



alpenkonvention • convention alpine
convenzione delle alpi • alpska konvencija

Tagung der Alpenkonferenz
Réunion de la Conférence alpine
Sessione della Conferenza delle Alpi
Zasedanje Alpske konference

XV

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ANLAGE/ANNEXE/ALLEGATO/PRILOGA

9

**REPORT OF THE
Platform Ecological Network of the Alpine Convention
on the 2016-2019 mandate**

1. Overview of 2016-2019 mandate or relevant decision of the Alpine Conference

Brief summary of the main activities according to the 2016-2019 mandate or relevant decision of the Alpine Conference

The activities foreseen for the WISO Platform in its 2016-2019 mandate can be summarised as follows:

- Support of the Pilot Regions for Ecological Connectivity of the Alpine Convention: presenting examples of Pilot Region activities to Platform members and support their actions by valorising them during the Platform meetings; offering opportunities for engagement in the frame of alpine project partnerships, including financial opportunities through INTERREG Alpine space Programme.
- Elaboration of a report on how ecological connectivity is considered in spatial planning: Analysis of the situation on different levels in the alpine countries and illustration of good practice cases.
- Contribution of exchange, development and Dissemination of knowledge and Know-How about ecological connectivity: continue promoting dialogue among Contracting
 - Parties through the sharing of information, experiences and best practice for
 - Connectivity implementation; and to foster dialogue with and among relevant stakeholders.
- Highlighting the link between Ecological Connectivity and Green Economy.

The Platform Ecological Network was chaired by France (Thierry BOISSEAU until September 2017 followed by Pierre COMMENVILLE), function of Co-chair was assured by Germany (Bettina HEDDEN-DUNKHORST).

2. Meetings

Summary of the meetings

The Platform Ecological network met three times during its 2016-2019 mandate:

1. Grenoble (France), 21-22 June 2017. Topics: update and information exchange among Contracting Parties and Observers; Workshop on Platform report about ecological connectivity and spatial planning.
2. Valdieri (Italy), 15-16 November 2017. Topics: update and information exchange about ongoing alpine projects; Workshop on Platform report about ecological connectivity and spatial planning.
3. München (Germany), 6-7 December 2018. Topics: Finalisation of report about ecological connectivity and spatial planning; Discussion of future consideration of the topic ecological connectivity in the Alpine Convention/contribution to upcoming Biodiversity Board.

3. Activities carried out

Report on activities carried out (including meetings, conferences)

The Platform carried out the following activities in fulfilment of the mandate:

- Support of the Pilot Regions for Ecological Connectivity: 2 of the Platform meetings took place in Pilot Regions and were the opportunity to valorise their actions. 5 Pilot Regions are project partners of the Alpine Space Programme supported ALPBIONET2030 project and actively work on connectivity improvement in their region.
- Elaboration of a report on how ecological connectivity is considered in spatial planning (PLACE): the elaboration of this report is carried out and supervised by the French research institution IRSTEA and financed by France. Platform members have contributed to the elaboration of the report. Three Workshops were carried out to support the elaboration of the report. The report will be made available at the date of the forthcoming Alpine Conference.
- Sharing and Exchange of Knowledge: a regular agenda item was set at every Platform meeting in order to allow for a regular exchange among Contracting Parties and Observers on the implementation of ecological connectivity. The Platform, how through its chairs is observer to the ALPBIONET2030 project, has be informed about project advancement and invited to important meetings.

- Ecological Connectivity and Green Economy: the results of the GreenConnect project have been highlighted in the frame of the elaboration of the Green Economy Action Programme and related background publications.

4. Results and outputs

Description of main results and outputs achieved

1. Up-to-date information about the situation of Ecological Connectivity in the different alpine Countries provided during Platform meetings.
2. PLACE report giving an overview about how ecological connectivity is considered in spatial planning in the alpine countries and an analysis of several good practice examples.
3. Close exchange with EUSALP AG 7, information and data exchange, coordination of activities, contribution to AG 7 project development, including thanks to the involvement of ALPARC, acting as the executive secretary of the Platform, in both processes.

5. Cooperation

Description of cooperation initiatives and activities with other Alpine Convention Thematic Working Bodies and other relevant bodies and processes (e.g. EUSALP)

The Platform cooperated with the following groups and processes:

- EUSALP, in particular EUSALP AG 7 by attending the AG meetings and participating actively in the activities of the group, especially on the identification of lighthouse project on green infrastructure in the alpine and EUSALP area.
- Network of Alpine, Carpathians and Danube Parks by supporting the development and launch of the ConnectGreen project of the Danube Transnational Programme (<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/connectgreen>).
- Contribution to the work of the Green Economy Advisory Board and participation to the Workshop for the drafting of the Green Economy Action Programme.

6. Attachments

List of the documents attached to the report

- Minutes of Platform Meetings.
- Place study “Spatial planning & ecological connectivity in the alpine context”
OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS



**EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE PLATFORM „ECOLOGICAL NETWORK“
- ALPINE CONVENTION -**

**21TH AND 22TH JUNE 2017
GRENOBLE, FRANCE**

**MINUTES
(21/22.06.2017)**

ANNEXES (available on the Alpine Convention Intranet)

- 1 Agenda of the Meeting
- 2 List of participants
- 3 Minutes 17th Platform meeting
- 4 PPT presentations

21th & 22nd June 2017

International Workshop on spatial planning Report

Welcome

Welcome to the participants of the International Workshop on spatial planning Report by the representative of the host IRSTEA M. Thomas Spiegelberger and the Platform chair Ms Sophie Cabanis. Introduction to the aims of the Workshop and the proposed Workshop methodology by M. Yann Kohler. Presentation of all participants.

Contact from the IRSTEA experts following the project:

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Methodology

Introduction to the methodology proposed for the realisation of the report by Nathalie Bertrand from IRSTEA.

Three Options were proposed to the Platform members concerning the content and scope of the report:

- 1: Output=report, small investment from country representatives
- 2: Output= final publication to be spread among technicians and civil society
- 3: Output=2+scientific paper and a project proposal; need of additional support by planner and ecologists

The Platform members expressed themselves in the frame of an Email consultation taking place in April/Mai for the Option N°2. This selection was confirmed by the Workshop participants. The Option 2 approach is based on case study analysis. Three case studies should be analysed in each country.

After a discussion with the participants the target public of the report has been defined as: Alpine Convention representatives; local regional administrations and in a larger focus the civil society with certain basic knowledge on spatial planning and ecological connectivity.

The outcomes of the work should therefore be: a technical report and an “easy to read” summary of the main findings of the report to be addressed to the larger public. The outcomes of the work should find their way to the local communities who are in charge of the implementation. The aim would be to demonstrate the interest of considering aspects of ecological connectivity in their planning processes.

For October 2018 (next Alpine Conference) the following outputs need to be finalised:

- Consistent technical report about the work carried out and responding to the mandate delivered to the Platform.
- English draft of an attractive brochure that could be addressed to a larger public. After validation of this draft it should be translated and largely distributed in the alpine countries (municipalities and other local planning entities; + people working with spatial planning). This could be realised during the next mandate period of the Platform. Ecological connectivity is a topic that competes with a lot of other topics (roads, leisure, etc.) when it comes to elaborate planning documents and the importance and potential of this topic should needs to be highlighted.

The final publication (report) needs also a recommendation part. There are two possibilities to formulate such recommendations: “this needs to be done” or “this needs to be avoided”. The more operational way would be to address the recommendation via the question “how to avoid or how to navigate in case of difficulties”.

The analysis of the case studies could include a part concerning the “benefits” provided by ecological connectivity (ex. via ecosystem services).

Decisions

Confirmation of the selection of Option N° 2 with commitment of country representatives to deliver the needed inputs for the realisation of this approach.
Output for October 2018: technical report + draft of a brochure (to be addressed to a larger public and translated to all alpine languages in a second step).

Case studies

The PPT presentations of the case studies are available on the Alpine Convention Intranet.

Three case studies should be analysed in each country. The case studies should address examples (and therefore planning documents) on a local planning level and take into consideration all relevant spatial planning documentation of the above located planning levels (regional, national).

The case studies should highlight inspiring/ innovative cases, showing how ecological connectivity could be integrated in spatial planning in an interesting way. If examples on negative experiences are available they can be analysed too allowing highlighting potential difficulties territories may be confronted to.

At least 1 case study should focus on transboundary aspects (between countries or between planning regions).

Interviews and questionnaire

In addition to the analysis of planning documents and other relevant literature for the case study description interviews will be carried out.

For one case study semi-structured interviews interviews with three different types of stakeholders will be carried out: one representative from the policy level, one technician from spatial planning and one expert of ecology involved in the planning process. The guidelines for the interviews will be provided by IRSTEA.

For the other two case studies more structured questionnaires (closed-ended and semi-closed-ended questions, multiple-choice questions, answers by keywords, etc.), to be provided by IRSTEA, will be submitted.

The interviews for the case studies will be realised by the Platform members. The interviews should be recorded and a written overview about the content of the interview provided to IRTSEA (delivery by each interviewers: (a) the audio recordings of interviews and of (b) the completed interview guides with transcription of the answers/discussions to semi-structured questions. Guidelines on the exact procedure to adopt for the interviews will be provided by IRSTEA in July.

In addition to the interviews realised by the Platform members in the case studies, one interview will be carried out in each country by IRSTEA with and planning expert (scientist). Platform members should support IRSTEA in identifying and contacting these experts.

Document analysis:

In accordance with the procedure of the interviews, the documents of one case study will be studied more in details than the ones of the two other case studies. A raster for the document analysis and detailed information about the elements of the planning documents to be analysed and a list of minimum documents will be provided by IRSTEA in July. An overview about all additional documents should be provided by the country representatives. In dialogue with IRSTEA the analysis of some of these additional documents could be agreed if feasible, IRSTEA will provide help for the selection of the additional documents.

Proposed calendar

<i>Date</i>	<i>Action</i>
<i>21/22 June 2017</i>	1st Workshop
<i>31 July 2017</i>	Final selection of the 3 case studies and short explanation on the selection process, identification of the interview partners; collection and upload of all relevant documents for all case studies

<i>20 September 2017</i>	Qualitative analysis of documents for 1 case study finalised
<i>20 October 2017</i>	Semi-structured Interviews finalized
<i>November 2017</i>	2 nd Workshop
<i>March 2018</i>	Finalization of the 2 other case studies (Close-ended and semi-close-ended questionnaires & document analysis)
<i>May-June 2018</i>	Drafting of the next mandate for the Platform + preparation of decision proposal for AC
<i>June 2018</i>	Finalization of content of report and brochure
<i>Summer 2018</i>	layout and print
<i>October 2018</i>	Presentation at Alpine Conference

Documents to be provided to Platform members by the End of July

- 1) Close-ended and semi-close-ended questionnaire + semi-structured interview guideline
- 2) Document analysis grid (with some methodological instructions)
- 3) Criteria concerning the selection of case studies. If needed IRSTEA can provide a support to identify main documents that should be analysed for single case studies.

Data exchange

Please upload all available documents as soon as possible to the Alpine Convention Intranet. The Permanent secretariat will check the possibility to provide enough storage space on this server. If this is not possible alternative solutions will be proposed by the latest in September 2017.

2nd Workshop, November 2017

As Mathieu Perrin will be available to work on the report for IRSTEA until End of November 2017 the next meeting should take place in November 2017. At this meeting the country representatives should present the results of their first in depth case study analysis to the plenary.

22nd June 2017

18th Platform meeting

Welcome

Welcome to the participants of the 18th Platform meeting by the Platform chair Ms Sophie Cabanis. The Platform chair particularly welcomes Michaela Künzli, co-chair of the EUSALP AG7.

Introduction, Agenda, Time Schedule

The Minutes of the 17th Platform meeting held in Grassau (Germany) were approved by the participants. The participants also approved the slightly rearranged agenda for the meeting.

01: Report from the Platform Chair: Implementation of the mandate

The Platform coordinator reports about the activities of the Platform since the last meeting:

- Participation of the Meeting of chairs of the Working Groups and Platforms under the Alpine Convention: 30th/31st January 2017 (Vienna): cooperation between Platforms and Working groups should be reinforced. Especially with the WISO Platform cooperation seems important. The organisation of back-to-back or parallel meetings of the 2 Platforms was proposed but could not be realised this year as both Platform had already fixed their frames. This possibility should be analysed for 2018.
- The Platform was unfortunately not represented at the Alpine Convention's Alpine Climate Board (ACB) the 22nd/23rd February 2017 (Vienna). The Platform is still searching for a Platform member who would volunteer to represent the Platform in this Group. A questionnaire about the activities of the Platform linked to climate change was addressed to the Platform chair. The filled questionnaire, mentioning also the Platform statement paper about connectivity and climate change, was send back to the Group leader in time by the End of April. Based on the results a overview report will be prepared for the next Alpine Conference on the activities of the Alpine Convention on climate change.
- The Platform was unfortunately not represented at the Advisory board for the elaboration of the Action Programme for Green Economy in the Alpine Region. The Platform is still searching for a Platform member who would volunteer to represent the Platform in this Group. The activities on the elaboration of the Action Programme will start in autumn. The Platform will contribute to this work according to its possibilities.
- The Platforms "Climate change statement" has been published in EEA and EU "Climate Adapt Newsletter" in June 2017 and therefore largely diffused in a European context. This was possible in the frame of the cooperation between the Alpine Convention Secretariat and the Climate Adapt Initiative.
- During the last Alpine Conference in Grassau a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the three networks of protected areas of the Alps, the Carpathians and the Danube River. Since October an action plan was elaborated to implement this MoU and a short Clip illustrating the cooperation, that is mainly focused on the topic of ecological connectivity, was realised. As the cooperation with the Carpathians is explicitly mentioned among the tasks of the Platform, the Platform follows these activities closely. The Clip was presented to the Platform members (available here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzK1tfabP3HlwKNZ3i8u6vQ>)
- As announced at the last Platform meeting the Platform chair proposed a session about ecological connectivity to the organizers of the "6th International Symposium for Reseach in Protected Areas" taking place in Salzburg the 2-4.11.2017. The session with the title "The different dimensions of ecological connectivity" has been

accepted and will be co-organized between the Platform and a partner from the ALPBIONET2030 project from EURAC.

- The Platform participated to the meetings of the EUSALP AG7 about ecological connectivity (see point 04).

02: News from the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention

Nathalie Morelle has been replaced by Giulia Gaggia as delegate of the Permanent Secretariat to our Platform. The Platform chair thanks Nathalie for all the work done for the Platform during the last years and welcomes Giulia.

The next meeting of the Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention will take place the 4th and 5th October 2017. An input from the Platform is foreseen on the agenda. This will be an oral presentation by the Platform chair giving an update on the latest activities and the implementation of the mandate.

An ESPON project Alps 2050 is currently been prepared with the aim to develop common alpine perspectives. Terms of reference will be published soon.

The drafting of the mandates for the next mandate period will take place around June 2018. This deadline should be considered in the calendar for the work on the spatil planning report in order to be able to consider some follow-up activities in the new mandate. A proposal of the new mandate should be discussed at the Platform meeting in spring 2018.

03: Introduction to the Alpine Space project LOS_DAMA

The PPT is available on the Platform Intranet page.

Guillaume Tournaire from Metropole Grenoble, project partner of the Alpine Space project LOS_DAMA presented this new project linked to ecological connectivity in alpine metropolitan areas to the Platform members.

This project deals also with issues linked to ecological connectivity and spatial planning, in particular in urbanised areas. The Platform coordinator has been included at the distribution list of the project and will receive information bout the advancement of the project. The LOS_DAMA project partners will also be informed about the results of the Platforms work and synergies should be used where these are possible.

04: News from EUSALP AG 7 and cooperation with Platform

The EUSALP AG7 works on the topic of ecological connectivity in the EUSALP area.

Usefull information about the functioning of the Group and its members can be found on their homepage: <https://www.alpine-region.eu/action-group-7>. There is also a calendar

function on this homepage that could be used to better coordinate the activities of the EUSALP AG7 and the Alpine Convention Platform.

In February 2017 took place the first EUSALP Action Group Forum. All 9 actions groups worked together and meet in different formats (common and individual work among the different action groups). At this occasion took also place a shared discussion with other working groups on the TEN-G instrument.

During the internal AG7 meeting at this Forum the mission statement could be finalized. It is now available on the webpage as well as a first version of Work Plan for the AG7 activities. The main tasks for the next years are:

- The Alpine Region should become a model region for the implementation of green infrastructure according to European strategy (milestones: raise the political awareness for the issue)

- Conference for ministers and leaders of alpine Regions (2nd October 2017): the conference is organized in 2017 because also of the current discussion on the multi annual financial framework and current discussion on TEN initiatives. The event will take place in Munich. An invitation has been sent out to all political representation from states and regions (55 official guests). Platform members should if possible support the mobilization of national and regional representatives to join this event. The list of the persons invited will be send to the Platform members in order to allow them to remind this event to the invited guests.

During the Conference some key note speeches and a round table are foreseen. A common declaration should be adopted by the participants at the end of the event, positioning the alpine space as model area for a TEN-G initiative. Furthermore the signing the memorandum of understanding with several alpine metropolises should take place in the frame of the event.

The draft of the political declaration that should be signed at this occasion is already elaborated. It is structured in 7 parts: emphasizing the benefits of green infrastructure; importance of the alpine region; appropriate governance and funding mechanisms; taking further actions in the alpine region (to include to the actions of AG7), welcoming of the alpine metropolises to this initiative and demand to keep the topic on the agenda.

The Platform suggests including also some information about the Platform Ecological network and its activities and importance for the alpine area to the event. The work of the Platform during the last 10 years on this topic as well as the current work on the spatial planning report should be mentioned. One possibility could be to address these points in the frame of the speech of Mr. Reiterer who is foreseen to give a speech about the Alpine Convention but also in the opening speech from the Bavarian minister. Arguments: uniqueness of alpine region but also the immense work already realized on this topic in the Alps.

Another EUSALP AG7 Workshop took place in Munich in May 2017. Main topics of this meeting were the discussion of the two documents (common declaration of alpine ministers and leaders of regions on TEN-G initiative and MoU with metropolitan areas). Platform members are asked to make this declaration known within the ministries and regions and to sensitive the concerned institutions to this initiative + possibility to give a feedback on the declaration + support it in a positive way.

2018: action according to work program: start a cross-sectorial dialogue to share possibilities of implementations of green infrastructure.

Work on POC (platform of knowledge) developed under the roof of entire EUSALP: financed by AlpGov Project. Questionnaires will be sent out in order to interrogate possible users about what they consider to be useful services. The aim of this POC is not to develop new information but share in a more targeted way existing information of all type (contacts, knowledge, data,...).

The European Parliament decided to allocate for 2017 and 2018 a total budget of 2 Mio. Euro for preparatory actions to support implementation of the EUSALP objectives in the so called "Alpine Region Preparatory Action Fund" (ARPAF). The ARPAF will organize one call for projects after the summer break this year for the action fields "Circular economy", "Demographic changes" and "Sustainable mobility".

Implementation Arrangements highlight the following points:

- All AG members can act as Lead Partner or Project Partner.
- Preparatory actions have to involve at least 2 AGs.
- Maximum duration of projects is 24 months.
- ARPAF co-financing rate is max. 90%. (appr. total volume of each project 200.000 – 300.000€).

AG7 members are invited to propose some project ideas linked to the main project topics. Platform members are also invited to propose Ideas to the AG7 lead.

Two upcoming events

1 further EUSALP AG7 workshops: in September 2017 a workshop on capacity building and networking on connectivity implementation in Eastern Alps (participation of Italy Austria, Slovenia; taking place the 19th September in Slovenia).

First EUSALP annual forum 23rd and 24th November 2017 in Munich: 700-800 participants invited, 1 day emphasis on political issues (addressing policy level); 2nd day more technical exchanges for the AG around their topics + Market place accessible to the public (inputs about mapping Jecami, Clips, board games on connectivity).

05: Life TEN project (Trentino Ecological Network)

The PPT is available on the Platform Intranet page.

Elena Guella and Marta Gandolfi presented the LIFE TEN project and the database linked to this context. The project seems particularly interesting as an example of concrete funding of a local/regional connectivity project via a LIFE fund. Possible links to the JECAMI mapping tool should be checked.

06: GreenConnect

ALPARC is cooperation with the Technical University (TU) of Vienna (Austria) in this project. The partner in the TU, who have already worked on similar topics with an analysis of the socio-economic effects of Natura 2000 sites in Austrian regions, elaborated a methodical approach to analyse the possible socio-economic impact of connectivity

measures in a context of the economy of a region by analysis impact chains based on a ecosystem approach.

Two workshops with the Pilot Regions for Ecological connectivity have taken place in the Eastern and Western Alps in spring 2017. These WS were the occasion to collect and discuss with the Pilot Regions measures in favour of ecological connectivity implemented by them that should be analysed in the frame of the GreenConnect project. In parallel a series of selected measures for the catalogue of measures is also analysed.

The results will be discussed with a larger public at the final event of the project taking place the 27th and 28th September 2017 in the new Pilot Region Achantal.

07: ALPBIONET2030

Yann Kohler and Filippo Favilli presented the current status of the ALPBIONET2030 project to the Platform.

An overview about the project is now also available on the project homepage: <http://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/alpbionet2030/en/home>.

First interesting project results such as a draft map of the Strategic Alpine Connectivity Areas (SACA), first findings about the Wildlife Management and its impacts on ecological connectivity or on human-wildlife conflicts in the frame of connectivity implementation will be discussed at a large mid-term event in 2018.

08: Any other issue

The next Platform meeting has been scheduled for the 15th and 16th November 2017. It will take place in the Alpi Marittime (Italy).



**NINETEENTH MEETING OF THE PLATFORM „ECOLOGICAL NETWORK“
- ALPINE CONVENTION -**

**16TH NOVEMBER 2017
VALDIERI, ALPI MARITTIME, ITALY**

**MINUTES
(16.11.2017)**

ANNEXES (available on the Alpine Convention Intranet)

- 1 Agenda of the Meeting
- 2 List of participants
- 3 PPT presentations (available on the Alpine Convention Intranet)

16th November 2017

19th Platform meeting

01: Welcome

Welcome to the participants of the 19th Platform meeting by the new Platform chair Mr Pierre COMMENVILLE. Mr Commenville will take over the Platform chair for France for the remaining mandate period. Welcome also by the host of the meeting, Mr Guiseppe Canavese, director of the Nature Park Alpi Marittime.

Agenda, Time Schedule

The participants approved the slightly rearranged agenda for the meeting.

02: Report from the Platform Chair: Implementation of the mandate

At the last Permanent Committee in Gmunden the current Austrian presidency of the Alpine Convention announced that the next Alpine Conference will take place only in April 2019 (and not in autumn 2018 as usually foreseen). This means also that the current mandate period is protonated by 6 month until the new mandate is delivered by the Alpine Conference.

The Platform coordinator reports about the activities of the Platform since the last meeting:

- **Green Economy**: the Platform co-chair and the Platform coordinator participated to the first Workshop for the elaboration of the Green Economy action Plan for the Alps that took place in Immenstadt (D) the 27th September 2017. The process, initiated as follow up of the 6th Report on the status of the Alps and coordinated by the German Agency for the Environment (UBA) will consist in a series of Workshops, the Action plan will be developed based on the results of these Workshops. In coordination with this event an International Forum was organised by the Partners of the GreenConnect project to present and discuss the project results. The project showed that measures improving ecological connectivity can indeed foster interesting socio-economic effects if they are designed and implemented in this regard. Among the analysed measures most effects could be shown in the sectors of agriculture and tourism. The two events were organised back-to-back in order to facilitate the exchange and discuss how to best include the GreenConnect project results to the Green Economy action plan of the Alpine Convention.
- **Research/science**: As announced at the last Platform meeting the Platform chair organised a session about ecological connectivity ("*Different dimensions of ecological connectivity*") at the "6th International Symposium for Research in Protected Areas" that took place in Salzburg the 2-4.11.2017. Five speakers addressed different thematic linked to ecological connectivity during the 1h30

session. The proceedings of this event will be published by the organisers next year.

- Alpine Convention: The 64th Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention took place the 4th and 5th October 2017 in Gmunden (A). As a main focus was set on “biodiversity” the Platform reported the advancements on the report about “ecological connectivity and spatial” planning to the Permanent Committee and gave an overview about the current Platform activities.
- Alpine Convention/EUSALP: The 5th and 6th October 2017 an exchange workshop between the leaders of the Alpine Convention Working Groups and Platforms and the EUSALP action groups was organised in Gmunden (A). The aim of this exchange Workshop was to present the activities of the different groups and foster cooperation among them. During the discussion following groups could be identified as interesting partners for a closer cooperation with the Platform: Platform and Action Group on Natural Hazards as they are working on a map of all protection forest in the alpine area. These protection forests could be key elements of a ecological network of forest in the Alps. Also the Action Group and Platform on Water works on “blue infrastructure”. Water courses are one of the main spatial links between the Alps and the EUSALP territory and cooperation could therefore be of particular interest.
- EUSALP: Upon Invitation of the Bavarian State Minister of the Environment and Consumer Protection and in the scope of the Bavarian EUSALP presidency an Environmental Ministers conference took place in Munich the 2nd October 2017, dealing with the issue of Green Infrastructure. Representatives of states and regions adopted a declaration calling for giving green infrastructure on alpine and European level the same attention as networks for transport, energy and digital networks. The representatives of states and regions together with representatives of peri-alpine metropolises suggested establishing an Alpine Green Infrastructure Network as a model for Europe and called on the European Parliament and the European Commission for better considering the issue in future EU funding instruments post 2020. As a first implementation step, a green infrastructure network of cities has been launched by signing a joint Memorandum of Understanding.
Furthermore EUSALP AG7 organised a workshop "Networking for Ecological Connectivity and Green Infrastructure" the 24th October 2017. The Workshop was an opportunity for dialogue between different organisations interested in implementation of projects on ecological connectivity and green infrastructure. The Platform prepared a presentation to this workshop that was held by a representative of the Permanent Secretariat.
Next EUSALP AG7 meeting will be in spring 2018.
- Climate change: a new flyer was published by the Alpine Convention on Climate change:
http://www.alpconv.org/en/publications/brochures/Documents/AlpineConventionFolder_Climate_Change_2017_EN.pdf. The flyer also highlights the importance of ecological connectivity in this context. The Platform as already elaborated a position paper on this topic. The proposal was made to identify some expert in the field of ecological connectivity and climate change in each country able to provide additional expertise if needed.

The Alpine Climate Board (ACB), has finalized the stock-taking, there have been 100 questionnaires collected. The ACB thanks the Platform for the contribution. A report has been prepared and received by the Permanent Committee at the Gmunden meeting (October 2017), it also contains a first set of recommendations and is available online (in EN only): "Synthesis report. Stock-taking as basis for defining activities of the Alpine Climate Board". http://www.alpconv.org/en/organization/groups/AlpineClimateBoard/Documents/ACB_stock%20taking_synthesis.pdf

The PF should continue participating in the further process of defining a System of objectives: the Board will get back to the PF with specific questions after its next meeting at the end of January. It is also important that the PF communicates to the ACB about its further activities linked to climate change and possibly also recommendations/wishes for joint action by the Alpine Convention.

03: News from the Alpine Countries

Switzerland

Switzerland appointed a new country representative to the Platform Ecological Network, Ms Céline Michel.

Switzerland is currently working on a large project about the development of a national ecological infrastructure. This project is carried out in cooperation with the Swiss protected areas. First project results of mapping of this ecological infrastructure were presented at the 6th Symposium on Research in Protected Areas in Salzburg by involved Regional Nature Parks.

Austria

In Austria a series of events on the topic of ecological connectivity took place during the last month:

„*Natur verbinden, Barrieren überwinden*“; 18.-19.10.2017, Salzburg. A partner from the ALPBIONET2030 project participated to this event and could distribute the publication "Alpine Nature 2030" there.

„Lebensraumvernetzung als Beitrag zur Sicherung der Biodiversität“, Workshop, 17.10.2017, Innsbruck. A representative from the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention participated to this event and gave a presentation about the alpine activities in this field.

France

A transnational project about ecological connectivity is developed between partners in Italy and France (Biodiversa) and has recently been approved. This project should start in March 2018 and last 3 years.

A new publication gives an overview about tools for the implementation of the national green and blue infrastructure: <https://www.afbiodiversite.fr/fr/actualites/cahier-technique-ndeq91-outils-pour-la-mise-en-oeuvre-de-la-trame-verte-et-bleue-tvb>

Germany

A new national publication about green infrastructure in Germany has been published: https://www.bfn.de/fileadmin/BfN/planung/bkgi/Dokumente/BKGI_Broschuere_englisch.pdf

Furthermore the topic of a dramatic reduction of the number and variety of insects has been broadly discussed in Germany during the last month.

Italy

In July 2017 a meeting of the Italian SAPA network took place. At this occasion a new report could be presented: "Developing the potential of the Alpine Protected Areas". This report is available in Italian only so far, a summary should be published in English.

The presidency of the Platform on Mountain forests is currently held by Italy. A closer cooperation should be developed between the SAPA network and the Working Group on Forests of the Alpine Convention.

Project LinkPAs - Linking Networks of Pas to territorial development (2017-2018). This ESPON project aims at building models of governance for different typologies of networks of protected areas (NPAs) to achieve cohesive governance at different levels. Furthermore it will analyse the impact of NPAs on territorial development, and draft recommendations for successful integration of the management of natural resources into sectoral strategies. Finally it should identify how, and to what extent, do NPAs contribute to developing and implementing territorial development strategies related to sector policies (see also presentation).

04: Challenges for the Platform work and activities for the new Mandate

Concerning the next mandate period the proposal was made by France to discuss on how the two working groups, the Platform Ecological Network of the Alpine Convention and the EUSALP AG7, could better work together in order to avoid redundancies. The idea about merging the two groups was brought up.

During the following discussion it was highlighted that the work of the Platform has been and is still very useful. The context of work in the EUSALP strategy is wider than the strict alpine context and both have their particular importance. The EUSALP context is spatially larger and the stakeholders are different (strong involvement of the regions). The EUSALP should be considered as an opportunity for alpine areas and the cooperation with the neighbouring territories.

It was also highlighted that the work carried out in the frame of the Working groups, Platforms and Action Groups contribute to the implementation of the Alpine Convention which is a legally binding contract. All contracting parties have a legal obligation to implement this contract. This implementation is done in particular via the Working groups

and Platforms so far. The Alpine Convention is a contract signed at national level between the member states, the EUSALP Strategy is supported by the regions. Implementation of the Alpine Convention can therefore not take place exclusively via the EUSALP Action groups as they are under the responsibility of the regions.

Therefore it seems that the question is to organise effective work in the Alpine region, not necessarily concentrating the effort on one or the other Working group but on how to best organise the coordination and cooperation between the two institutions.

In any case such a proposal would need a discussion among member states in the frame of the Permanent Committee. The next exceptional meeting of the Permanent Committee in March 2018 could be an occasion to address this question. The final decision about this belongs to the ministers in the Alpine Conference. A proposal on how to design the best possible cooperation between the two groups could be proposed by the Platform at this occasion.

France suggests thinking about what kind of constructive work could be envisaged in the future on the implementation of the protocol that deals with nature protection.

Germany underlines that stopping the work of the Platform is not considerable for Germany. Due to the prolongation of the Austrian presidency, the current mandate is running until 2019 April, which gives time to analyse the consequences of such a decision and evaluate the possibilities for effective cooperation.

Awareness raising about the topic of connectivity has always been one of the issues mentioned in the past mandates. The regions play an important role in this context. They will gain even more importance as large parts of responsibility will be handed over to them on the topic of biodiversity in the frame of the ongoing reforms in France. EUSALP could therefore be a good way in implementing the regions to this topic – it would be a particular challenge for the Platform to better involve the regions in their activities.

05: Project presentations

The PPTs are available on the Platform Intranet page.

Guido Plassmann gave an update about the activities carried out in the ALPBIONET2030 project. The Platform via its chairs is observer to this Alpine Space project. The mid-term conference of the project will take place in June 2018. At this occasion first results of mapping of the Alpine Strategic Connectivity Areas (SACA) in the Alps and in the EUSALP perimeter will be presented and should be discussed with the participants.

Yann Kohler gave an overview about the results of the GreenConnect project. The project report will be published within the BfN Skripten series in 2018.

06: Pilot Regions

Guiseppe Canavese gave an introduction to the activities of the Alpi Marittime Nature Park, in particular also to the close cooperation with the French National Park Mercantour. (see PPT presentation).

07: Any other issues, organizational issues and announcements

The next Platform meeting should take place in spring 2018, the exact date will be determined after consultation of all Platform members.

The Platform thanks the Alpi Marittime Nature Park for their support in the organization of the meeting and their very kind welcome!



TWENTYTH MEETING OF THE PLATFORM „ECOLOGICAL NETWORK“

- ALPINE CONVENTION -

06TH DECEMBER 2018

MUNICH, GERMANY

DRAFT MINUTES

(06.12.2018)

ANNEXES

- 1 Agenda of the Meeting

6th December 2018

20th Platform meeting

Participants: Bettina Hedden-Dunkhorst (Germany), Filippo Favilli (Italy), Andreas Bartel (Austria), Pierre Commenville (France), Yann Kohler

Welcome, Agenda, Time Schedule

Welcome to the participants of the 20th Platform meeting by the Platform chair Mr Pierre COMMENVILLE. The participants also approved the slightly rearranged agenda for the meeting.

Tour de table

The participants of the Platform meeting gave a short overview about recent activities linked to Ecological connectivity in their countries.

Evolutions of the Platform

According to a recent decision of the Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention the Platform Ecological Network as well as several other Platform of the Alpine Convention will be dissolved. The topic of biodiversity will still be important in the Alpine Convention and the creation of a new working form taking over some of the missions of the former Platforms is currently discussed within the Alpine Convention. One option that was raised is the creation of a biodiversity board on the example of the Climate change board.

The participants to the Platform meeting agree about the fact that the Platform has delivered some interesting and important work in the past. They think that the topic and the activities of the Platform should somehow be integrated in the new biodiversity activities of the Alpine Convention.

Main points that seem important to capitalize on:

- Excursions: showing examples of good practice on the ground, mainly linked to the pilot regions
- Ecological connectivity expert network, working also on different (implementation) projects (added value to project development and ..)
- Highlighting the importance of the topic at different levels, the Alpine Convention for example, and linking the topic to other activities of the Alpine Convention
- Network of officially recognised Pilot Regions for Ecological Connectivity
- Publication of the book "Alpine Nature 2030" in 2016
- PLACE report about ecological connectivity and spatial planning

In order to make sure that these achievements of the Platform will serve the future work of the Alpine Convention the Platform will propose to contribute to the definition of the missions and tasks of the new alpine biodiversity board. The Platform will also foster the cooperation of its members with the EUSALP AG7 working group treating about the topic of connectivity too.

Some concrete suggestions to the biodiversity board would be:

- Keep the existing Pilot Regions on ecological connectivity and further develop it: these regions are important actors on the ground. Continue involve the Pilot Regions in the biodiversity board – include the members in the distribution list and offer them an observer status, encourage also cooperation with other AC activities for example on soil protection, landscapes, biodiversity

Themes (out of the Platform and about new topics):

- Landscape permeability (urban sprawling and land consumption; quality of land use)
- Network of protected areas (role of the managing team of PA)
- Eco-tourism, Valorization aspects (linked to the valorizing activities in the multi annual work program)
- Restoration techniques (green bridges, underpasses), also linked to the excursions done
- Pollination
- Water/blue corridors
- Role of land use on connectivity (keeping mountain agriculture, design it in a sustainable way)
- Foster cross-cutting effects with green economy

A demand concerning the possibility to contribute to the drafting of the mission statement for this biodiversity board will be addressed to the presidency of the Alpine Convention by the Platform chairs.

Alpine Conference

Platform chairs should participate to the next Alpine Conference. The PLACE report should be presented and distributed at this occasion. Platform chairs will ask for the possibility to organize a side event during the conference to promote the report.



20th Meeting of the Platform “Ecological Network” of the Alpine Convention in Munich, Germany

Venue 06th and 07th December 2018

Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz
Rosenkavalierplatz 2,
81925 München

Agenda

The meeting will be held in English.

06.12.2018	Workshop on spatial planning Report	
9h30	Morning session: presentation of the draft report <i>The session will be facilitated by Marianne Badura, blue!</i>	
12h30	LUNCH	
13h30	Afternoon session: work on policy recommendations and final products <i>The session will be facilitated by Marianne Badura, blue!</i>	
17h30	END	
19h30	Common dinner	

07.12.2018	20th Platform Meeting	
09h00	01: Welcome by the Platform Chair	<i>Platform chair</i>

9h15	02: Latest activities in the frame of the Platform, Alpine Convention and EUSALP AG7	<i>Platform chair Platform coordinator Giulia Gaggia</i>
10h00	03: Tour de table of country representatives (update on recent national activities)	<i>Country representatives</i>
10h30	Coffee	
10h50	04: Future evolution of the Platform	<i>Platform Chair</i>
11h45	05: Project insides - ALPBIONET2030 - LOS_DAMA	<i>Project Partners</i>
12h30	07: Any other issues, organizational issues and announcements	<i>Platform chair</i>
13h00	Summary of the day and End	

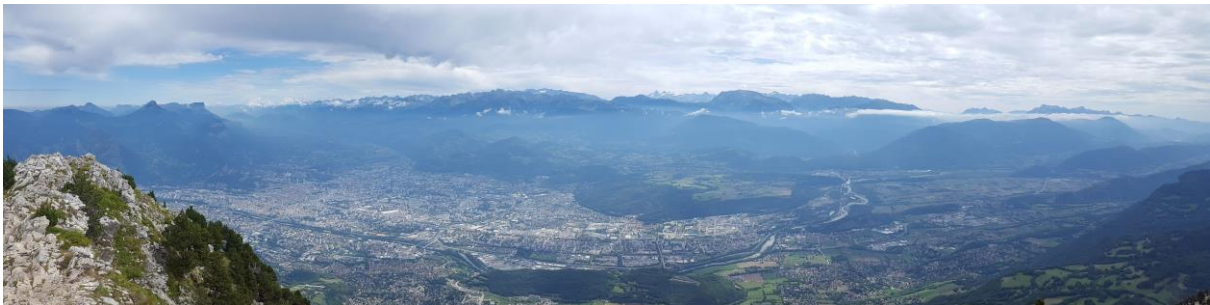


ALPINE CONVENTION

PLATFORM ECOLOGICAL NETWORK OF THE ALPINE CONVENTION

**PLACE STUDY
SPATIAL PLANNING & ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY
IN THE ALPINE CONTEXT**

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS



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MARCH 2019

Study produced by the French National Institute for Environmental and Agricultural Science and Research (IRSTEA) with contribution from the Platform Ecological Network.

SPATIAL PLANNING & ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY IN THE ALPINE CONTEXT

The Platform Ecological Network of the Alpine Convention was mandated in 2016 by the XIV Alpine Conference in Grassau (D) with the elaboration of a report about the consideration of ecological connectivity aspects in spatial planning in the alpine countries. The PLACE report (Spatial Planning & Ecological Connectivity in the Alpine Context) was realized by the French National Institute for Environmental and Agricultural Science and Research (IRSTEA) with inputs from the members of the Platform Ecological Network. The report could not be entirely finalized for the XV Alpine Conference in Innsbruck (AU). The present document presents and overview about the report content and the main findings. Subject to a decision of the Alpine Conference, it is envisaged that the final version of this report will be presented to the 68th Permanent Committee.

1. AIMS OF THE STUDY

A serious decline in biodiversity (ecosystems, species and genetic diversity) has been observed worldwide and has gained in political and scientific interest since the Rio Conference in 1992. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (2017) estimates that more than 26,500 species, representing 27% of all assessed species, are threatened with extinction globally. At European level (Pan-Europe and European Union), the same trends have been noticed with 10,810 species reported in the European Red List. The degradation and fragmentation of landscapes, particularly impacted by urban sprawl, transport infrastructures as well as agricultural intensification, are often seen as major drivers for the loss of this biodiversity.

In the early 1990s, the concepts of ecological connectivity and ecological network gained momentum and developed into a cornerstone of different European nature conservation policies. The basic idea is that ecological dynamics have to be apprehended not only within protected areas but in the entire landscape. Moreover, restoring and maintaining ecological connectivity have been considered as crucial objectives in the context of land management and spatial/landscape planning policies at European, national and regional levels. Yet, the method of planning and implementing ecological networks differs between countries and between regions, in a context of a growing questioning of the current ecological functionality ensured by the projected infrastructures. This takes a specific form in the Alpine context, given that the landscape fragmentation process expresses itself quite differently for geographical reasons.

Studies on ecological connectivity are quite numerous. However, less attention has been given to the way the issue is addressed in spatial planning, although this field of intervention is often seen as important for the successful implementation of ecological networks. This fact encouraged the Platform “Ecological Network” of the Alpine Convention to focus on this topic in this PLACE report, giving a general overview about the situation in the alpine territory and analysing more in depth a series of case studies.

2. SPATIAL PLANNING SYSTEMS AND ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY IN THE DIFFERENT NATIONAL CONTEXTS

NATIONAL SPATIAL PLANNING SYSTEMS AND ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY

Drivers of convergence in the fields of spatial planning and development have been observed in Europe over the last three decades. The adoption of the European Spatial Development Perspective (1999) and the Territorial Agenda (2007) provided the European Union with a non-binding framework aimed at guiding spatially significant policymaking at different spatial scales. However, differences can still be observed between spatial planning systems, primarily due to varying organizational architectures and sets of legally established norms (objectives, tools, procedures, etc.) according to which spatial planning is implemented in each country. Therefore, spatial planning systems and how they consider ecological connectivity/networks were investigated and compared for 6 Alpine countries: Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, and Switzerland.

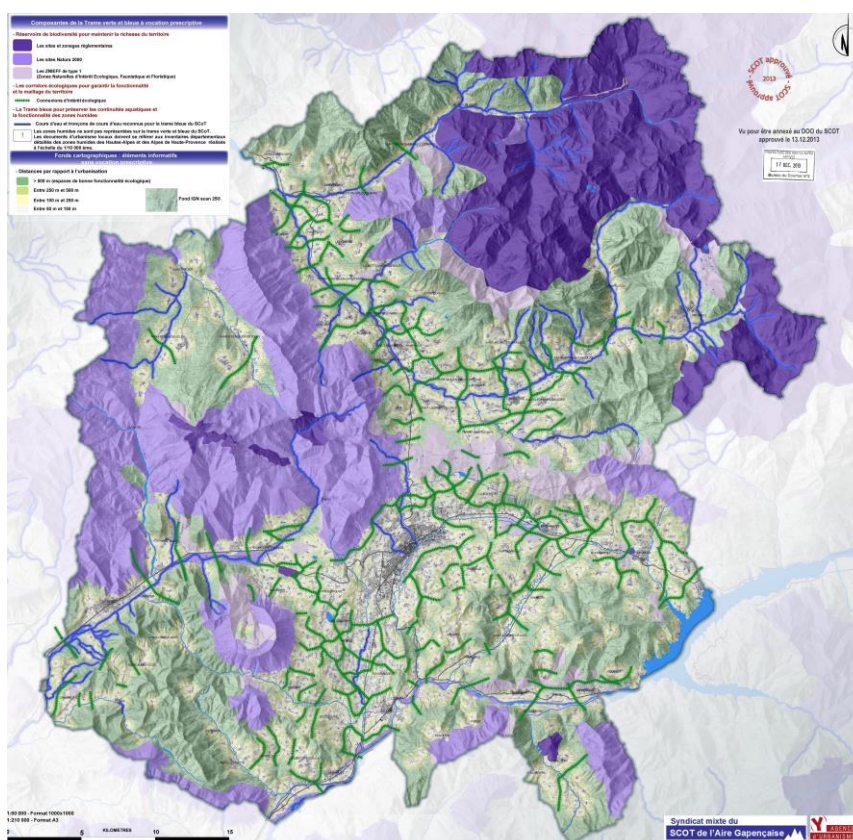


Figure 1: Map of the Green and Blue Infrastructure planned for the 2013 Scheme for Coherent Territorial Development (Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale) of the Greater Gap Area. It maps the biodiversity reservoirs made of areas covered by regulatory protections (dark violet patches), natura 2000 sites (medium violet patches) areas covered by inventories of natural resources (light violet patches), as well as the connections of ecological interest (green and blue links). Distance to human settlements are also specified as an additional and non-binding information: > 500 m (dark green patches), 250-500 m (light green patches), 100-250 m (pastel yellow patches).

Source: Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale de l'Aire Gapeçaise (Spatial Scheme for Coherent Territorial Development of the Greater Gap Area), approved in 2013, prepared by the Agence d'Urbanisme de la Région Grenobloise (Urban Planning Office of the Greater Grenoble Area).

A COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW ON THE ALPINE SCALE

Based on the material collected in the six different countries (legislative, technical implementation, and the literature as well as interviews), the analysis shows a large diversity of ways in which the issue of ecological connectivity/networks has been put on the agenda of spatial planning and how it is addressed in the different national contexts. Hence it is difficult to establish a typology of approaches based on the selected items, although some factors such as a certain academic and professional tradition in landscape ecology (i.e. Germany, Switzerland) or the distribution of planning responsibilities between different levels can be seen as influential factors for some items. Additionally, it should be highlighted that there is no explicit legal obligation to deal with ecological connectivity or to develop ecological networks in spatial planning at the national/federal level in every country. Explicit obligations can be found in only three countries (i.e. France, Germany, and Slovenia). In the absence of obligation at the national/federal level (i.e. Austria, Italy, and Switzerland), significant variations may be observed between regions in terms of legal constraints regarding ecological connectivity/networks being considered in spatial planning.

3. CONSIDERATIONS FOR ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY IN SPATIAL PLANNING PRACTICES – A CASE STUDY APPROACH

Spatial planning activities result both from legal and administrative fundamentals as well as from informal institutions, approaches and processes. In other words, the same spatial planning system can lead to a wide variety of practices on the ground. Concepts can be understood differently and instruments are applied in various ways. Different innovation and learning potentials can also be observed on the ground, contributing to diverse levels of the development.

Attention is therefore paid in this part to the consideration given to ecological connectivity in the very planning processes and documents by means of a case study analysis. The latter was carried out in six case-studies located in or around the Alpine Convention area. The case studies are not intended to be representative of the whole variety or even necessarily exemplary, but they reflect the diversity of approaches and methods, as well as the common and distinct challenges faced in practice.

Case study Regional Planning Area	Focus Local Planning Area	Country
Canton of Geneva	Vandœuvres Municipality	CH
Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region	Muzzana del Turgnano Municipality	IT
Greater Gap Area	Gap Municipality	FR
Greater Grenoble Area	Le Cheylas Municipality	FR

Orobie Bergamasche and Altopiano Valsassina - Alpine Valleys	Barzio Municipality	IT
Southern District of the Berchtesgadener Land	<i>Municipalities of the planning area</i>	DE

In each case study, spatial/urban planning documents were collected and analysed. In addition, semi-directive interviews were conducted with planners (from city planning offices, private consulting firms, etc.), ecological experts (environmentalists, landscape planners, etc.) and elected representatives (mayors, deputy mayors, etc.) directly involved in the spatial planning processes. This material was then exploited to depict and examine the ways in which ecological connectivity has been addressed in spatial planning practices at supralocal and local levels in the different case studies.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

Based on the scientific, legislative and technical literature as well as on the interview material and planning documents collected on the different case studies, 10 lessons were learned. They reflect the potential and challenges involved as to how ecological connectivity can be integrated into special planning.

01. Different legal support for ecological connectivity in spatial planning – There is not always a legal obligation to protect or restore ecological connectivity, to develop and implement an ecological network supported through spatial planning in the different countries. However, the adopted or currently developed national biodiversity strategies suggests that national legislations could become more constraining in some countries in the years to come.

02. The difficulty in addressing the issue of ecological connectivity in its full complexity – Ecological connectivity includes both a structural dimension (the configuration of landscape and habitat patches that may facilitate or obstruct the movement of organisms) and a functional dimension (the way species populations, individuals or genes move and respond to the landscape). The concept of ecological connectivity as understood in spatial planning practices appears to be largely confined to a structural dimension.

03. The challenge of strengthening coherence between planning scales and adjacent areas – The issue of ecological connectivity calls for a planning action that considers the different spatial scales and overlapping administrative boundaries. However, difficulties can be frequently observed when dealing with ecological connectivity across scales and borders: challenges in harmonizing/matching methodologies and databases, insufficient structuring of the supramunicipal planning scale, etc.

04. The challenge of producing and managing habitats/species data – Inventories have often been developed with a view to assessing wildlife stocks, and possibly their evolution, rather than ecological functions of the landscape. Often, systematic methods and recurring efforts for counting and mapping species on the long term are missing, particularly outside protected areas. There is also a need to improve the adequacy between data collection/management processes and the needs

expressed by ecologists and planners to enhance their capacity to design relevant ecological networks and assess their effectiveness.

05. The challenge of shaping a well-structured and accessible ecological expertise – The integration of ecological expertise in spatial planning processes often remains a challenge. It requires specific abilities to select and adapt the necessary information in order to make it understandable and usable by various stakeholders involved. The case studies suggest that the direct inclusion of ecological expertise within spatial/urban planning departments/offices as well as common arenas and other mechanisms fostering collaboration provide a real added value.

06. The challenge of developing and taking advantage of a shared experience – Spatial planning cannot be reduced to a one-shot process and a decontextualized field of action. The succession of programs, initiatives and other experiences in favor of ecological connectivity or, more broadly speaking, biodiversity, have often had a positive influence on the attention paid to biodiversity in planning processes.

07. The designing process and the meaning of maps – The design process and graphical representations of ecological networks in planning documents imply a variety of issues. The projection often results from difficult compromises between various stakeholders and between different planning goals. The chosen delineations and icons may also reflect different understandings of a same concept (e.g. ecological corridors). Moreover, the scale and the graphic resolution of the ecological network map may imply legal consequences in some countries.

08. The challenge of ensuring long-term attention to ecological connectivity in spatial planning – Planning processes are frequently viewed as privileged frameworks for leading local or regional communities to pay attention to specific issues. However, there is a recurring risk of losing the benefits that result from efforts to bring attention to the issue of biodiversity and ecological connectivity amongst various stakeholders involved, as a result of e.g. turnover rates amongst planners, renewal of political representatives after elections, etc.. Consequently, it may be relevant to think about planning timelines that boost long-term attention. Mid-term monitoring operations may be viewed as key events and opportunities to maintain long-term attention to ecological connectivity in spatial planning.

09. Multifunctionality as a source of opportunities and drawbacks – The recognition of the multifunctional quality of specific landscapes and areas can contribute to justifying the integration of aspects of ecological connectivity into spatial planning. However, possible detrimental effects, such as traffic and disturbances related to human presence, should not be neglected. The attribution of a multifunctional quality to specific areas in spatial plans can also raise concerns among stakeholders (farmers, land owners, residents, etc.) about disturbances in the surroundings due to new anthropogenic uses.

10. An Alpine way to ecological connectivity? – Geographical specificities (i.e. urbanization in the valleys, intensified land competition and landscape fragmentation, etc.) imply particular challenges that have to be addressed in spatial planning processes. However, the Alpine Convention perimeter includes a large number of protected areas (national parks, regional nature parks, etc.) and associated competences regarding biodiversity management. Although these specific resources are sometimes directly involved in spatial planning processes, contributing to the development of methodologies for designing ecological networks, more synergies could be achieved.