

**MANDATE OF THE
Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development
Working Group
FOR THE PERIOD 2025-2026
(BETWEEN THE XVIII AND XIX MEETINGS OF THE ALPINE
CONFERENCE)**

1. Introductory remarks

Importance of the issues selected and relevance of the proposed way to tackle them, including reference to the Alpine Convention and its Protocols and further strategic documents

The mandate for the period 2025-2026 of the Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development Working Group (SPSD WG) focusses on three thematic fields: a continuation of the process towards an Alpine Spatial Development Perspective, a continued contribution to the Climate Action Plan 2.0 on topics in the sphere of spatial planning and development as well as a territorial focus on border regions in the Alps and their governance structures.

The Alpine Spatial Development Perspective (formerly titled Alpine Spatial Planning Perspective) builds on the processes initiated during the previous mandate of the Working Group, with a focus on continuity and reflection. Its main objective is to highlight the spatial dimension of sustainable development and promote cross-sectoral and cross-border perspectives in spatial development. A key reference point is the Protocol on Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development, which emphasises the importance of cross-border cooperation to achieve harmonious and sustainable development across the Alpine region. This is further reinforced by the Territorial Agenda 2030, which advocates for "Integration beyond borders". Specifically, it calls for actions that embed stable cross-border, transnational, and interregional cooperation into macro-regional, national, regional, and local development strategies, while also supporting the creation of new strategic documents where necessary. In addition, the ESPON InTerAlp project and its results can be a relevant reference point.

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2.0 is at the core of the climate action priority of the Multi-Annual Work Programme (MAP) 2023-2030. The Working Group places a specific emphasis on the Implementation Pathways, particularly those outlined in the spatial planning pathway IP_SP1. Climate action aligns with the Territorial Agenda 2030, which prioritises "A Green Europe," aiming for climate-neutrality in regions and towns. Additionally, the outcomes and follow-up actions of the Tenth Report on the State of the Alps on Quality of Life in the Alps (RSA 10) are vital components of this climate agenda, ensuring that the progress made in earlier initiatives is maintained and built upon.

In the area of cross-border governance, the Territorial Agenda 2030's priority on "Integration across borders", as part of the objective for "A Just Europe," is a key focus. This priority includes actions that embed stable cross-border cooperation into regional and local development strategies while promoting co-development and the involvement of citizens across borders. Findings from the assessment study on cross-border cooperation in spatial planning carried out in the mandate 2021-2022 highlight the importance of governance that facilitates cooperation between different sectors and spatial levels, particularly at the local cross-border level. Shared

approaches to territorial planning are essential in these areas. The recommendations of RSA 10 address model approaches for governance that enhance collaboration between urban and rural territories and promote spatial integration in transition areas, with a special focus on cross-border regions. The need for soft cooperation in functional areas, especially across borders, remains a critical concern, with the InTerAlp project again playing a significant role in shaping these governance frameworks.

2. Planned topics and activities

Topic No. 1: Alpine Spatial Development Perspective	
Topic outline and objective until the XIX Alpine Conference (knowledge sharing, policy setting etc.)	
Alpine Spatial Development Perspective (ASDP): Continue ongoing work on the Alpine Spatial Development Perspective, deepen the analytical understanding and further concretise the spatial perspectives	
Envisaged activities (desk research, collection of good practices, workshop etc.)	
<i>Description</i>	<i>Tentative timeline</i>
a. Thematic analyses based on territorial and sectoral indicators, development of objectives and visions	until Q2/2026
b. Cartographic processing	until Q2/2026
c. Participation and feed-back-loops	until Q2/2026
d. Concretisation of political involvement, steps, and consensus building towards Alpine Conference(s)	until Q4/2025
Expected outputs (statement, report, brochure, exhibition etc.)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Territorial and sectoral results and reflections on sustainable spatial development - Mapping and developing spatial vision: Cartographic representation - Broad acceptance of ASDP results after feedback-loops and participatory elements - Concretised political process towards an Alpine spatial development perspective. 	
Potential follow-up after the XIX Alpine Conference	
Continuation and finalisation of the ASDP.	

Topic No. 2: CAP 2.0 Implementation Pathway IP_SP1

Topic outline and objective until the XIX Alpine Conference	
Follow up to the CAP 2.0 and the implementation steps foreseen in IP_SP1 "Spatial Planning for Climate Action" in coordination with the Alpine Climate Board (ACB)	
Envisaged activities (desk research, collection of good practices, workshop etc.)	
<i>Description</i>	<i>Tentative timeline</i>
a. IP_SP1_Step 2 Exchange and dissemination of information and awareness raising on issues including inner-urban development, settlement development, architectural qualities of density	until Q2/2026
b. IP_SP1_Step 5 Recommendations for the biggest challenges, focussing on major challenges being perceived in several Alpine countries and identified in the process of IP_SP1_Step 3	until Q3/2025
c. IP_SP1_Step 3: Follow-up activities regarding the previous mandates' outputs on land-saving targets and challenges (e.g. data compilation)	until Q4/2025
d. Related to Activity b) linking follow-up activities arising from RSA 10, e.g. its Recommendation R 3 "Equitable and just net-zero land take", screening and compiling approaches and instruments to combat land take/achieve circular land use while simultaneously benefiting land-use related social aspects (e.g. access to affordable housing, attractive public spaces)	until Q2/2026
e. Impulses for national soil protection and spatial planning coaching events together with the Soil Protection Working Group, based on the activities during the last two mandate phases	until Q2/2026
Expected outputs (report, brochure, exhibition etc.)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step 2: Information and awareness raising activities (e.g. best-practice collection, Online-seminar etc.) - Step 5: Trans-Alpine, transferable recommendations for selected topics - Compilation of approaches/instruments to reconcile land-saving efforts with land-use related social aspects 	
Potential follow-up after the XIX Alpine Conference	
Monitoring of activities and reflecting progress of IP_SP1 in regard to the upcoming 2030 intermediate land take targets	

Topic No. 3: Promotion of cross-border governance schemes	
Topic outline and objective until the XIX Alpine Conference	
Promotion of cross-border governance schemes: The 2021-2022 mandate's assessment study has identified cross-border governance structures as a viable approach to address spatial processes with a cross-border relevance. The SPSD WG promotes these approaches through appropriate formats and events (e.g. facilitating an exchange of experience among interested Alpine regions on successful structures, topics of common interest (e.g. commuting, housing, labour market, SGI, ecological connectivity, recreation))	
Envisaged activities (desk research, collection of good practices, workshop etc.)	
<i>Description</i>	<i>Tentative timeline</i>
a. Activities to promote cross-border governance	until Q3/2026
Expected outputs (report, brochure, exhibition etc.)	
- Report/reference material of exchanges	
Potential follow-up after the XIX Alpine Conference	

3. TWB meetings schedule

Tentative dates and settings of meetings (month or quarter, online/in presence)
The Working Group plans 2-3 regular meetings per year with additional meetings if necessary. Meetings shall be organised physical or virtual as appropriate, with at least one meeting annually being held in presence.

4. Cooperation

Planned cooperation with other Alpine Convention bodies and further relevant partners and processes, and the expected benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue cooperation with other Thematic Working Bodies of the Alpine Convention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impulses for national soil protection and spatial planning coaching events together with the Soil Protection Working Group, based on the activities during the last two mandate phases, ○ with the ACB on CAP 2.0 implementation pathways ○ cooperate with the ABB on its upcoming Biodiversity Action Plan, in particular in the preparation of a workshop on how the Alpine Convention can support the inclusion of Alpine ecological connectivity into spatial planning documents

(joint workshop with ABB, EUSALP AG7, Large Carnivores, Wild Ungulates and Society WG WISO, Transport WG)

- continue the exchange with the Transport Working Group. Especially following up on the joint meeting between the Transport and the Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development (SPSD) Working Groups in September 2023, an exchange on the Alpine Spatial Development Perspective is envisioned.
- Pursuing thematic cooperation with selected EUSALP Action Groups (in particular 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 9) as well as the Austria & Liechtenstein Presidency of EUSALP 2025 on topics of joint interest, in particular in connection to the Alpine Spatial Development Perspective
- Continue cooperation with the AlpPlan network of spatial planners, incl. general exchange and in particular exchange on the Alpine Spatial Development Perspective
- Exchange with the Alpine Space Programme and its projects in the field of spatial planning and other bodies of cross-border Interreg-Programmes e.g. to share and use existing project results and expertise.

5. Communication

Communication objectives, targets and respective planned measures

- Dissemination of the results by each member within national administrations, different planning levels and other forms of public relations.
- Systematic communication activities of the Working Group using existing communication formats (Alpine Convention website) and via related networks,
- Outreach activities to related processes and identification of future cooperation opportunities, including other Alpine Convention TWB and events, structural funds programmes, EU cooperation projects in relation to spatial development (e.g. ERDF or CAP) and/or Territorial Agenda 2030 related actions.

6. Link to the Multi-Annual Work Programme 2023-2030 of the Alpine Conference

Contribution of the activities to some or all of the priority areas of the MAP 2023-2030 (interlinkages, synergies, and trade-offs with the specific objectives below)

MAP Priority area 1 – Biodiversity and ecosystems: *Contribute to the achievement of the European and international objectives to protect, preserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystems in the Alps; Strengthen the Alpine Convention's own biodiversity and ecosystem-related activities and integrate the topic into the work of all its bodies*

The Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development Working Group will continue to strengthen sustainable spatial planning and development and support the Contracting Parties integrating sectoral activities and policies through its cross-sectoral and holistic approach and by including different interest groups and stakeholders at different spatial levels.

The mandate is contributing to priority area 1 (conserving and valuing Alpine biodiversity and ecosystems) by fostering spatial connectivity of ecosystems and habitats as well as green infrastructure and building on its previous activities to link sustainable spatial planning and prudent use of soils, which are crucial for the conservation and restoration of biodiversity in the

Alps. In its activities related to priority area 1, the WG seeks a cooperation with the ABB in the preparation of the Biodiversity Action Plan.

MAP Priority area 2 – Climate action: *Implement the Climate Action Plan 2.0 on the way to reach climate-neutral and climate-resilient Alps by 2050; Pursue cross-sectoral activities and look for cooperation beyond the environmental and climate sector*

The mandate addresses area 2 (taking ambitious climate action) in the form of its continued activities on concrete implementation pathways of the Climate Action Plan 2.0 in the field of spatial planning. The WG continues to follow a cross-sectoral approach through continued thematic cooperation with other TWBs like the Soil Protection WG and Transport WG.

MAP Priority area 3 – Quality of life: *Further the Alpine Convention's knowledge on the quality of life of people in the Alps, acknowledging and respecting territorial and individual differences; Promote the inclusion of quality-of-life measures in public policy-making processes at all territorial levels*

The mandate also contributes to priority area 3 (enabling a good quality of life for the people in the Alps) through its work. In addressing the social dimension of land-saving approaches, the mandate also picks up recommendations and challenges outlined in the RSA 10. Efficient and climate-sensitive spatial structures as pursued by the ASDP, activities related to the CAP 2.0 and cross-border governance schemes are beneficial for the quality of life of Alpine citizens.

7. Chair

The Chair will be held by Germany.