The ECONNECT project

Aims and activities, with a special focus on large carnivores and wild ungulates
- EU Alpine Space, Budget 3.2 mio Euro (public funding)
- September 08 - August 2011
- 16 partners plus many co-partners:

**Protected areas**
- Gesäuse (A)
- Berchtesgaden/Salzburg (D)
- Isère (F)
- Alpi Marittima (I)
- Hohe Tauern (A)
- Schweizer NP (CH)
- Task Force (International)

**Observers**
- ISCAR
- Platform/BfN
- Logarska Dolina

**Authorities**
- Umweltbundesamt (A)
- Environment Ministry (I)
- Valle d’Aosta (I)
- Conseil général de l’Isère (F)

**Science**
- FIWI, Lead partner (A)
- EURAC (I)
- Uni Innsbruck (A)
- Cemagref (F)

**NGOs**
- CIPRA (FL)
- WWF (I)
Aims and major activities

- Background: initiated by ALPARC, CIPRA, ISCAR and WWF (Ecological Continuum Initiative)
- Aim: „Restoring the web of life“: protect Alps wide biodiversity by overcoming habitat fragmentation → contribution to Nature Protection Protocol AC art. 12
- Focus: implementation in 7 pilot regions
- Other activities: harmonisation of geographical data, analysis and mapping of physical and legal barriers and migration corridors, knowledge transfer, raise awareness
• Visualizing habitats and modelling barriers and corridors on an Alps-wide level
  - Selected species: Red deer, Black grouse, Fish otter, Bullhead (Cottus gobio), Wolf, Brown Bear, Lynx, Griffon vulture (Gyps fulvus)
  - Functional landscape connectivity corridor models
  - Modelling method selected (habitat distribution)
  - Collection of observation records of indicator species (modelling test run: black grouse), need for expert data
  - Quality of modelling results depends directly on quality and number of data (observation records)
  - Responsible project partner: Umweltbundesamt (A)
• Mapping of priority connectivity areas (Alps wide and pilot region level):
  - Areas with high biodiversity values (PCA, Natura 2000, etc.)
  - Riverine systems as connectivity elements of the wider landscape
  - Densely populated low altitude areas, roads...
  - High risk areas/areas with high pressure/ through intensive agriculture, tourism, energy
  - Infrastructures
  - Border areas of the existing protected areas
  - Areas linked to large scale European networks such as PEEN, Alpine-Carpathian network, IBAs etc.
  - Large scale forest areas
  - Data deficiencies
  - Special local constraints areas
  - Responsible project partner for mapping: EURAC (I)
• Priority setting for each pilot region
• Choose pilot region specific target species
• Continuum Suitability Indices: measure connectivity potential and barriers (Alps wide and in pilot regions)
• 14 indices: ecological measures, restoration, fragmentation by infrastructure, environmental protection, pollution, population, land use, urbanisation, economy, public opinion (initiatives...)
• Responsible partners for indices: ALPARC, Swiss National Park
The seven ECONNECT pilot regions

- Berchtesgaden / Salzburg
- Northern limestone Alps
- Hohe Tauern
- Rhaetian triangle
- Monte Rosa
- Alpi Marittima / Mercantour
- Isère
- Schweiz

Innsbruck, 2.2.2010
2nd meeting of the Platform WISO, Aurelia Ullrich, CIPRA
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ECONNECT’s strengths

- Transalpine approach
- Adaptation to climate change
- Strong cooperation with Alpine Convention and with local stakeholders
- Strengthen cooperation between institutions for implementing ecological networks
- Approved and tested methodological approach, promotion of this procedure
- Knowledge about gaps and barriers to ecological connectivity
More information:

www.econnectproject.eu

and

• Detailed methodologic working documents
• Personal contacts