

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 Marittime (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:

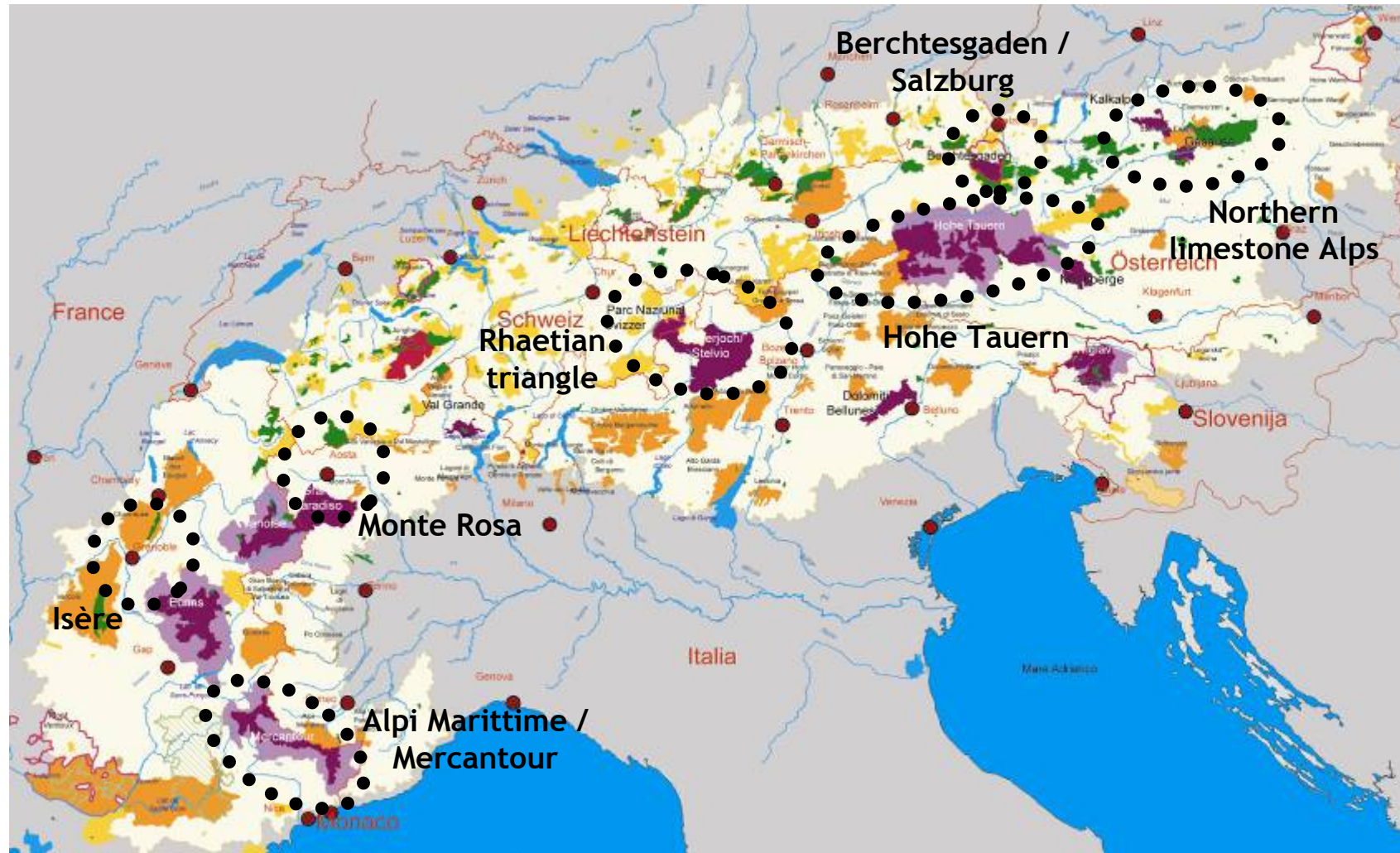
- CIPRA (FL)
- WWF (I)

- 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 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



- 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