

# FAUNUS



View of the Kastleeren landscape in 1931 and today  
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## Location

Turtmann

## Country

Switzerland

## Short summarizing description

The FAUNUS association ensures the preservation of the cultural landscape and the unique biodiversity of the Wallis region by reviving the traditional form of grazing with goats. In this way, old alpine goat breeds (*pro specie rara*) are promoted and concomitantly reduce shrub encroachment of montane pasture, which is a major jeopardy for biodiversity in alpine ecosystems. To this end, FAUNUS engages with migrants, giving them the opportunity to learn new skills and a purposeful occupation. With this transdisciplinary approach, FAUNUS responds to several current challenges of our society. FAUNUS is a non-profit organisation.

## Key Terms

Social integration, sustainable land management, alpine biodiversity

## Context and background, Which problems/challenges does your measure try to solve/cope with?

Changes in the agricultural practices over the last decades led to various changes in biodiversity rich habitats like alpine dry meadows. Traditional management including grazing or hand mowing were either replaced by mechanical machinery or totally abandoned. These changes, directly lead to shrub encroachment of alpine meadows, with consequences for biodiversity. In addition, migrants, hosted in the regional centre of migration usually do not have regular schedule. The resulting tediousness, in combination with high ethnic diversity can lead to conflicts. The migrants need a purposeful occupation, integration and recognition, to feel welcome. FAUNUS has been developed with the aim to solve these two problems in combination.

## Which are the key objectives of your measure?

1. Sustain and restore the alpine biodiversity through the removal of shrubs to preserve open alpine landscapes.
2. Promote the traditional agriculture as part of the cultural heritage, with goat management and manual work.
3. Promote the social aspect: Give migrants the possibility to work in a local agricultural project, including collaborations with local people and learn new skills.
4. Promote the sustainability aspect (Integration of Migrant manpower in the local agriculture, use of "*pro specie rara*" animals who are most appropriate for the alpine agriculture).

## Who are the main target groups and beneficiaries of your measure?

1. Migrants, accommodated in the regional centre for migration 2. Local land owners and farmers 3. Local authorities (municipalities, regional park) 4. If enlarged to biological groups, then we can include the old goat breeds and the target species of dry meadow to our beneficiaries.

## Which actions have already been implemented and which results have been achieved so far?

In 2013, BINA SA, a local engineer bureau, proposed to manage pastures in "Kastleren", a dried habitat of national importance. With a small goat herd and in collaboration with migrants, this area of 25 hectares has been restored leading to the protection of rare emblematic species like for example the spring pheasant's-eye (*Adonis vernalis*). This successful project has shown that the encroachment of alpine meadows and pastures can be controlled by goat grazing and was approved by the Canton. Since then, the engagement program grew in importance as well as request for dried-pasture management. Therefore, in 2016 the FAUNUS association was founded. The herd was enlarged from 50 to 100 goats and complemented by 50 sheep. On the integrative side of the project, some migrants, could finally be employed by local farmers, which is a proof of the efficiency of this integrative work. As an additional result, the acceptance of the local population towards the migrants was as well increased.

## Which were the main problems and challenges you were/are facing when implementing the project and how did/do you (try to) overcome them?

The funding of the project was precarious. Beside the subsidies for the management of dry meadows, there is no financial support by the authorities. A different solution had to be found. One of them is sponsoring of individual goats by the public. When we began to work with migrants, the acceptance of the local population was not huge. Considering that the work of FAUNUS is precious for the landscape and biodiversity, which are also recreational areas for local people. Once the local people saw not only the migrants at work and but also the result of the latter, the acceptance has grown.

### Link to website

<http://www.faunus.ch>

### Starting date

2016-04-13

### Duration

20

### Regional scale

2 - small region (some municipalities, a mountain valley etc.)

### Other involved partners

Marc Wyer, BINA engineering SA [info@binasa.ch](mailto:info@binasa.ch); Giacomo Andenmatten, Natur und Umwelt, Flüchtlingsheim; Contracting authorities: Community of Turtmann, Leuk and Siders, Regional Park Pfyn-Finges, Highway A9 – DLW-Canton Wallis

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### Category 1, Managing social change

Mutual benefits By reviving a traditional form of agriculture, FAUNUS, the goats and migrants are making a hard job to promote biodiversity rich landscapes with high importance for a many birds, insects and plant species. These landscapes are at the same time important recreational areas for the local people and tourists. Since 2013, the migrants were active in various aspects for the municipality helping to support biodiversity. Local people recognised the positive effects of the project, and appreciate the value of this work. We received many positive feedbacks from the local population and farmers, as it is hard to find enthusiastic people for the manual work in the alps.

## Category 2: Integrating migrants into the local/,regional labour market

In addition to learning the German language (two afternoons/week), migrants are primarily concerned with gaining employment, learning additional skills and carrying out a meaningful activity. This supports the well-being of the migrants and reduces the conflicts in the centres. The migrants can get to know new tasks over several months, receive a daily structure over a longer period of time, and generate new contacts. Outdoors, they are supervised by a qualified person, such that they learn various agricultural practices to preserve the local landscape such as construct fences, basic animal care, traditional mowing. In addition, the experienced and long term migrants have the possibility of taking over responsibility for specific tasks relative to their previous competences. Finally, within this project the possibility is given to do a special driving license for agriculture. For the job, the migrants receive a small payment, as consequence they learn to manage this income.

## Category 3: Improving land use, nature ,protection and regional development

The landscape in the region is home to precious dry meadows and pastures, providing habitat for a unique variety of life. But, only small parts of these high quality habitats remain. FAUNUS works with old breeds of goats and sheeps which are well adapted to alpine conditions. However, the success of our landscape care is largely due to the work of migrants. In this project, the migrants are providing an extremely valuable service. They are not only invested to construct fences and taking care of the animals, they also learned (with qualified supervisors) to deal against the encroachment by manual mowing and cutting of young trees. These old traditionally practices are the key for the preservation of open landscape with a high biodiversity potential. With goats only this measure would not be sufficient. The competences of migrants are also often used. We have had a herdsman of Tibets which was really helpful to manage the herds. Meanwhile, he has a permanent position on a local farm.

## Category 4: Supporting change in the local / ,regional dual education system

This aspect is largely covered by the description of the work FAUNUS does in Category 2.

## Category 5, PR impact and awareness raising

Since the start of these project two articles were published in the local press and one in a national newspaper. - „Geduld bringt Adonisröschen“, Walliser Bot, 14.April 2016 - „Ziegen als Helden für den Naturschutz“, Schweizer Bauer, 8 November 2017 (<https://www.schweizerbauer.ch/vermischtes/allerlei/100-ziegen-als-helden-fuer-den-naturschutz-38666.html>) The FAUNUS Association and the goat herd have success in the local landscape conservation program. The interest and solicitation to preserve such landscapes with high biodiversity is increasing. Some municipalities in the region are today also working with migrants for outdoor maintenance. We also work with a regional Park. This in turn increases the visibility of this integration program.

## Category 6, Innovative dimension

Integration of migrants in a project for the nature conservation: This project has the particularity to be not profit-oriented, but revalue natural ecosystems. Joint solutions benefitting both migrants and local landscape and biodiversity. It is no concurrence for other institutions or industry in the region. It is a helpfull gap filler as the local population is not working on these sites anymore for various reasons. With the use and promotion of old sheep and goats breed we not only help the conservation of this precious animals but also give more values to unused pasture and optimise the use of present food sources. However, until the biodiversity and the rural grazing scheme have adapted to each other, it will take another 20 year. This project is a real long term application for the management of the local biodiversity hotspots.

## Category 7, Transferability

In the entire alpine region, the traditional cultural practices get forgotten because of the decreasing number of farmers. This leads to the depredation of precious habitats and the scrub encroachment is widely spread. That's why the work of FAUNUS is not necessarily restricted to Wallis. Dry locations with their special biodiversity have become rare throughout the European alps. Similarly, for the old goat breeds, which need support. Almost each alpine valley has had his own breed, adapted to local conditions. The promotion of this races is crucial for the long-term sustainability of the alpine area. We therefore hope that we can set a mark throughout Switzerland with our project. So that through our work similar initiatives are strengthened or even new ones will arise. Our project is thus gaining significance beyond its current extent.

Joining the work power of migrants with the preservation of our alpine landscape can be implemented in any alpine migration centre.

## Category 8, Embedment in a comprehensive welcoming strategy

The canton of Wallis was obliged to accept 3.9% of all new migrants arriving in Switzerland (according to the distribution key of the Swiss government, Art.21 Asylum-ordinance). The current 2'849 migrants in Wallis (status 31.01.2016) are distributed proportional to the local population as follows: Oberwallis 0.59 %, Mittelwallis, 1,14% and Unterwallis 0,81%. Thus, more and more interactions with migrants are possible. In Raron, a training and employment centre was created, where daily activities are offered and which coordinates the different working groups. The activities comprise German and computer courses or even craft activities. They already provide work for the community (Vita parcours, landscape management, work with the regional Park "Forest of Pfyng-Finges", assistance with events). Migrants help as well outside maintenance work in their own accommodation via charitable activities in cooperation with the communities.

### Further Information



Migrants at work for deforestation of young tree  
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[AsylumEmployment\\_program\\_Raron\\_2017.pdf](#) — 439Kb

Description of the employment project, provided from the centre for migration

[Offers\\_Example\\_FAUNUS\\_flyer\\_2017.pdf](#) — 2360Kb

Example of an official offer to contracting authorities with flyer of FAUNUS