



AlpGov

Implementing Alpine Governance Mechanisms
of the EU Strategy for the Alpine region



Final Publication

Interreg
Alpine Space



AlpGov

www.alpine-space.eu





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1. Project



Mission - *Implementing Alpine Governance Mechanisms of the European Strategy for the Alpine region (EUSALP)*

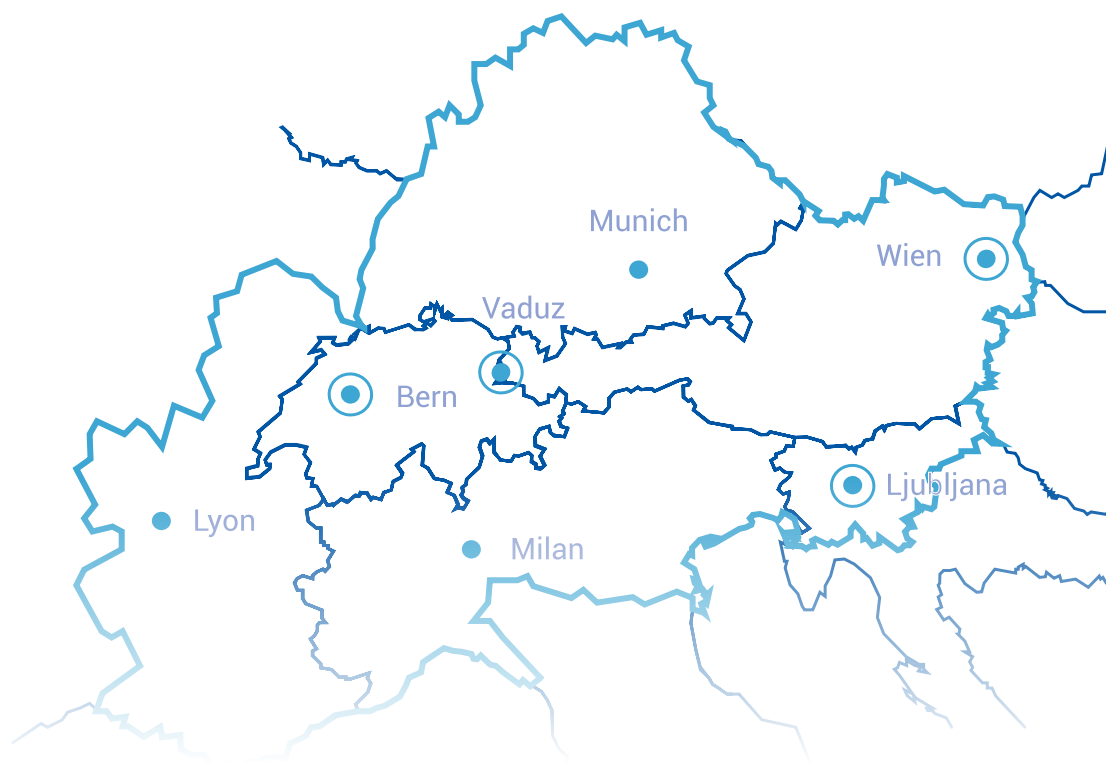
Objective - *To support EUSALP activities in 3 actions:*

1. Make EUSALP Action Groups (AG) operative, ensuring a permanent exchange of knowledge and experiences among them.
2. Manage the knowledge gained in the AG work thanks to the implementation of a Platform of Knowledge (PoK).
3. Develop concrete initiatives (project preparations, workshops etc.) to find funding sources for implementing concrete actions.



Expected outputs - *To turn EUSALP into practice*

Outputs and deliverables will produce long lasting effects: structures and procedures for thematic implementation, knowledge management, funding schemes and project development will be closely linked to the policy level and set the course for new cooperation models.



2. Consortium

Leader



Bayerisches Staatsministerium für
Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz



Partners

 Federal Ministry
Sustainability and Tourism



ZAVOD REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE
ZA VARSTVO NARAVE



PROVINCIA AUTONOMA
DI TRENTO



Région Autonome
Vallée d'Aoste
Regione Autonoma
Valle d'Aosta



Baden-Württemberg
MINISTERIUM FÜR WIRTSCHAFT, ARBEIT UND WOHNUNGSBAU

La Région 
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes



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3. Outputs

The Board of AG Leaders (BAGL)

What BAGL is

The official supporting tool of EUSALP bodies ensures:

- Horizontal coherence among AGs tackling all policy fields
- Thematic steering of the EUSALP implementation process
- A vertical interface to all levels of EUSALP governance model especially between coordination level Executive Board (EB) and implementation level (AGs)

How it is composed

BAGL is composed of all AGs leading institutions. Members from DG Regio and EB are invited to participate in the meetings as observers, as well as specific experts that could be involved in BAGL meetings upon invitation.

BAGL main tasks:

- Supporting cooperation between AG leaders and EB members
- Raising specific potential for a better cross-sectoral integration
- Solving conflicting interests and providing solutions for conflict management
- Better harmonising work plans of single AG



Tailor-made governance approaches

The AlpGov project contributed to a better EUSALP governance “tailor-made” on three levels: specifically by addressing the policy needs for the single AG and organising the single working progresses accordingly, cross-sectorally among all AGs by identifying joint initiatives and vertically by managing the cooperation structures and information flow beyond AGs.

As regards the specific approaches per AG, they very much depend in particular on differences in topic, level of (administrative) competences, target groups, political setting and goals of the EUSALP Action Plan.

AG level “tailor-made” governance



AG1: “To develop an effective research and innovation ecosystem”

AG1 developed tools for the collection and provision of scientific knowledge as well as for strategic transfer, to connect AGs, EB and relevant stakeholders to facilitate exchange.

For this purpose, the PoK, which was set up as a web-based platform, offers both, the aggregation of data from different databases all over the Alpine region and strategic tools.



AG2: “To increase the economic potential of strategic sectors”

AG2 aims at identifying key Alpine economic sectors which would benefit from action at macro-regional level, and to implement concrete measures to improve their economic and social environment. The added value comprises a better use of Alpine specific resources and potentials in the identified strategic sectors with focus on the improvement of framework conditions and opportunities for SMEs.

So far, AG2 established four sub-groups working on the topics “Bioeconomy”, “Wood”, “Health Tourism” and “Digital Industry”, which were identified as thematic priorities.

Within the sub-groups, experts from all Countries in the Alpine region identified and discussed common goals and worked on their implementation through transnational collaboration. AG2 started several projects (“Triple Wood”, “HEALPS”, “TRANSALP”, “CIRCULALPS”) which are co-financed by the Alpine region Preparatory Action Fund (ARPAF), an initiative of the European Parliament to support the EUSALP implementation.



AG3: “To improve the adequacy of labor market, education and training in strategic sectors”

AG3 concentrated on the topic of “dual education” bearing in mind that dual systems have a positive effect on the school-employment transition and are allowing a rapid insertion into the labor market. To improve the dual systems in the Alpine region a participative approach was chosen and the representatives of the regions were invited to consultation rounds in the 7 Alpine countries, where experiences and approaches were discussed.

Further the attention of the group was dedicated to the skills and competences, a topic that has strong cross cutting potential, thus making it a good path for further cross AG activities, as it deals with human resources, job profiles and professions.



AG4: “To promote inter-modality and interoperability in passenger and freight transport”

Transport is among the most sensitive issues in the Alpine territory due to its position in Europe, its geographical constrains. To manage this topic a strong involvement of representatives of transport authorities is extremely important. Therefore AG4 focused its work on long term and strategic developments covering the whole territory rather than on short term implementation of single measures in specific areas.



AG5: “To e-connect people and promote accessibility to public services”

The objective “To e-connect people and promote accessibility to public services” is highly connected to public policies on municipality level. AG5 therefore pursued a strongly community-oriented approach, focused on the implementation of “smart solutions” for small towns and villages in the mountains. The main goal of AG5 is to improve digital and mobile connection of these remote regions.

By developing small scale and tailor-made applications on the ground short term, communities in seemingly disadvantaged areas were enabled to provide services of general interest, to ensure a sustainable economic development and thus to keep the territory liveable for their citizens, following the principle of equal opportunities for urban and rural areas. Projects such as “Smart villages”, which features the use of new technologies for innovative solutions in small towns and rural areas, or “Cross - border Mobility” (ARPAF) were developed for this purpose. In addition to the community based approach, the AG aims in long term at better connecting remote Alpine areas to the European and worldwide digital networks by means of expanding the fibre-optic network (“Fiber-optic backbone”).



AG6: “To preserve and valorise natural resources, including water and cultural resources”

AG6 is focused on three main subject areas calling for action in the interest of sustainable development in the Alpine region: “Spatial development and soil conservation”, “Future oriented farming and forestry” and “Integrated and sustainable water management”.

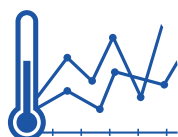
The topic of sustainable land use and soil protection was strategically treated through a political declaration which received the support of a large number of Alpine States and regions. In the field of “Future oriented farming and forestry” the preservation and valorisation of the Alpine cultural heritage was promoted in light of the increasing demand for sustainable and regional products. In addition, AG6 collected good practices and recommendations regarding green infrastructure solutions in river restoration and regarding the supply and demand management in times of peaks of demands and droughts.



AG7: “To develop ecological connectivity in the whole EUSALP territory”

AG7 promoted Green Infrastructure as the basis for life of present and future generations in the Alpine Space. “Making the Alpine region a model region for Green Infrastructure” as core AG7 mission calls for a governance approach which includes different sectors on multiple levels and also reflects the different territorial types of the Alpine region landscape. Consequently, AG7 is engaged in setting-up an Alpine Green Infrastructure cities network and later initiated a strategic cooperation with actors from the rural areas, specifically with LEADER actors.

AG7 strongly followed a policy cycle approach. Starting with political decision making by means of ministerial conferences and meetings including political declarations, strategic projects and concrete tasks for the AG have been developed, followed by feedback loops and resulting in identifying further needs for political decision-making.



AG8: “To improve risk management and to better manage climate change, including major natural risks prevention”

To improve risk management, AG8 established a successful cross-Alpine cooperation between the most relevant actors in natural hazard management, climate risks and civil protection. Risks and hazards, i.e. from erosion, floods and windstorms, were likely to increase due to climate change. AG8 exchanges best-practice and knowledge on management of these hazards and risks and deals with arising issues such as forest fires and risk governance.



AG9: “To make the territory a model region for energy efficiency and renewable energy”

AG9 pursued a systematic, analytical and evidence based approach “to make the territory a model region for energy efficiency and renewable energy”. For that purpose, several investigations and studies were carried out, helping to identify the areas of intervention: for instance energy efficiency in companies was examined by identifying best practice - solutions which could potentially be transferred to other SMEs in EUSALP territory.

A comparative study on energy policies in Europe’s Macroregional strategies was conducted. A series of expert workshops and activities led to the development of strategies for the implementation of some of the AG’s priorities: the Alpine Energy Observatory, the Task Force on Multifunctional Forests and Sustainable Use of Timber, and a Network for Energy Efficiency in SMEs.



Cross-sectoral level

It consists of:

- The establishment of the so-called BAGL where AG leaders met regularly, helped to exchange on cross-sectorial topics and to develop strategic actions;
- A close cooperation among the working groups allowed profound project development and helped to agree on several cross-thematic projects;
- The participation in technical meetings demonstrated the excellent relationship among the working groups;
- The regular exchange with the EB is evidence for the reliable work of the AGs.



Vertical level

AlpGov helped to keep the AGs and thereby the whole implementation process running, not only by developing specific actions on the level of AGs, but also by involving a broad variety of stakeholders ranging from EU-representatives and local authorities to non-governmental organisations.



EUSALP implementation strategy

With the AlpGov project, EUSALP has done pioneering work. As the only one of the 4 Macroregional strategies, EUSALP organised governance in the form of a transnational Interreg project and co-financed it with EU funds.

All AG leaders participated in the project. Right from the start, it was necessary to establish a lean and functional governance structure, which was primarily designed for the joint development of processes.

This approach was worthwhile, it gave the governance of the strategy a firm structure and produced important results. The cooperation of individual working groups between States and regions, with stakeholders and important partners such as the Alpine Convention and the Interreg Alpine Space Programme was established.

Among the joint results of Alpine Governance across the AGs are in particular:

- the cross-thematic formats, such as the workshops at the Annual Forums of the respective presidencies,
- the financing of small projects across working groups with the help of the Alpine region Preparatory Action Fund (ARPAF) made available by the European Parliament,
- the joint identification of funding needs in relation to the future EU funding programmes for 2021-2027. A common understanding has also developed of the need to develop concrete policy advice and suitable implementation projects out of the working groups.

Based on a SWOT analysis, the AG leaders identified a need for further adjusting Alpine governance. With regard to internal governance, a closer exchange between the EB and the AGs should lead to considerable synergy effects. This comprised on the one hand the transfer of technical results from the AGs to the management level of the strategies, but also vice versa the strategic management of the AGs, taking into account the respective focal topics of the presidencies.

Strengths

- Cross-thematic formats, such as the workshops at the annual forums of the respective presidencies;
- The support to small projects with the help of the ARPAF made available by the European Parliament;
- The joint identification of funding needs in relation to the future EU funding programmes for the 2021-2027 funding period.

Opportunities

- Improving the communication using the online tools developed within the framework of AlpGov;
- Expanding even further AGs cooperation;
- Improving the working groups initiatives to identify and use suitable funding instruments;
- Spreading the results achieved even more strategically oriented and addressed more precisely to the right political levels and decision-makers at European, national and regional level.

Threats

- The governance structure as an international Interreg project means that its flexibility is limited by the specifications of the programme;
- Difficulty in the governance mechanism in the transition phase until the next funding period.

Weaknesses

- Lack of a closer exchange between the EB and the AGs;
- Difficulty in translating technical results from the AGs to the management level of the strategies;
- Difficulty in translating the strategic management to the AGs, taking into account the respective focal topics of the presidencies.

With regard to external governance, results should be even more strategically oriented and addressed more precisely to the right political levels and decision-makers at European, national and regional level. This was also recorded in the context of the COWI study financed by the European Commission and the report of the European Commission to the European Council on the implementation of Macroregional strategies.

Based on these principles, the AlpGov partners developed an adapted basic approach for a EUSALP Implementation Strategy, transferring the proven into the future, further developing promising new approaches and adding new elements. In addition to this, the cooperation formats between the AGs on specific topics were even more weighted and focused than in the past.

The EUSALP Implementation Strategy is still based essentially on three pillars, which will be further implemented and developed in the follow up project AlpGov 2, through three content related work packages:

- **Skills development and EUSALP AGs empowerment.**

In addition to the support of the classic AG work in the AG formats with the involvement of external stakeholders, a learning environment should be created for the AG members. This should contribute to a more effective implementation of the AG work plans, for example for the strategic setting up of projects, for the understanding and broad use of funding instruments, for the precise addressing of key stakeholders.

- **Strategic Steering and monitoring of implementation.**

This work package is intended to focus further on cross-organisational cooperation, as it represents a significant added value of the strategy. This means that strategic initiatives should be jointly developed and implemented by several AGs wherever possible. At the same time, a new monitoring system should be set up to improve internal quality control. This work package will also provide the basis for the further development of the EUSALP Action Plan.

- **Mobilising strategic target groups.**

This work package focuses on improving the conditions for the design of effective policies at EU, national and regional levels that will enable the implementation of the Macroregional strategy for the Alps in the sense of the policy cycle. This should strengthen the impact on the entire EUSALP area and in all relevant policy areas.

The organisation of governance as an international Interreg project posed a considerable challenge. Although this supports the idea of cooperation, its flexibility is limited by the programme specifications. However, for the time being it was the only feasible way to further develop governance in the transition phase until the next funding period.

In long term, new solutions for the organisation of the whole EUSALP governance would be welcome, ensuring a permanent support for the technical aspects of the governance and specific support for strategic actions.

A Joint EUSALP Knowledge Platform (PoK)

The PoK is a technological public platform which is mainly dedicated to support AG leaders, EB members, EU team and related people, to connect them and facilitate knowledge and dialogue while making different targets (policy makers, stakeholders, researchers, citizens) aware about EUSALP, its projects, results and impact.

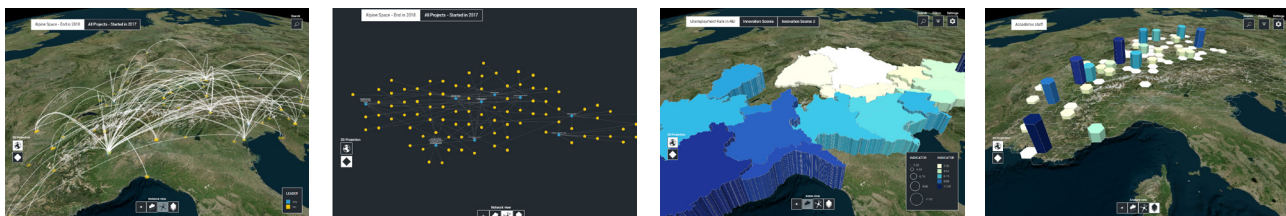
Objectives and expected results

The PoK aggregates data concerning the Alpine region from the most relevant EU datasets (top-down approach) and from urban sensing and survey tools (bottom-up approach), offers strategic tools such as strategic funding monitoring tool, eLearning area, Communication area for press offices and journalists. All EUSALP groups can also join their "private" tools such as the meeting room, the file sharing area, the contact book etc.

The sections of the PoK

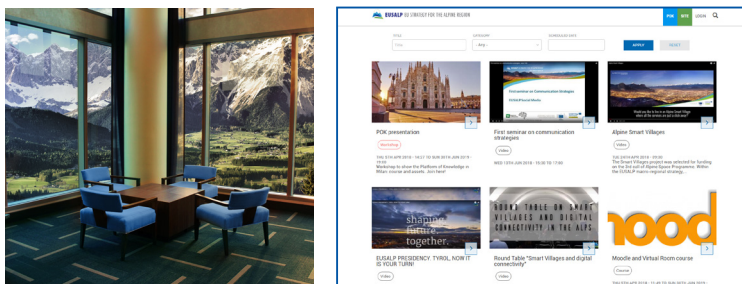
View, know & plan

Section containing datasets concerning Alpine region, data about innovation bodies, SMEs and publications, graphs and interactive 3D MAPS.



Learning & meeting

Section containing the EUSALP e-Learning platform to deliver useful contents produced by AGs and the meeting room area to organise virtual meetings.

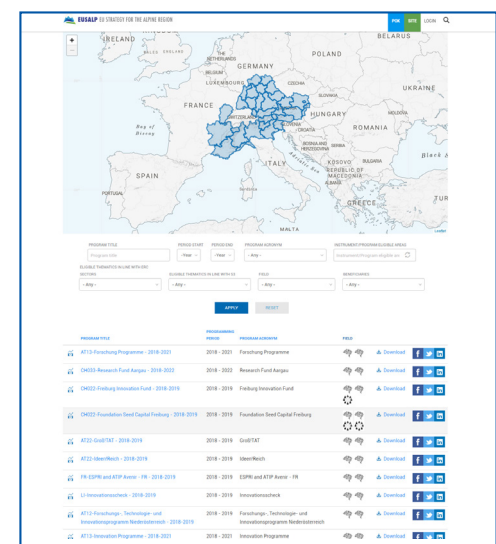


Communication area

Section containing useful tools to disseminate information about EUSALP, its groups, projects, actions and achievement: press releases, newsletters, videos, media kit, etc.

Strategic funding

Section containing the funding programmes and calls available for the players working in the EUSALP area.



A Compilation of further funding schemes

The draft Council conclusions on the implementation of the EU's Macroregional strategies adopted on 15th May 2019 state: "The council of the European Union (...) CALLS on the participating countries and regions to take into account priorities of the Macroregional strategies in the programming and implementation of post-2020 relevant programmes under shared management..." and "ENCOURAGES the key implementers of the Macroregional strategies to make better use of the programmes directly and indirectly managed by the Commission".

The EUSALP was established at a time when the programmes of the current 2014-2020 funding period were already in their implementation phase. As a consequence, the embedding of the strategic initiatives could not be implemented as intended from the very beginning. Now, in view of the upcoming programming, there is a unique opportunity to apply this commitment and to better interlink the EUSALP and funding programmes and to leverage synergy potential.

Considering their specific sector of Action within the strategic EUSALP implementation, the lead partner assigned to all AGs the transnational and cross-border strands of Interreg and the mainstream ERDF programmes, plus individualised for the single AG, as follows:

- **AG 1: Horizon Europe**
- **AG 2: Horizon Europe, LIFE, LEADER**
- **AG 3: ESF+ mainstream, Horizon Europe** (Cluster 'Inclusive and Secure Society')
- **AG 4: Horizon Europe** (Cluster 'Climate, Energy and Mobility'), **CEF Transport**
- **AG 5: Horizon Europe**, (Cluster 'Digital and Industry'), **CEF Digital, Digital Europe**
- **AG 6: Horizon Europe** (Cluster 'Inclusive and secure society'), **LIFE, LEADER**
- **AG 7: LIFE, LEADER**
- **AG 8: Horizon Europe** (Cluster 'Climate, Energy and Mobility'), **LIFE**
- **AG 9: Horizon Europe** (Cluster 'Climate, Energy and Mobility'), **CEF Energy**

For each AG, the general challenge was to address the right funding areas or intervention categories. This was due on the one hand to the lack of information regarding the conception of the future EU funding instruments and on the other hand to the difficulty of linking one's own working priorities with concrete funding priorities at a point in time, where the development of the future work plans had only started.

Since EUSALP does not have its own financing instrument and, at the same time, many strategic decisions are being taken from EUSALP, the importance of better embedding is crucial for the future.

There is a broad political consensus that stronger embedding of strategies in EU funding programmes is needed to make Macroregional strategies more effective.



TWO SUCCESSIVE STEPS ARE NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL:



a. Macroregional strategies must formulate their needs, knowing that it will not be possible to foresee the individual funding requirements for years to come and that this will not be an automatic way of meeting them. Consequently the next step is to identify the expected funding needs and possible project partners from the programme's point of view.



b. Funding programmes should be open to consider the funding needs arising from the Macroregional strategies in view of the possibility of their inclusion in their programmes and its implementation in the light of existing legal possibilities, technical needs and synergetic potentials.

For better embedding of Macroregional strategies into EU instruments at a time when programme preparation for the period 2021-2027 is in an early phase, the EUSALP AGs have formulated concrete funding needs on the basis of their own priorities.

In order to turn this synopsis effective, several steps might be considered:



There is great potential to put the strategy on a broader footing and to make better use of existing and future funding programmes.

Strategic Implementation Initiatives

The Strategic Implementation Initiatives can be described as mid-term to long-term activities, resulting from a structured state of play review and a gap analysis of the work of the AGs in their respective thematic field.

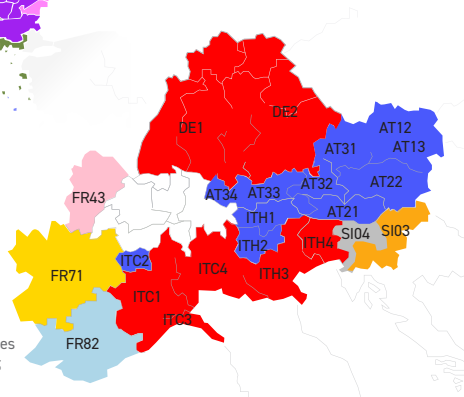
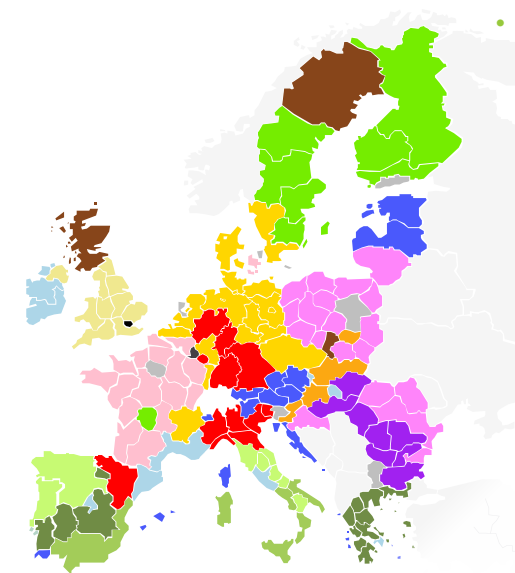
The activities can be subject of a proposal for any funding scheme, including the Interreg Alpine Space programme, but the submission and realisation of the initiative should take place outside of the proper AlpGov activity (and co-financing).

The Strategic Implementation Initiatives allowed to all AGs to enter into a dialogue with partners to explore the possibilities for co-producing and using of knowledge across different fields of expertise, for building thematic clusters or related activities like developing transdisciplinary marketplaces.

INTERACTING TOOL TO EXPLORE THE GOVERNANCE IN THE FIELD OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOP

- TOPIC:** Within AlpGov project, AG1 has been working to carry out an applied research project that returned a comprehensive analysis of the main patterns and the major differences characterising policy formulation for R&I in the EUSALP area. The research team has surveyed the literature, documents and data in English and in all the Alpine languages in order to get the most comprehensive view and support with indications and guidelines the process of harmonisation among the 48 regions. In addition, in order to back the discussion on future EU Cohesion Policy, deliverables and papers produced to implement Action 1 suggest capitalising on research and innovation strategic priorities outlined by almost all regions in Europe within the Research & Innovation Smart Specialisation Strategy (RIS3).

- AIM:** The objective of this analysis is to introduce a valuable and original categorisation of RIS3 priorities, applying it to classify EU regions' RIS3 and suggesting a comparative analysis across EU regions and Macro regions. This will serve the identification of common challenges and specific topics of Alpine relevance that can be prioritised across regional and national governments. Indeed, RIS3 should be conceived as place-based economic transformation agendas that could support AG1 in stimulating evidence-based policies encouraging innovation and experimentation.



- What has been achieved?** Grounded on information available at Eye@RIS3, which is built by the EC-Joint Research Centre and populated by regions, AG1 studies elaborated automatic text analysis of the priorities (in both free text and encoded format). They provided a powerful multidimensional perspective on RIS3s, describing the current state of diversification across regions and underlining the potential complementarities and synergies that might support territorial integrated development paths. This tool has recently integrated into the PoK on EUSALP website. The main outputs of this research are:

- Socioeconomic comparative analysis of regions in the EU-28
- RIS3 in Macroregional strategies: tools to design and monitor integrated territorial development paths
- Perspectives on RIS3s: a classification of topics emerging from automatic text analysis

Source: Authors' elaboration on Pagliacci et al. (2018)

MAPPING RESEARCH CENTERS AND LABS IN THE ALPINE MACRO REGION

- TOPIC:** Re-search Alps is a project built on the needs of the EUSALP's AG1, namely to have access to a comprehensive database of the Research and Innovation centers working within the EUSALP region in order to improve the capitalisation and networking process. The project has been funded to an open call by INEA CEF-TELECOM and was granted an award due to its strategic importance in the open-data and R&I field. The idea behind Re-Search Alps capitalises, in accordance with one of the funding principles of EUSALP, the experience and the idea behind the platform "Scan-R", developed by the French Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI). Re-Search Alps led to the development of an impressive database with information concerning laboratories, research centres, SMEs and start-ups operating in the R&I field and located in the 7 EUSALP Countries. The dataset is fed directly from the sources available online as open data, integrating over 20 databases in a unique one. Re-search Alps currently hosts information on 125.649 research centers and laboratories, 257.248 projects, 110.910 websites and 771.875 publications.
- AIM:** The objective of this initiative is to create a powerful tool that can be used by policy-makers, researchers and entrepreneurs, as it offers an essential knowledge base to support the networking and technology transfer processes on EUSALP territory.
- What has been achieved?**

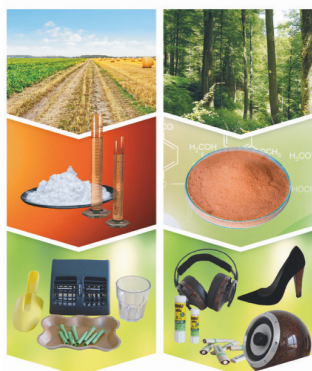
Re-search Alps platform facilitates the R&D process by forecasting:

- What the labs do and where they are located
- Mentioning where excellence emerge and the researchers working in a specific center
- Representing a scheme of the existing network of relations
- The project focuses on the infrastructures in support of (public, private and public-private) partnerships. The analysis highlights the characteristics of these infrastructures, referring to available resources, type of governance, involved areas of expertise, and business models.

This project led to:

- The definition of a set of metadata able to represent the relevant characteristics of laboratories, R&I centres
- The creation of an open dataset describing the "labs" in the seven countries of EUSALP – focus on the 48 regions of the Alpine area
- The development of a semantic and multilingual web application for:
 - Querying the dataset*
 - Retrieving the results in open and structured formats and*
 - Visualising geo-referenced data*





BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH

BUILDING BIO-BASED INDUSTRY VALUE CHAINS THROUGH CROSS-REGIONAL CLUSTER COOPERATION

- **TOPIC:** Value chains, especially in Bioeconomy, are distributed throughout the Alpine region and can be closed mainly by transregional cluster collaboration.
- **AIM:** Development of a Master Plan for Bioeconomy in the Alpine region to improve an effective, Bioeconomy based innovation system by facilitating cross-regional cooperation along bio-based industry value chains through cluster-based cooperation.
- **What has been achieved?** Regional reports on “Status quo of Bioeconomy and related clusters for selected Alpine Space regions” have been worked out and provided new insight in the different situations in the regions. Furthermore, the cluster mapping in the field of Bioeconomy has been implemented for selected regions illustrating where key bottlenecks exist. Approaches for new cross-regional support schemes have been identified in order to facilitate cross-regional collaboration and to gain critical mass for the development of Bio-based industry value chains across the Alpine region. Many of these insights have already been incorporated in recent regional strategies to support Bioeconomy, like Lombardy and Baden-Württemberg.

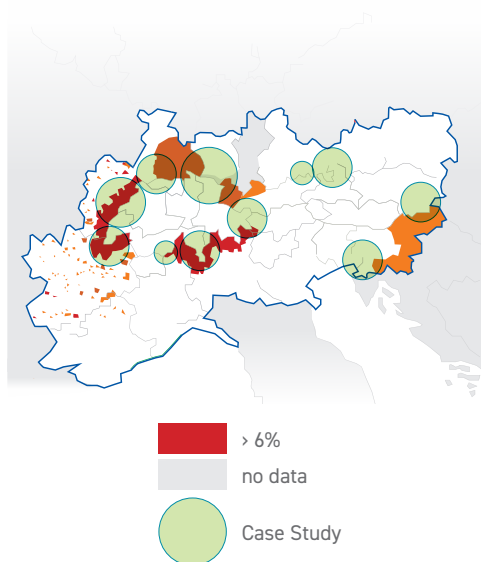


PERFORMING DUAL SYSTEMS FOR YOUNGSTERS IN THE ALPINE SPACE

- **TOPIC:** The Alpine region is one of the wealthiest, the most dynamic, innovative and economically competitive areas of Europe. The territories constituting this region benefit from a more favorable labor market than in the rest of Europe, at least for what concerns overall employment and unemployment rates. By contrast, regarding young people, the situation is more complex. It is acknowledged, that the school to work transition is working better in countries with a well established dual system and also the unemployment rates are lower among youngsters. However, problems and difficulties of various types occur in all dual systems. The AG3 with an alpine wide comparative study worked on the preconditions and future working paths.
- **AIM:** To create a 10 points plan with strategic objectives for effective governance of Dual Systems in the Alpine region, as inspiration for politicians and stakeholder and as a base for further actions that goes towards a common dual educational space.
- **What has been achieved?** The first tangible result is the Final report on Dual Systems in the regions of the Alpine Space, carried out as a comparative study on dual education models in Alpine countries and regions, to come up with a set of recommendations and guidelines considered both as recommendations addressed to institutions, schools and training providers, enterprises and apprentices, and as guidelines to be followed in order to enhance the structures and governance mechanisms of the dual education systems.

It clearly stated that basic conditions in the field of governance, attractiveness, quality of the training, innovation, and mobility of the apprentices should be met to perform better and presented a list of best practices from the 48 regions that clearly show that dual education is in favor of youngsters and companies.

The study is a building block for the DuALPlus project and it was discussed in detail in occasion of the AG3 strategic event, the 3rd Forum on Dual Education in the Alpine region.

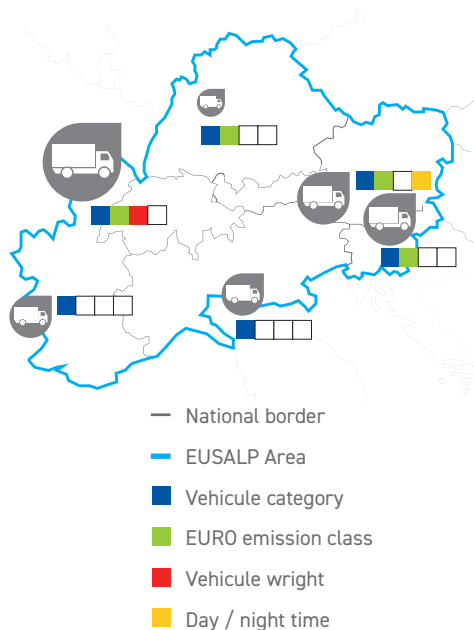


FACILITATING SUSTAINABLE CROSS-BORDER COMMUTING

- TOPIC:** Physical and digital accessibility do not stop at national borders. However transport networks in particular have for a long time been planned in a purely national context, also in the Alpine region, which is characterised by numerous national borders. These networks are no longer in coherence with ever increasing passenger flows across borders. This is particularly true for public transport systems. Hence AG5, focusing on aspects of digital accessibility, has sought for close coordination with AG4 to start the ARPAF project "Cross-border Mobility in the Alpine region".
- AIM:** This strategic initiative aims at identifying gaps in existing transport infrastructure and planning to facilitate sustainable cross-border commuting and increase the accessibility of border regions in EUSALP in order to avoid negative impacts on economy, society and the environment
- What has been achieved?** The CrossBorder project is the first to ever produce a statistical and cartographic overview of the phenomenon of cross-border commuting in the EUSALP perimeter, analysing existing commuter flows and existing road and rail infrastructure in twelve pre-selected hot spots. Furthermore, the project has collected existing solutions and searched for new, innovative approaches in cross-border commuting that serve the target groups of transport providers, public authorities, commuters and enterprises. The solutions were discussed with relevant stakeholders in several hotspots of cross-border commuting in the Alpine region to implement the findings of the previous analyses. The results of this strategic initiative provides a basis for future activities of each AG, particularly for AG4 (Mobility) and AG5 (Connectivity).

IMPLEMENTING MODAL SHIFT POLICIES WITH A FOCUS ON TOLL SYSTEMS

- TOPIC:** The Alpine regions are particularly sensitive to negative environmental and social impacts caused by the excessive traffic flow of freight and passenger transport through the Alps. In order to tackle this challenge the AG 4 promotes the harmonisation and implementation of coordinated modal shift policies with a focus on toll systems.
- AIM:** To support the shift from road to rail by coordinating activities and policies that affect freight transport in the Alpine region. That means: 1) providing a scientific basis for external cost in Alpine areas; 2) collecting detailed information on policy-induced pricing components that influence road and rail transport; 3) developing a comparative illustration of them for supporting political discussions and communication; 4) providing preliminary recommendations to improve the instrument mix for balancing the transport modal split in the Alps.
- What has been achieved?** The over-proportional environmental impacts from freight and passenger transport were updated in a study on external costs in mountain areas as an important piece of information for the design of common policy instruments. In a second study, an overview of existing pricing components was produced with a focus on vehicles operating costs. The results of this initiative were used as common basis for the design of policy instruments and strategies, including policy recommendations for implementing measures across EUSALP that promote modal shift in transport from road to rail.





CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR A SMART TRANSITION - SMART VILLAGES

- **TOPIC:** Alpine space rural communities are deprived of highly needed jobs, good provision of services as well as a favourable climate for entrepreneurship and social innovation, which result in a brain drain. Digitalisation is a promising approach to counter the situation. A Smart Village (SV) approach for mountain areas could unlock the potential of local actors to make their region a more attractive place to live and work.

This strategic initiative followed an integrative, participatory approach implying a city-village dialogue.

The direct beneficiaries are local/regional authorities and administrations, SMEs, public service providers, regional development agencies and NGOs which will receive a concrete guidance to implement the SV approach.

- **AIM:** To create opportunities for a smart transition of municipalities and regions in mountainous areas through new forms of stakeholder involvement facilitated by Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).
- **What has been achieved?** The first output is a regional analysis of readiness and needs for a Smart Transition in the Test Areas: a list of indicators of smartness for the self-assessment of pilot areas has been created and a dedicated form for the evaluation of core indicators of smartness has been applied. The second output is an Open Digital Smart Village Exchange Platform: the cooperation between the University of Maribor, the Software Center Hagenberg and Adrets led also to the implementation of a first version of an operational digital exchange platform with basic functions. A third output is a Digital Smart Village Toolbox and pilot activity implementation.



IMPROVING CROSS-BORDER CONNECTIVITY

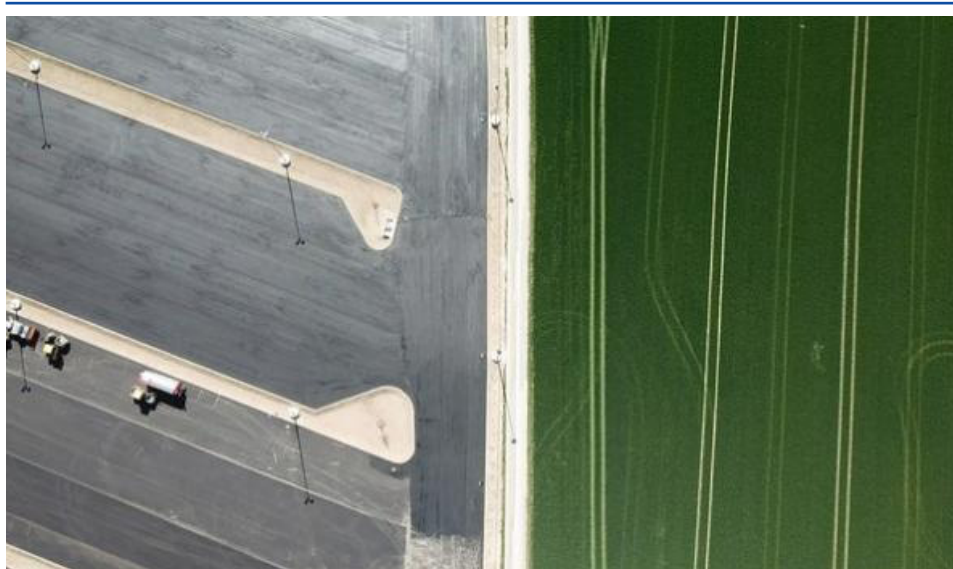
- **TOPIC:** Implement a digital strategy for the Alpine region where connectivity should be available and pervasive as in major cities to provide all necessary services. Some ideas and projects already exist in different countries/regions of the Alpine Space, but are not coordinated with each other. This strategic initiative highlighted the need to install a transnational fibre optic network and more infrastructures in cross-border areas, which could be used by citizens, operators in the sector and public administrations.
- **AIM:** to increase connectivity and accessibility of the border regions in the Alps.
- **What has been achieved?** EUSALP AG5 has developed a feasibility study to find potential infrastructures (already existing) to be used in cross border connectivity, underlying the gaps existing and how they can be filled. The study also aims to highlight economic models that can be developed with such connectivity.



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ESTABLISHING A KNOWLEDGE NETWORK FOR AGRI-FOOD AND FORESTRY VALUE CHAINS – SPOTLIGHTING THE POTENTIAL OF TERRITORIAL BRANDS

- TOPIC:** High quality food products based on a rich traditional heritage and a large variety of agricultural and forestry raw materials are joint assets of the entire EUSALP area.
 Generating, managing and sharing knowledge and information about innovative approaches within agri-food and forestry value chains can foster and improve sustainable local and regional development.
- AIM:** To bring together the different networks of territorial brands in the Alpine agri-food sector and to trigger a lasting knowledge and experience exchange in the framework of an international conference in order to trigger better cooperation among these networks.
- What has been achieved?** The international conference “Territorial marks in the Alpine region, an opportunity for a better valorisation of regional and local agri-food products”, which took place in May 2019 in Bolzano at EURAC Research, was attended by more than 100 operators of the agri-food sector and experts and was an opportunity for discussion on the theme of territorial marks. In this way, the AG6 raised public awareness of the issue, reviewed current trends among stakeholders and set the foundations for future cooperations.



JOINING FORCES FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND USE AND SOIL PROTECTION

- TOPIC:** Soils are affected in their functions by their use for purposes such as traffic, housing, economy, leisure, agriculture, etc. This may lead to excessive land take and soil sealing and is particularly true in the Alpine regions, where soil formation processes are particularly slow due to geological and climatic conditions, and where permanent settlement and production land are limited.
- AIM:** To develop a common and comprehensive approach for an Alpine wide implementation of careful land use and quantitative and qualitative soil protection.
- What has been achieved?** A political Declaration on “Sustainable Land Use and Soil Protection” within the territory of the EUSALP has been elaborated. After the adoption by the members of AG6 a public consultation to collect the feedback of interested institutions and civil society organisations was carried out. The political coordination process led to the support of the Declaration by a large number of Alpine regions and States.



LINKING URBAN AND INNER-ALPINE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- TOPIC:** Green Infrastructure (GI) plays many important roles as source of food, water and other raw materials, protection against flooding or leisure space and habitat for animals, plants and people. Especially at a time where climate change even increases the pressure on Alpine ecosystems and threatens services which go far beyond the inner-mountain regions, GI offers economically sound solutions in harmony with nature. In response to all that, AG7 implemented an approach based on strengthening the link between mountain ecosystems and urban centres in the Alpine region.
- AIM:** To improve the frame conditions for preserving and developing an intact, diverse and connected environment in favour of nature, people and economy.
- What has been achieved?** At the occasion of the EUSALP Environmental Ministers Conference on Green Infrastructure on 2nd October 2017, the Green Infrastructure City network LOS_DAMA! has been set-up with the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding, which can count on 12 cities that joined the network.

AG7 developed a concept on how Alpine cities can closer cooperate with rural areas in the field of GI. Innovative business models should be supported using the example of regional GIs. This strategic concept has been transferred into a project proposal called “LUIGI – Linking urban and inner-Alpine Green Infrastructure – Multifunctional Ecosystem Services for more liveable territories” which has been approved by the Interreg ASP.



FOSTERING THE NATURAL HAZARD RISK GOVERNANCE DIALOGUE

Status Quo of Natural Hazard Risk Governance in the EUSALP region

- TOPIC:** Governance is a complementary approach to government-based public administration schemes. The main idea is that decisions should be taken close to their effect on a local to regional level, complementing government. The participation of stakeholders is strengthened, and decision-making should be by negotiation. Risk governance discusses the ways we deal as a society with natural hazards. Commonly, threats and risks are experienced directly by populations. Consequently, past events shape the common memory, as well as the risk awareness and therefore affect local communities. The essential two parameters for risk governance are:

 - A common problem for concerned stakeholders (i.e. local population, public authorities, NGOs)
 - Existence of a discussion and negotiation network that helps to deal with natural hazard risk

- **AIM:** Mapping the status of Natural Hazard Risk Governance within the boundaries of the EUSALP region is a first step to promote international exchange of expertise and can help to develop and shape more sophisticated and practical governance solutions to decrease vulnerability and raise resilience. This AG8 activity has fostered the EUSALP dialogue on natural hazard risk governance.
- **What has been achieved?** AG8 members investigated the existing national regulatory frameworks in hazard management and mapped governance mechanisms that are in place in a comparable manner with the support of TU Vienna. In a close cooperation with the Alpine Convention, good practice examples were collected. Finally, AG8 identified and formulated recommendations for enhancing risk governance mechanisms concerning the management of natural hazards in the Alps. A final report and accompanying policy brief were published.



INCREASING ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN THE ENTERPRISES OF EUSALP REGION

- **TOPIC:** The implementation of energy efficiency measures is a key element to reach Europe's energy and climate targets. Several national and regional programmes were launched in the Alpine area to support enterprises to implement energy efficiency measures, but small enterprises are often not sufficiently considered, and standards are different in each part of the Alpine Macro region.
- **AIM:** To establish a network of decision-makers, enterprises and experts in the field of energy efficiency in SMEs, exchanging good practices, developing and further supporting mechanisms to enhance energy efficiency measures for the SME sector.
- **What has been achieved?** EUSALP AG9 launched the initiative with the strategic event "Energy efficiency in enterprises in the EUSALP Macro region", held in Bozen on 20-21 March 2019 under the patronage of the Italian Presidency 2019 and open to the decision-makers, stakeholders and multipliers with expertise in the field of energy efficiency in enterprises. During this meeting the study on Energy Efficiency in Alpine Enterprises (Analysis of supporting instruments for realising energy efficiency measures and the use of renewable energies), developed specifically for AG9, has been presented. Using the funding opportunities provided by the second ARPAF call, AG9 in cooperation with AG2, launched the project "CAESAR – Capacitating Energy Efficiency in Small Alpine Enterprises", aimed at providing the necessary resources to set up the experts' network for energy efficiency in enterprises, roll-out an auditing programme for small enterprises in the Alps and train energy auditors.



TRANSFORMING THE ALPINE REGION INTO A MODEL REGION FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

- **TOPIC:** Energy data can support the implementation and monitoring of a long-term cross-border energy strategy for the Alpine region.
To transform the Macro region into a model for energy efficiency and renewable energy, it is necessary the implementation of an observatory project, which implies a network of actors as well as a collection of relevant data.
- **AIM:** The set-up of the Energy Observatory requires entering into dialogue with strategic implementation partners to explore possibilities of collaboration and activities which can lead to the establishment of the Observatory.
- **What has been achieved?** In 2018, EUSALP AG9 organised a series of workshops with energy data experts to exploit the feasibility of a future EUSALP Energy Observatory. The results of these events included the mapping and networking of actors, sharing of good practices and experiences in the field of regional and national energy data collection, brainstorming sessions about framework conditions, objectives and target users, financing options and energy data sharing tools.
In 2017 and in 2019, the EUSALP Energy Survey collected all the key energy data and strategic documents from the regions of the entire EUSALP area, bringing together standardised and comparable data for policy makers.

4. Communication activities



Towards AlpGov 2...

A future with new challenges



“Strengthening the links among the EUSALP governance bodies”

“Increasing political ownership”

“Implementing AGs’ projects”

“Fostering EUSALP internal and external communication”



5. Conclusions

Our dreams for the Alps...



"A common research agenda able to build an effective ecosystem of research and innovation in the Alpine Macroregional area".

Anna Giorgi

AG1 leader



"Integrated and sustainable value chains for Bioeconomy, Wood, Health Tourism and Digital Industry".

Susanne Ast and Sylvain Guetaz

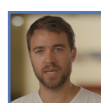
AG2 leaders



"A common Alpine area of vocational education and training".

Boglarka Fenyvesi-Kiss

AG3 leader



"A more sustainable and cleaner transport system through interoperability and intermodality of passengers and freight transport".

Patrick Skonieczki, Olivier Margouet, Xavier Garcia

AG4 leaders



"The Alps as forerunners of digitalisation".

Carlo Vigna and Thomas Egger

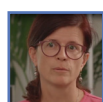
AG5 leaders



"Future generations continue to fully enjoy the natural and cultural resources of the Alps".

Lisa Ellemunter, Helmut Serro and Wolfger Mayrhofer

AG6 leaders



"Green Infrastructure as the basis for life of present and future generations in the Alpine Space".

Michaela Künzl and Tina Trampuš

AG7 leaders



"A society more aware, prepared and skilled in the implementation of risk governance and adaptation to climate change".

Florian Rudolf-Micklau and Christian Wanger

AG8 leaders



"A shared PoK for energy efficiency in all the regions involved in the Alpine area".

Ulrich Santa and Patrick Biard

AG9 leaders





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Lead partner

Bavarian State Ministry of the Environment
and Consumer Protection

Communication

ERSAF - Regional Agency for Agriculture and
Forests | Lombardy Region

