience from pilot projects and operation*, under the responsibility of Lesvos, was finally not carried out.

A first evaluation of the ALAS results at interregional level¹

Although ALAS was originally a super-ambitious project (most of the partners believed that the effective time was too short for the realisation of all the tasks), it has been finally a successful one. It gave the possibility of interregional co-operation to partners that had never experienced such a manifold collaboration; left behind much material treating the subject of salinas both technically and theoretically; and left a legacy of the ALAS salt museums and the new-born Salinas Network under MedWet auspices. On the other hand, several activities encountered delays, had results of minimal or unacceptable quality, or were not finally achieved. This is due, to a certain extent, to the difficulties met with the poor co-ordination of the project, a task that proved to be too great for the abilities and will of the project leader. Still, besides the difficulties met with the interregional collaboration demanding Sisyphean insistence, there was the lack of political will, the hesitation in decision-making by the administrative bodies, the inability to manage the project at both the institutional and practical levels. All these, together with the lack of previous experience in managing such projects, and the lack of interest of the European Commission in effectively controlling it, gener-

ated an atmosphere that was negative to the ALAS partners and incompatible with quality results.

Another reason for the poor performance of ALAS as far as interregional results are concerned, may be the difference observed between the partners (geographical, political, cultural, ethnological, historical, linguistic). This type of complex difference was greatest in our Mediterranean consortium (Greece, Portugal, Slovenia, Bulgaria), which probably caused some kind of introversion in some of the partners, expressed to a certain extent as intensive creativity at the local level (e.g. Slovenia, Bulgaria). Still, the heterogeneity among the partners – a feature that could be even beneficial for the outcome of the project – became a real obstacle in combination with the limited effective time span in which the project had to be concluded. In fact, the effective project launching time was March 2001 instead of the contractual date, December 1999, whereas the project ended in December 2002.

The "local anchoring" of the general idea of the project encountered problems, especially in Lesvos and Figueira da Foz. We assume that this was caused by the fact that in both sites ALAS was proposed and sustained by "outsiders", perhaps not even accepted at the local level (University of the Aegean in Lesvos, *Mãe d'Água* in Figueira da Foz). In contrast, Piran already had a well-welded team before ALAS, while the Pomorie team was largely supported by the local municipality.

In any case, the interregional co-operation between the four ALAS sites was positive, but it is too early to say whether any durable co-operation between the sites is likely. Still,

the project may stimulate future exchanges – perhaps through friendship agreements – on salt and salinas, but also on other themes like adding value to other agricultural products and sustainable tourism. The ALAS Final Conference was a very good opportunity to set up future networks between sites and museums.

Added value created by ALAS

The ALAS project was a follow-up to a series of actions for the benefit and preservation of European salinas for future generations. One such major event was a conference organised by Insula/Unesco and European Commission in Paris, June 1997.

We therefore sought a much wider distribution of the *ALAS Newsletter* than the original project stipulated. The spontaneous reactions to the Newsletters from other salt-producing sites, companies and museums was very positive. In 2002, the distribution has been even wider and 500 copies of the Newsletter were printed.

The *technical letters* and *general leaflets* stimulated great interest from most salt-producing sites in Europe, and they were widely distributed. We are sure that the *ALAS video* will also be a helpful tool: more than one hundred

copies have been distributed, including to sites where sea salt is or used to be produced, as well as to European salt museums.

The *ALAS website* has been a success since it first appeared. The regular updating of the site has been important. We are currently working on spreading knowledge of the site and making it easily available through search engines. By also maintaining the website updated after the final date of the project (through the University of the Aegean), we expect the results of ALAS will be useful for a long time.

The *Final Conference* ("Salt and salinas as natural resources and alternative poles for local development") gathered in Lesvos many people and international organisations that not only debated the subject, but also will carry on the ideas (and ideals) of ALAS. The proceedings of the meeting will be also useful as a tool, as an important reference. The *Final publication* that is in your hand will be also a helpful document giving examples of positive experiences with a view on maintaining, restarting or enhancing small-scale salt production.

These will be the legacy of ALAS, the salty dowry to the next *alónitoi* to come.



¹ A first evaluation of the results of ALAS has been attempted in Petanidou (2004).

Local actions: Lesvos

Hjalmar Dahm

There were two very important results of ALAS at the local level in all ALAS sites:

- Awareness-raising with different outcomes depending on each local partner (local concepts, marketing of salt, re-organisation of structures, etc.).
- Construction or reconstruction work in both salinas and salt museums.

In detail, the results at the local level of Lesvos were the following:

Studies and experts' reports

- *Local concept* – Few things have been done in Lesvos to achieve public awareness on how to use the locally produced salt and salinas in

local development. A few articles were published (in the MedWet Newsletter and a Mytilenian periodical), but unfortunately it was not finally possible to mobilise the local women's association (in Polichnitos) also because of the lack of effort invested in doing so.

- *Local management plan* – A first ecological management plan was published in 2002, taking the results from the interregional report into consideration, albeit with no possibility of applying for permission.
- *Compilation of knowledge throughout Greece* – The University of the Aegean was in charge

and achieved the following: a) database of all salinas that have been working since the establishment of the Greek state, b) detailed database of all salt-making sites (typical and atypical) and their characteristics in all coastal areas in Greece (based on some 350 questionnaires, literature, encyclopaedias, geographical sites mainly relevant to salt and salinas) and c) historical evolution of salt-making in three important salt-making sites in Greece, including that of Polichnitos.

- *Consulting salt museums* – The University of the Aegean collected information and material and set up a database from all working salt museums and information centres in Europe, America and Japan. This tool will be of great help when consolidating the local salt museum and searching for connections between museums and salt sites.
- *Consulting tourism facilities* – The University of the Aegean carried out this study, which deals principally with the role of salinas as alternative poles for local development based on tourism.

Infrastructure and building works

- *Restoration of a traditional building to host the salt museum* – The Hellenic Saltworks S.A. was in charge of the works which were carried out in autumn 2002. The museum's first exhibition was inaugurated during the Final Conference.
- *Initial establishment of a salt museum in the restored building* – The University of the Aegean has invested in a collection of material for the future museum (old photos and post-cards, printed material etc.). Thirteen posters have been created and exhibited, showing different aspects of salt and salinas. A wide collection of contemporary photos, films, packaging etc. from all over Europe has been gathered to be used for a future extension of the exhibition. Also exhibited are miniature copies of different hydraulic tools previously used in traditional salinas of the Aegean. They were built by two Bulgarian salters from Pomorie. The Hellenic Saltworks S.A. has made a first list of tools that the company is able to provide to the museum.

Local publications

All seven technical letters and the six general leaflets were translated and published in Greek.

› Restoration of a traditional building for the Lesvos salt museum

Photo: Hjalmar Dahm



Local actions – Figueira da Foz

Renato Neves

Salt production in Figueira da Foz has been facing serious difficulties for several decades, and while the uncompetitiveness of the salt produced is a problem common to all salt-producing areas in Portugal, the situation here is even worse due to local conditions. Figueira da Foz, together with Aveiro, is in a region greatly influenced by the Atlantic, which means that the weather conditions are much less favourable than those enjoyed by more Mediterranean-type climates, since on average it rains more often and more heavily in summer and the amount of sunshine is considerably less, leading to lower productivity per hectare.

At the time of launching the ALAS Project in Figueira (November 2000) there were around forty producers, and one could say that in general the local community had great expectations by the project, since the identity of Figueira da Foz and the surrounding estuary area are closely tied to salt production. The approach of the project's Local Committee was therefore to foster close links with producers and to involve the community, publicising the project in the press and organising public meetings.

The principal local actions allocated to Figueira da Foz under the scope of ALAS were as follows:

- *Networking and promotion* – Despite the difficulties arising from cultural and linguistic barriers, Figueira da Foz was actively involved in developing the project, helping to define strategies and propose solutions, as well as making significant contributions to certain outputs that did not come under its direct responsibility, such as newsletters and the Project's website. It also worked on a number of interregional tasks that necessitated a great deal of contact both

within the ALAS teams and with external bodies, of which we would particularly mention the coordination of the final publication and leaflets, together with responsibility for carrying out two interregional studies that resulted in the publication of two technical letters.

A number of events were organised on a local level, including a public meeting to present the Project (November 2000), two theme-based workshops, and a photographic exhibition at the ALAS Annual Conference held at Figueira da Foz in September 2001. Two leaflets were also published, one for the general public about the Salt Museum, and the other on the salinas of Figueira aimed at children of school age.

- *Compiling information on the present economic situation of salinas* – A socio-economic study of the current state of salinas was carried out by a team of specialists; this demonstrated the fragility of their present economic structure, in terms both of production and commercialisation systems and of the average age of producers, which together are pushing the activity to the brink of collapse.
- *Drafting and implementation of an ecological management plan* – This action was the responsibility of DRAOTC, the regional environmental agency of the Ministry of the Environment. Since guaranteeing salt quality was one of the most important issues for producers, the plan was focused on the identification of sources of pollution. However, particular attention was also given to aspects related to degeneration through erosion, given that this factor had initially been identified as one of the main threats to the salinas.

- *Re-establishing/upgrading traditional salinas* – This was one of the main local actions of the project. The municipality acquired a salina that had been abandoned for approximately five years, and following restoration using traditional technology, it became a demonstration unit for the project. This restoration experience is one of the case studies presented in the Interregional Study of Restoration of Salinas.

- *Training and related measures* – The activity holds little attraction due to the low earnings associated with the sector, which led to the failure of the training course organised in conjunction with the Figueira da Foz technical training college, due to lack of applicants. The course was too long, and also devoted too much time to theory. Until there are clear signs of a real improvement in the prospects for traditional salt production, any future training actions will have to be organised on the basis of part-time activities in people's free time.

- *Setting up cooperative structures* – With the aim of publicising the first experience in Portugal of an association of traditional salt producers (TradiSal), the project organised a study visit for Figueira da Foz producers to Castro Marim in the Algarve. In addition, taking advantage of the presence of the President of the Guérande Salt Producers' Cooperative at the ALAS Conference in Figueira da Foz, the project organised various working sessions with local producers so they could find out about the Guérande experience. These and other initiatives were instrumental in prompting producers to revive a local association – FozSal – that at the start of the project had been inactive.

- *Marketing and related measures* – In order to confirm whether salt produced at Figueira da Foz met the standards specified by Nature et Progrés, which form the basis for certifica-



tion of the traditional salt produced at Guérande and at Castro Marim, the project requested a chemical analysis from the Food Quality Laboratory of the Chemistry Department of the University of Aveiro, which showed that the salt produced in Figueira meets all the legal requirements to be classified as traditional salt. Given that certification and designation of origin status for Portuguese traditional salt will only be possible following changes in the current legislative framework, the Local Steering Committee of ALAS played an active role in meetings between producers from various regions and the government body responsible for the sec-

▲ Opening of the Figueira da Foz salt museum

Photo: Rui Rufino

tor, which resulted in a proposal for a new decree-law. Still on the subject of designation, the local ALAS team presented producers with a document specifying procedures for traditional salt production at Figueira da Foz, in which local technology is defined and described.

- *Compiling knowledge on traditional salt production and related cultural heritage* – The project organised a survey of all the tools used in production and maintenance operations, including technical drawings that also showed construction details (water conduits, water-lifting mechanisms, etc.). A survey was also made of the terms used for the various compartments, channels, divisions and production processes, with local techniques being defined and described, as mentioned above.
- *Establishing a salt museum* – The traditional warehouse attached to the salinas was completely rebuilt in accordance with local technology, technical drawings being made in order to provide the builder with illustrations of the joints and fittings used in the original structure. The same materials were used, and certain

details that had fallen into disuse but which were typical of the warehouses of the past were reintroduced, notably locks and keys fashioned from wood. The idea behind the museum project was to create an ecomuseum-type unit, with a significant outdoor component. The interior lighting was designed to set off the items on display, combining the exhibition space with the original function of the building, that is to store the salt produced in the salinas.

Experimenting with small infrastructure, facilities and other services to use the site's cultural and natural heritage for quality tourism – All along a short walk around the salinas, panels have been placed illustrating various themes connected with the salinas, including birdlife, salt technology, fish, flora, and the Figueira da Foz salt barges. Within the salinas itself, between the two main levels of compartments, an observation platform has been built on a mound using material left over from the restoration works, with the aim of giving visitors a better understanding of the operations of the salinas, while at the same time increasing their awareness of the surrounding environment.

› The warehouse and the salina after all the restoration works made under the ALAS frame.

Photo: Renato Neves



Local Actions – Piran

Robert Turk

Local actions, planned and carried out in Piran, more precisely in and around the Sečovelje salinas, a landscape park and a Ramsar site, followed the main goals of the ALAS Project. They were thus to enhance the possibilities of conserving and developing traditional salt production in the Piran municipal area and at the same time raise public and state/government awareness with regard to the importance of conserving the natural and cultural heritage of the Sečovelje salinas. The main partners in the project were the Municipality of Piran, the Regional Institute for Natural and Cultural Heritage Conservation, the Sergej Mašera Maritime Museum, the Ixobrychus Ornithological Society and Soline d.o.o., the company responsible for salt production.

In accordance with the methodology laid down for the project, a detailed local work plan was drafted in order to define the tasks of the partners involved in the project. In line with the goals defined by the Piran team in preparing the framework of the project, emphasis was given primarily to improving the salt museum facilities, restoring salt production, which included training, reconstruction of facilities, marketing, and activities for natural and cultural heritage conservation. The work plan was finalised after the Launching Conference and Project Management Committee meetings that were held in March 2001 in Lesvos.

As local *studies and experts reports* were concerned the first step was the preparation of the work plan. All the partners involved in the project proposed various activities that were later evaluated and finally accepted as part of the working plan. Great importance was given to the development of the local strategic concept and to

studies of the local economy. In the framework of cultural heritage conservation, a special study was carried out concerning technological heritage and its maintenance. Even though the outlook for salt production is improving, the partners judged it appropriate to support the establishment of a co-operative structure that would be able to revitalise traditional salt production and at the same time could act as a (co-)management body for the Sečovelje salinas Landscape Park. Since tourism represents the most important activity in the Piran area, two special studies were planned. The first will examine expected tourism at the salinas and the second will investigate the guidelines and limitations for tourism development derived from nature conservation, which is the top priority for the area of the salinas.

The local *promotion and publication* tasks were on one hand focused on the importance and continuation of the ALAS project, its goals and the partners involved. On the other hand the main promotion activities were devoted to the raising of public awareness. Two major exhibitions were set up – one dedicated to natural heritage and its conservation and the other to the Sečovelje salinas as a whole. The exhibitions were put up in the town hall in Piran and later moved to Koper, to the town library. They both stressed the interdependence of natural and cultural heritage conservation and traditional salt production and consequently the need for common targets and actions. The exhibitions were very well received by the general public and the decision was taken to move the one on the Sečovelje salinas to other parts of Slovenia. Beside the exhibitions, a poster and a leaflet on the natural heritage of the area were produced, press

conferences were held and an important workshop on natural heritage conservation was organised. The workshop was held in the last week of January and was scheduled by the Ministry of Environment as the main event to mark 2002 World Wetlands Day in Slovenia. Another very important event, which had good coverage in the media, although not planned as a promotion action, was the annual conference held in Piran in May 2002.

Apart from the local *promotion and publication* tasks, the preparation of two technical letters (interregional promotion and publication tasks) was entrusted to Piran or, more precisely, to the two Technical Working Groups led by Piran – TWG4, *Training of salters, co-operative structures, marketing and related measures*, and TWG5, *Cultural heritage and salt museums*. Two technical letters were accordingly prepared (*Training salters: Guidelines and general material* and *Salt museums and compiling traditional salt knowledge: Experiences and tips*).

In accordance with the part of the work programme concerning *meetings, conferences and seminars* of the four Principal Partners (Lesvos, Figueira da Foz, Piran and Pomorie), the local co-ordinator and the project leader attended the three Project Management Committee (PMC) meetings in Lesvos, Pomorie and Figueira da Foz, while several members of the Local Steering Committee attended the Launching Conference (LC) in Lesvos and the first Annual Conference in Figueira da Foz. At the first meeting in Lesvos (PMC meeting and LC) the inter-regional tasks were defined and entrusted to the four Principal Partners, which allowed them to better define their work plans.

Great emphasis was given in the first stage of the project to preparatory activities concerning *infrastructure and building works*. As there was al-

ready a salt museum in the Sečovlje salinas, the main activities set out in the project were the maintenance and upgrading of 20,000m² of traditional salinas, the improvement of the existing salt museum and surroundings as a visitors' attraction, and various works in implementation of the management plan. An inventory of the cultural heritage of the area was completed with the involvement of two experts from the Sergej Mašera Maritime Museum, Piran, and two experts from the Regional Institute for the Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Piran.

At the beginning of 2001 important maintenance works were carried out to improve the accessibility of the salt museum by land and by sea. The main road to the museum, which runs on the southern part of the salinas, was repaired and the banks of the Giassi canal were reconstructed in order to allow access to the museum from the sea.

Further maintenance works were carried out throughout the salinas of the salt museum (banks, wind-pump, etc.) and also on the outer banks of the area in order to prevent damage from heavy rain and flooding.

A geodetic survey was made for the area of the salt museum and remains to be done for the Giassi canal. The map will be included in the permanent exhibition of the museum. For the same reason – the new permanent exhibition – photographic material and old post-cards showing salinas and work of salters were acquired. Within the framework of improving the existing salt museum facilities a project was prepared to reconstruct two additional salters' houses on the banks of the Giassi canal.

The *Training* activities laid down in the project were divided into two parts – practical and theoretical. The practical part was car-



◀ Nesting platforms built in Sečovlje salinas under the ALAS frame
Photo: Hjalmar Dahm

ried out separately for the student in charge of the salt museum salinas and the salters, working for the salt company. The theoretical part of the training, consisting of guidelines and case studies on management of protected areas and protection and conservation of natural and cultural heritage, was carried out in January 2002.

From a general point of view the results of the project meet the overall objectives set out in the original application. Awareness raising, reconstruction works in the salt-ponds and in the salt museum infrastructure, and, last but not least, interregional collaboration between the four principal partners, are undoubtedly the principal gains of the project in the two years of its implementation. There is however a minor set of objectives, mainly concerning the creation of new jobs and preparing the lo-

cal and regional public and associative and private players for EU accession, in particular in terms of EU policies for structural and regional development, the environment, and co-operation with partners in other countries, that were hard to meet fully. In the first place this is because of the fact that, due to the delay in signing the Grant Contract, the project lasted only two instead of three years. The other reason is the undefined and complicated relationships between state, municipality and the company responsible for salt production. Nevertheless, a co-operative structure has been established and, according to the work plan of the Ministry of the Environment, a public invitation/call for tenders for the management of the Sečovlje Salinas Landscape Park was carried out in 2002. The tender was successful and the concession for the management of the Sečovlje salt-works (salt pro-

duction and management of the park) was given to the salt making company Soline d.o.o. The Project is perceived by the authorities, and also by the general public, as an excellent opportunity to support current efforts to preserve traditional salt production in the Sečovelje salt-works in the framework of the long-established landscape park, and is generating very positive expectations.

Local Actions in Pomorie

Introduction

The ALAS Project found the Pomorie salinas in a very decisive period. On one hand only a small part of the town salinas remained, as a salinas museum, but without the resources for an area of natural beauty, or the infrastructure, organisation of the museum area and other activities and services for tourists. On the other hand, the out of town salinas with its three sites were in the process of being returned to their previous private owners. The state company that managed these salinas was in decline, as some of the salinas had been abandoned. The final structuring of salt production awaited its time, but the outlook for this was uncertain. The main problem was that most of the new owners had no idea of salt production technology or the future technological and organisational structure of production, nor did they have the finances for this reconstruction.

Taking into consideration this state of affairs, the project team in Pomorie concentrated on local tasks, arranged in two groups: (1) studies and experts' reports and (2) infrastructure and building works. Besides, a number of seminars

Nevertheless, there are problems and presently the number of the salt-workers is being reduced due to the critical financial state of the salt production company. The situation with the salt works infrastructure (seaward dikes, the embankments of the main channels and also the crystallisation areas) is also very critical. In view of this, significant state intervention is urgently needed.

Milcho Skumov

and meetings on the local level were planned, as well as publications in the mass media.

Studies and experts' reports

Local work plan and feasibility check. At the very beginning of the project a local plan was worked out in which the different tasks were specified and those responsible for performing them were appointed. When required, additions and specifications were formulated.

Local concepts. The main problem for the private owners of the out of town salinas was the reconstruction of the salinas and the choice of technology – with single or frequent salt collection – in other words, the industrial or the traditional type. Another question was whether the three sites should work together or separately. All these variants were developed and put forward along with a critical evaluation in *A Strategy for the Development of Salt Production in the Pomorie Salinas*. This useful work includes a large number of tables, diagrams and figures illustrating the variants. Some brief practical guidelines for sea salt production are also included, relevant to operations at the salinas, and it

contains more than the planned two local concepts for the future of the salinas in Pomorie and develops all possible technological and organisational variants of salt production.

Environmental and urban restoration plan and advice on re-establishing traditional salt production out of town, and on its operation. The Project team in Pomorie has worked hard from the very beginning in order to activate municipal structures and experts for developing a Management Plan for Pomorie Lake. This area, protected from the beginning of 2001, consists of the lake and the adjacent salinas. Meetings have been held on *A Task for Developing a Management Plan* at the Ministry of the Environment. This Task was ratified on 11 April 2002. At present the work is divided between experts and is in process of implementation. The management plan is expected to be available in a year. As part of the same task, two Project Documentations were developed for a road from the town to the Salt Museum on two sides:

from the central highway and from the resort area near the beach. There are projects to install telephone lines in the Salt Museum, for fencing the outer perimeter of the museum complex and for planning and laying out lawns in the area.

Adapt training material. The salinas in Pomorie are supposed to be operated by qualified salters. Up to now there has been no training of salters. The Project team in Pomorie collected information on the study programmes from partners and related sites, as well as study programmes from local vocational schools, and developed a syllabus for training salters. Consultations took place with experts from the municipal administration about the possibility of establishing such training in one of the schools in Pomorie, at which stage a training course will be held, and in the event of greater interest a class will be organised.

Stimulate local marketing. Another expert work produced for the owners of salinas is the *Project*



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◀ Opening day at the Pomorie salt museum

Photo: Hjalmar Dahm

for Establishing a Private Salina in Pomorie. This is concerned with the marketing of the produced salt and the opportunities for the salters to organise a co-operative or trading company. This work, together with the *Strategy*, will be available to help the owners of the salinas make the right decisions.

Improvement of knowledge. This concerns the traditional salinas and includes two documents: a complete inventory of the archives in the Record Office in Burgas and a study, *The History of Techniques in Sea Salt Production in Pomorie*.

To this group of studies can be added the old maps of the area of Pomorie salinas and interviews with old salters recorded on video.

Consultations on the salt museum. The consultations for the Salt Museum include a layout plan.

Consultations on local tourism. Two specific recommendations were developed for local participants in the tourist market: tour operators, hotel-keepers, restaurateurs.

Local expert support dissemination. Information on all the above is provided within the project in Pomorie, including the making of films by teams from local and regional television, advertising sign-boards for the Salt Museum, etc.

Expert support (qualified trainers) to train salters. Two courses for training salters have been held at the museum salinas in the last two years. The subjects were the importance of the salinas as wetlands and as a part of the protected Pomorie Lake area, the technology of salt production and its part in the chemical composition of the salt produced, world methods of salt production, the importance of traditional salinas for cultural heritage and the development of tourism and related activities.

Experimental operation of traditional salinas. The workers at the museum salinas were financed according to the project budget.

Infrastructure and building works

This activity was of great importance from the point of view of the positive adoption of the project results by the community in Pomorie, so the efforts of the project team were concentrated on these results.

Upgrading of 12,000 m² of traditional salinas. A competition was conducted to select the recipient of the funding for the upgrading of the saltpans. The competition was won by Solar-98 Ltd. – the company operates with 39 private owners, among whom is the new owner of the museum salina.

Mini-project fund for re-establishing traditional salinas. There is a project for the reconstruction of the canal with which the museum salinas are supplied with salt water from Pomorie Lake.

Upgrading of a traditional building to be used as the salt museum. The architectural project was prepared for the reconstruction of the building. Later a construction company was appointed and the reconstruction of the building took place in the period April-September 2002. At the same time the museum's layout was prepared, and it was inaugurated on 7 September 2002 by the Mayor of the Municipality in the presence of many guests and journalists. The inauguration of the Museum coincided with the session of the Project Management Committee on 7 and 8 September in Pomorie.

Initial establishment of the salt museum in the upgraded building. Old aerial photos of the salinas area from 1941, 1957 and 1965, and topographic maps from 1958, were acquired.

The production of photo displays for the museum also came within the same task. All the old photos from the early 20th century were scanned and printed in a suitable format. Models and salters' tools are made and exhibited in the museum.

Mini-project fund for tourism-related infrastructure and works. This part of the project included the levelling of the area near the Salt Museum.

Promotion and publications

Newsletters. The Newsletters published within the framework of the interregional tasks were translated into Bulgarian and the original publications with their translation were distributed in Pomorie.

Technical letters. After these were received on CD they were translated and distributed among interested persons and organizations.

General leaflets. These were also translated and distributed mainly among people in the tourist business.

Three local promotion events each year. These are meetings between the owners of the salinas and all those interested in the salt business, those connected with salinas tourism and the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage of the town, in order to introduce the goals and tasks, the expected results and the current stage of implementation of the project.

At the end of the first and second year of the project conferences were held to report on the corresponding periods and the project as a whole.

In January 2002 the United States Peace Corps in Bulgaria held their annual environmental

conference in the central Bulgarian city of Star Zagora. Participants included representatives from NGOs, municipalities, schools, Nature Parks, foundations and the national government. Incidentally, the Municipality of Pomorie provided the ALAS Project and the three ALAS newsletters with a general description of its goals and local tasks. Various participants from the municipalities showed interest, especially one individual from the city of Sliven, where an Ecos-Ouverture project is also under way. General information was distributed and questions were answered with further details directed to the project leader. ALAS was also promoted during casual discussions and sessions.

There were programs on local cable radio in order to give information about the project. Pieces about the implementation of the project and particularly the inauguration of the Salt Museum were published in the national and regional press, as well as announcements on national and regional television.

Workshops

Seminars were held with experts from the municipal administration, the Regional Inspection for Environmental Protection, representatives of the salt producers, architects, old salters, etc., to discuss various aspects of the project: the museum salinas as a separate site in town planning, reconstruction of the out of town salinas and the canals, the plan for the management of Pomorie Lake, etc.

Difficulties faced by the local team

The main difficulties were connected with the project implementation in the short term. At the beginning this problem was of little importance, but at the end of the second year there was some tension.

The difficulties on a local level were due to the transitional period of the Bulgarian

economy and undeveloped management and civil structures. For instance, the salinas in Pomorie are in the process of restitution to their owners, but most of the latter do not take the initiative in making the right decisions. Besides, funding are insufficient for the implementation of any project, and hence

the lack of interest in the training or qualification of the salters. It can be stated that the interest of the local co-operative structures in the project was considerable. In such projects they see an opportunity for the reestablishment of this ancient occupation in Pomorie – salt production.

Salt Museums

Hjalmar Dahm

Would you believe me if I told you that there are more than 40 museums and information centres that deal with salt? That at least is the result of a questionnaire sent out in 2000 by the team of the University of the Aegean. Some museums are large, with over 100,000 visitors annually, while others carry out research or have rich collections. Some museums consider themselves “eco-museums”. Most visitor centres are linked to nature parks. All have in common that they deal with salt and salt production in one way or another.

The *questionnaire* sent to different recipients in the whole world contained 34 questions, ranging from the name and address of the museum to number of visitors and contents (exhibitions, publications, cafeteria, etc). It was only available in English and French, so many answers from Germany, Spain and Italy had to be obtained through other research (e. g. on-the-spot visits). The newly created database enabled us to map the distribution of salt museums and information centres throughout Europe.

All museums are situated close to sites where salt is (or was) produced and their exhibitions mainly deal with that type of salt. However, there are important differences between them. Some are very old (the Musée des Marais Salants in Batz-sur-Mer goes back to 1887 and the Salt Museum in Northwich was founded in 1889), but many museums are less than ten years old. Further, the differences may be in the body responsible (municipalities, private foundations, salt-producing companies), in the number of staff (e.g. up to 20 permanent employees or only voluntary workers), number of visitors per year (around a thousand to several hundred thousand visitors), or the emphasis on the subject (history, human work – anthropology, technology, natural environment, economics of salt production). Some museums also deal with other subjects (e.g. the “Tobacco and Salt Museum” in Japan, “Museo del Mar y de la Sal” in Torrevieja). They may produce books, have large libraries, constitute research places, combine leisure and shopping. These differences demonstrate how the subject is wide and can be treated in many interesting and fruitful ways.

Only very few of the salt museums and information centres have exchanges with other similar institutions, although most of them are interested in setting up a network of collaboration for cultural exchanges.



Salt-museums and information centres

United Kingdom:

Lion Saltworks, Northwich
The Salt Museum, Northwich
Saint Barbe Museum, Hampshire

Denmark:

Danmarks Saltcenter, Mariager
Læsø saltsjuderi, Læsø island

The Netherlands:

Zoutmuseum, Delden

Poland:

Salt mine in Wieliczka
Stanislaw Fischer Museum, Bochnia

Germany:

Deutscher Salzmuseum, Lüneburg
Salz- u. Kali-Bergbaumuseum, Bad Salzdetfurth
Salzmuseum, Bad Sooden-Allendorf
Halloren- und Salinemuseum, Halle
Besucherbergwerk (salt mine) in Bad Friedrichshall
Salzbergwerk in Berchtesgarten
Alte Saline in Bad Reichenhall

▲ Salt museums and interpretation centres with information on salt in Europe

Map: Hjalmar Dahm



◀ In the salt museum of Halle (Germany), the visitors can take out the salt

Photo: Hjalmar Dahm

France:

Musée Intercommunal des Marais Salants, Batz-sur-Mer
Terre de Sel, Guérande
La Maison des Paludiers, Saillé/Guérande
Ecomusée du Daviaud, Marais Breton
Ecomusée du Marais Salant, Ile de Ré
Maison du Saunier, Ile d'Oléron
Musée du sel, Salies de Bearn
Musée du Salin de Gruissant
Musée de la Camargue, Parc Naturel Regional
Musée du Sel, Marsal
Saline Royale, Arc-et-Senans
Anciennes salines, Salins-les-Bains

Portugal:

Museu Marítimo de Ílhavo (Aveiro)
Ecomuseu do Sal, Figueira da Foz
Inland salina in Marinhas do Sal, Rio Maior
Tidal water mill, Setubal (Sado)
Nature Reserve, Castro Marim

Spain:

Mon de Sal (salt-mine) in Cardona
Museo de la Sal, in Santa Pola
Museo del Mar y de la Sal in Torrevieja

Austria:

Salzwelten Bad Durnberg, Hallein
Salzbergwerk, Hallstatt
Schatzkammern, Althaussee

Switzerland:

Vereinigte Schweizerische Rheinsalinen AG in Schweizerhalle
Société Vaudoise des Mines et Salines de Bex (Aigle)

Italy:

Museo delle saline and salina in Cervia
Museo delle saline in the Nubia-Paceco salina, Trapani
Museo delle saline and Salina Ettore in Mozia, close to Marsala, Sicily

Slovenia:

Museum of salt-making, Piran

Bulgaria:

Salt museum, Pomorie

Greece:

Salt museum in Lesbos

Ukraine:

Salt museum in Solotvina

Ouside Europe:

Mexico:

Museo de la Sal in Colima

Japan:

Tobacco and salt museum, Tokyo

China:

Zigong Salt museum, (Sichuan)

USA:

Salt museum, Onondaga, Syracuse (N.Y.)



◀ The salt museum in Santa Pola (Spain), with indoor and outdoor views

Photo: Hjalmar Dahm

Salinas and tourism

Theodora Petanidou & Lena Vayanni

Located at sites of exceptional natural interest, salinas are particularly sensitive areas that need protection. This means that, apart from salt making, it is questionable whether other economic activities may take place in their territories or near to them. The same applies for tourism, considered as an environmentally harmful business. However, tourism could be combined with the landscape and function of salinas, both as salt-producing sites and for their natural aspect, on condition that it does not affect them.

Tourism is one of the world's biggest economic activities, with many countries and regions specialising in this sector. However, because tourism frequently uses natural resources intensively, it has often been accused of seriously affecting the environment. This is particularly true when tourism takes place in fragile habitats, such as salinas. In fact, salinas are among the few environmentally friendly industries spread all over the Mediterranean, in which protection and exploitation of natural resources can be perfectly combined. Such a combination can be an appealing challenge for local development.

The current world trend has been for alternative and special forms of tourism, in particular nature tourism and ecotourism. Both alternative and special forms of tourism are considered to be gentle, "green" and less harmful to the environment. There are two main reasons affecting the tourism market: consumers' preferences for more environmentally friendly products on the one hand, and the global need to protect the environment and preserve natural resources on the other.

Salinas are endowed with attributes offering many possibilities for *alternative tourism*. *Ecotourism*, perfectly compatible with nature preservation even in Nature Reserves and Protected Areas, is consi-



♥ Salina landscapes are particularly attractive for painters and photographers

Photo: Hjalmar Dahm



► Bird-watching can be an important tourist resource in salinas

Photo: Hjalmar Dahm

dered as an important alternative economic resource that contributes to the revitalisation and development of these areas. An example of salinas-related tourism, the most outstanding one, is that found in Guérande (Brittany), a salt-producing area that has managed to develop the concept of traditionally produced salt, in which the product, the site and the people are closely linked.

Following a general trend to diversify tourism activities, and also probably as a result of recognition of the values of salinas, the tendency to promote ecotourism in salinas has been increasing in recent years. Such values are of a historical, cultural, geological, and technological as well as an ecological nature. Related to ecological values, many forms of tourism can be developed in salinas, such as nature tourism and ecotourism. Further, the forms of tourism responding to the cultural, historical and economic value of salinas can be of an educational and gastronomic nature. Specifically, the major forms of tourism are the following:

Nature tourism and ecotourism: Various activities that take place outdoors in and around salinas, the most popular and widely known being *bird-watching* and *trekking*. Salinas are particularly good sites for observing birds, some of them found only in salinas (e.g. greater flamingos and, to a large extent, avocets). Salinas can also be very interesting sites for observing other groups of species, such as halophytes, wasps, the fish *Aphanius* spp., *Artemia* and many other examples.

Cultural-historical tourism: The art of salt-making carried out for hundreds of years in salinas, the tools, buildings, boats, wind-pumps, traditions and legends, as well as the salt as a chemical product, form a vast cultural potential. Further, salinas can be related to local history, mythology, ethnology, etc. All these subjects are promoted and exhibited in salt museums that have opened in several Mediterranean salinas. Such museums may be used in the future as instruments for promoting salinas-related tourism in the whole basin.



Educational: Learning in salinas through an active or a passive approach is a must. The activities can be variable: learning subjects from nature and ecology to history, culture, anthropology, natural resources, salt-making; excursions, volunteer work, exchanges of human resources and of educational material; permanent and temporary active exhibitions; research in salinas; operation of a creative laboratory for biological and cultural approaches, especially working with local schools.

Gastronomic: Located near the sea, usually with excellent seafood, salinas are very often connected with culinary specialities found nowhere else. Within salt-producing regions, probably because of the vicinity of salt-making and the availability of huge quantities of salt, a series of salty culinary traditions have been developed. Such salted specialities include the fish-roe (*avgotárahō*) of Messolonghi, the freshly salted sardines of Kalloni (Lesvos), the famous salted fish (*tárichos*) of the ancient Black Sea, the *gáros* of the ancient Klazomenes in Asia Minor and the Roman *garum*, a salted relish prepared with small fish and the insides of large fish. Today the use of some renowned traditional salts is often linked to the high standards of cooking and sophisticated cuisine, like the salt of Guérande in Brittany, that is even used in chocolate-making.

Recreational – Health: Salinas and salt landscapes constitute a pleasant and relaxing environment encompassing a variety of diverse elements: technical (walls, canals, ponds), architectural (lines, shapes and water planes), natural (marshes, sand dunes). Further, many salinas in the Mediterranean are the sites of famous spas, sometimes operating in an organised mode like in Pomorie (Bulgaria), Mar Menor (Spain) or freely used by the locals as in Greece (Messolonghi, Kitros). The combination of natural and built elements, together with the reflections on the water in the open space, not only contribute to the recreational values of the area, but also create a chromatic and geometric landscape, unique for photography, painting or even a simple walk.

◀ Salinas are one of the best examples of cultural landscapes

Photo: Theodora Petanidou

Salt Routes in the Mediterranean: geographical-historical concept and use

Theodora Petanidou

The concept of *Routes* has been much discussed in relation to alternative uses of traditional natural resources, mainly in the framework of modern local development, albeit in a misunderstood sense. Routes, a primarily historical and geographical term, describes exclusively the corridors through which, before the era of globalisation, a natural resource was traditionally diffused in order to reach its final consumers, both by land and by water. In other words, it is the geographical depiction of the commerce of a commodity, encompassing successive pictures of different historical periods, in fact the atlas of commerce through the centuries.

Considering that salt was a product of prime importance in many ways, from the very early stages of human history it was a major trading commodity, and dominated the market. As its production was confined to a few sites only, salt routes were always part of history, intense and complicated: land roads and waterways, ship and boat routes, sea and river ways, chariot-, horse-, mule- and even humble donkey-roads, smugglers' routes. Yet, there were long-distance and short-distance routes, hinterland roads; legitimate versus contraband routes, i.e. those of smuggled salt, not forgetting the high risks of piracy that seriously affected the routes and their continuity. According to the famous salt historian Prof. Hocquet, there was no road or path of the past that was not used for salt transport, or even more, that all these roads and paths were kept working just for the transportation of salt itself. The Mediterranean is a vast geographical region, not only as a passage of important civilisations, from the ancient world of Greeks and Romans to the mediaeval Byzantines, western kingdoms and Arabs, then to the Venetians, Ottomans and modern states. It has also been the crossroads of a huge central basin with the adjoining seas which played an important role in the salt trade of the basin: the Atlantic, the Black and Red Seas, not forgetting the Indian and the Caspian seas, nor the catchment areas and the navigable plains of the Danube, Nile, Rhône and Po rivers. A great number of caravans with pack animals (donkeys and mules) left the highlands towards the end of the summer and headed for the coasts, in search of salt, but never travelled too far. They brought goods from the interior and returned with salt, sometimes in late spring. The extent of this primitive barter cannot easily be assessed as the availability of historical evidence is limited and restricted to a few areas only, e.g., 5,000 to 6,000 animals used on the Dalmatian coast a few centuries ago.

The ancient world was a world of short-distance trade. If we exclude the Phoenicians, the first merchants that, according to Strabo, traded salt even beyond the Mediterranean from Gadeira (now Cádiz) to the Kassiterides Islands (now the British Isles), the Greeks were not interested in the business. An outstanding example was that of the Athenians selling salt to the Thracians in the area of Strymon, and exchanging it for slaves called, for this very reason, *halónittoi*, meaning "bought with salt". However, there is evidence that in antiquity short-distance trade was very efficient, and local salt route networks existed everywhere. Such a busy network was the Protocycladic one, at the dawn of the 3rd millennium B.C. in the Aegean. The Athenians, just to take an example of classical Greece, imported salt from Megara and Sounion, both no more than 60 km away. Similarly, the Romans did not develop very long-distance trade. The needs for huge quantities of salt were covered either by a dense network of salinas around the big cities, or by diversifying the salt types (ebullition salt,

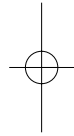
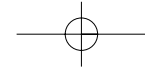


◀ For centuries salt was considered to be the white gold

Photo: Renato Neves

brines of all provenances, rock salt) depending on the region. However, it was during Roman times that, for the first time in the history of western civilization, the need for salt distribution led to the creation of specific roads. Thus, the Ostia salt from the *Esplanade of the Salinas (Campus Salinarum)* entered Rome through the *Salt Gate* and finally via the *Salt Road (Via Salaria)* supplied areas north of Rome, such as the country of the Sabinians who were supplied with salt by the Romans, in conformity with an old agreement.

Long-distance trade in the Mediterranean started after the transformation of Mediterranean salinas into organised and productive ones, working with the system of *successive evaporation ponds* brought by the Arabs into the Basin. Thus, from the 10th century on, the first to deal with this trade were the Venetians. Until the 16th century they were the leaders of long-distance international trade in the Mediterranean, followed far behind by the Genoese and the Ragusans. The Venetians took great care of a network of salinas throughout the basin, which varied considerably in time depending on the use of the salinas and the relationship with the locals. Many salt-producing sites were of outstanding importance for this trade, such as Cervia and Commachio in Italy, Pag and a dozen other sites on the Dalmatian coast, the Ionian islands, and the coasts of the northern Black Sea. Above all, though, there were Ibiza and Cyprus, by far the largest producers within the territories controlled by The Serenissima. Describing these networks is a very difficult job for two reasons: first, because of the scarcity of existing documentation on most sites; second, because wherever documentation exists is so fragmented and complicated that any simplification does not do justice to the complexity. We can, though, give two such pictures for two different periods of European history, when common salt played a glamorous role, the most outstanding in the commerce of the basin.



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