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Workplan 2023-2025

Action Group 5 – Connectivity and accessibility

Interreg
Alpine Space



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mountain areas lack connectivity and services compared to more populated areas. The AG5 is committed to bringing the benefits of digitisation to rural and mountain areas, through the dissemination of the Smart Villages approach, dissemination of good practices in the Alpine Space and synergy with other actions. In parallel, the AG5 is emphasising the importance of transnational connectivity in remote areas and the relevance of data through studies that have shown that there is still room for improvement. All results of these activities found their place in the Digital Alps Conference, one of the main events of the Alpine Macro-Regional Strategy which brings together all initiatives and projects dealing with digitalization in the Alps and unleash the potentials of digitalization.

Starting from the policy statements of the Annal Forum 2022, which defined the digitalisation of territories as one of the five relevant topics for the General Assembly, the AG5 has identified the **Digital transition of Alpine territories** as its main priority for 2023-2025. The work of the AG5 will be structured along thematic focus areas. These focus areas are:

- **Digital Transformation of Rural and Mountain Territories.** To countering depopulation, the AG5 aims to mainstream the Smart Villages approach through communication, exchange of good practice, and capacity building actions via the **Smart Alps network**, a network of Smart and Sustainable villages in the Alps, evolving the Smart Villages approach into a Smart and Sustainable Communities approach, including in the SV approach the valorisation of local cultural heritage and environmental sustainability. They will also **test the potential of digitalisation** in test areas and explore how **remote working** can help retain young people in rural areas.
- **Future-proof digital infrastructures.** The AG5 will continue to develop this priority, enabling the potentials of rural areas communicating the importance of digital infrastructures for remote areas such as the relevance of **digital infrastructure** for growth, sustainability, and competitiveness of the Alpine region. AG5 wants to **promote a territorial ecosystem approach** with data centres in mountainous areas and advocating for a **network of rural DIHs**.
- **Relevance of data in mountain economy.** The AG5 also aims to encourage the **adoption of Open Data** in the Alpine Space and develop new projects to demonstrate the value of the data and related new technologies (AI, Big Data etc.) in the adaptation to climate change and scarce natural resources (water management).

In addition, through its cross-cutting initiatives as a three main line of intervention, the AG5 wants to highlight **how digitalisation can contribute to people, environment, and economy**, promoting digitalisation for local communities and economic players in the Alpine Region.

All the AG5 initiatives will be spread through the Digital Alps Conference every year in a different alpine country. This will allow to get in touch with more key stakeholders and to increase the visibility.

TARGETS AND COMPOSITION

1. Mission statement of the Action Group

AG5 is striving for the digitalisation of the Alps, working to improve the e-connectivity and the accessibility to services of general interest in the Alpine Area.

Therefore, AG5:

1. constitutes **the focal point for discussion on the potentials of digitalization** in the Alpine area and brings together existing and new strategies and projects on digitalization in a strategic, alpine-wide approach;
2. gives a **strategic dimension to the digital transformation of rural and mountain territories** with new initiatives, transferable models and their implementation on the policy level and leads an alpine wide discussion on the opportunities offered by the digitalization of the Alps;
3. gives a **strategic dimension to the relevance of digital infrastructures** for growth, sustainability and competitiveness of the Alpine region;
4. gives a **strategic dimension to the relevance of data** in the Alps, becoming a key economic and environmental resource in our mountain societies;
5. encourages the **exchange of experiences in the EUSALP-perimeter** through amongst others the cooperation with various Alpine Space Programme projects, cross-border cooperation projects and stakeholders' networks at European and Alpine level;
6. coordinates its work with the other Action Groups of EUSALP to develop **common technological solutions based on ICT** for joint initiatives.

AG5 Motto:

AG5 wants to make the Alps the forerunners of digitalization in Europe

2. Composition and sub-groups

AG5 itself is composed of:

- Carlo Vigna, Leader of AG5, Valle d'Aosta Autonomous Region (IT)
- Members from Ministry for Environment and Agriculture (IT)
- Member from Ministry of Public Administration (SLO)
- Member from Office of Economic Affairs (LI) (pending replacement)
- Member from Office of the Styrian Provincial Government (AT) (pending replacement)
- Member from Bavarian State Ministry of Finance, Regional Development and Home Affairs (DE) (pending replacement)
- Members from Trentino Digitale (IT)

- Member from Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (IT)
- Members from Association Adrêts (FR)
- Member from ITC Cluster (SLO)
- Member from ANCI Liguria (IT)
- Members from ERSAF (IT)
- Observer from Alpine Space Programme (EU)
- Observer from DG REGIO (EU)
- Observers from DG CNECT (EU)

The work in AG5 during the period 2023 – 2025 will be focused on the main topic of **Digital Transformation of rural and mountain territories** of the Alps. The main events (i.e. the DAC - Digital Alps Conference) and general policy documents are jointly discussed by AG5 Leader with members and receive input from the focal points.

From the period 2020 – 2022, AG5 has changed its working methods by structuring itself in a more flexible organization, focused on Areas of Interest and with a wider stakeholder involvement. This organization will be repropose and based on “focal points”, within a common coordination at the AG5 level, and it will allow to interact with an increased number of networks of stakeholders who can bring issues and solutions within the AG5.

The focal points, that are the main point of reference for networking and activities coordination on a AG5 specific priority, are:

- **Digital Transformation of Rural and Mountain Territories**, led by Autonomous Region of Valle d’Aosta. Building on the Smart Villages experience, this focal point will go beyond this successful approach by providing communities with methodologies and tools for digital transformation, also through the results that the AG5 Flagship initiative will produce.
- **Future-proof digital infrastructures**, led by Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia. It is dealing with all aspects concerning strategies about digital infrastructures and general opportunities/issues of digitalisation (i.e. Cross-border connectivity, Data infrastructures and Distributed facilities).
- **Relevance of data in mountain economy**, led by ITC - Innovation Technology Cluster (SLO). This focal point will explore the potential of open data, AI and new technologies for the Alpine economy and environment.

AG5 in numbers:

- 1 leader
- 14 members
- 3 focal points on :
 - Digital Transformation of Rural and Mountain Territories
 - Future-proof Digital Infrastructures
 - Relevance of Data in Mountain Economy

3. Involvement of the stakeholders

The AG5 wants to involve as many stakeholders as possible in its activities. For this reason, it decided to change its internal organisation and identify focal points to get in touch with networks of stakeholders outside AG5. This organisation makes it possible to exchange ideas and possible project initiatives with a larger number of stakeholders than in the past.

To reach as many stakeholders as possible, AG5 will be supported by the TSS by the Stakeholder Engagement Plan that will be developed.

The main target groups that the AG5 aims to reach are:

- Local public authorities: to share regularly relevant information for knowledge implementation and exchange, to raise awareness of its role in the smart transition, to discover and test digital tools, to test innovative and smart solutions, to actively participate in the network of smart Alpine communities, to participate to the DAC.
- Regional and national public authorities: to share regularly relevant information for knowledge implementation and exchange, to discover and test digital tools, to test innovative and smart solutions, to develop new policies on smart transition, to stimulate the participation of local authority and citizens in the network of smart Alpine communities, to strengthen relations with EUSALP and other European strategies dedicated to rural areas, to participate to the DAC.

SMEs: to share regularly relevant information for knowledge implementation and exchange, to invite and cooperate in existing and new tools, to inform about the activities in the pilot areas and to test innovative and smart solutions, to participate to the DAC.

- Higher education and research and Education institutions: to share regularly relevant information for knowledge implementation and exchange, to invite and cooperate in existing and new tools, to inform about the activities in the pilot areas and to test innovative and smart solutions, to participate to the DAC.
- Infrastructure and (public) Service Provider: to invite and cooperate in existing and new tools and to test innovative and smart solutions in test areas, to participate to the DAC.
- Interest groups. Incl. NGOs: to share regularly relevant information for knowledge implementation and exchange, to invite for testing and using existing and new tools, to inform about the activities in the pilot areas, to participate to the DAC.
- General public: to share regularly relevant information for knowledge implementation and exchange, to invite for using existing and new tools, to inform about the activities in the pilot areas and to discover smart transition good practices in the Alpine Space, to participate to the DAC.

AG5 stakeholders:

- Local public authorities
- Regional and National public authorities
- SMEs
- Higher education and research and Education institutions
- Infrastructure and (public) Service Provider
- Interest groups. Incl. NGOs
- General public

4. The role of the Youth Council

The AG5 strongly believes in involving young people in its activities. Therefore, since the first edition of the DAC in 2021, it has involved young people from the Alps to understand their needs and expectations related to the topic of digitisation.

In the DAC 2021 a young mayor of the Alps and a representative of the Youth Parliament to the Alpine Convention (YPAC) were invited to speak during the conference, while in the DAC 2022 a representative of the EUSALP Youth Council (YC) and one of the YPAC were able to dialogue with political representatives on policy options to unleash the potentials of digitisation.

In the period from 2023 to 2025, the AG5 wants to continue its activities to involve young people and to increase the number of opportunities for discussion and exchange of ideas. Youth involvement will therefore take the form of specific activities within the AG5 flagship initiative, involvement of YC in AG5 meetings on specific topics, participation in the DAC and inclusion in cross-cutting initiatives. Moreover, the Regional Stakeholders Groups within the test areas will include a least one youth to have his visions, ideas and perspective on the themes of the Digital transition of Alpine territories.

Youth involvement:

- specific activities within the AG5 flagship initiative
- involvement of YC in AG5 meetings
- participation in the DAC and inclusion in cross-cutting initiatives

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-2022

During the 2020-2022 period, the AG5 met various key achievements:

The AG5 led the **Smart Villages cross-sectoral strategic initiative** with AG1, AG3, AG4, AG9 based on the results of the Alpine Space Programme SmartVillages project. The initiative established an overview of existing Smart Villages and smart regions initiatives in the Alpine area and related financial support mechanisms. The studies were published on the EUSALP website, and communication activities were carried out through dedicated workshops during DAC, a Roadshow in Trieste, studies, brochures, and promotional materials. The **Smart Alps network** was launched to spread the Smart Villages approach and increase the capacity building of small communities. The network will be financed and strengthened through the SmartCommUnity project. The AG5 also carried out dissemination activities to the Financial Dialogue Network to encourage **the embedding of the Smart Villages approach** within the Programmes and facilitate access to financial resources for rural and mountain areas. Finally, **policy recommendations** were inserted into the policy cycle to discuss them with relevant stakeholders in the Alpine area.

The Alpine Region is a challenging environment for **digital infrastructures**, and the AG5 has developed a **roadmap** to identify key elements for future-proofing them.

The AG5 also developed a **Roadmap and action plan for Open Data (OD)** to raise awareness of the importance of data in the Alps and a **study on potentials of OD** for the Alpine Space within the framework of the EUSALP Strategy.

To continue the dialogue on **cross-border mobility**, AG4 and AG5 integrated the findings into the **policy cycle**.

The AG5 published a **Thesis paper on Best practices on E-Health and Best practices on 5G and SGI**.

AG5 in collaboration with AG2 and AG3 developed the **project “SmartSMEs”** to analyse the potentials of **digitalisation for SMEs in the natural fibre-based value chains**.

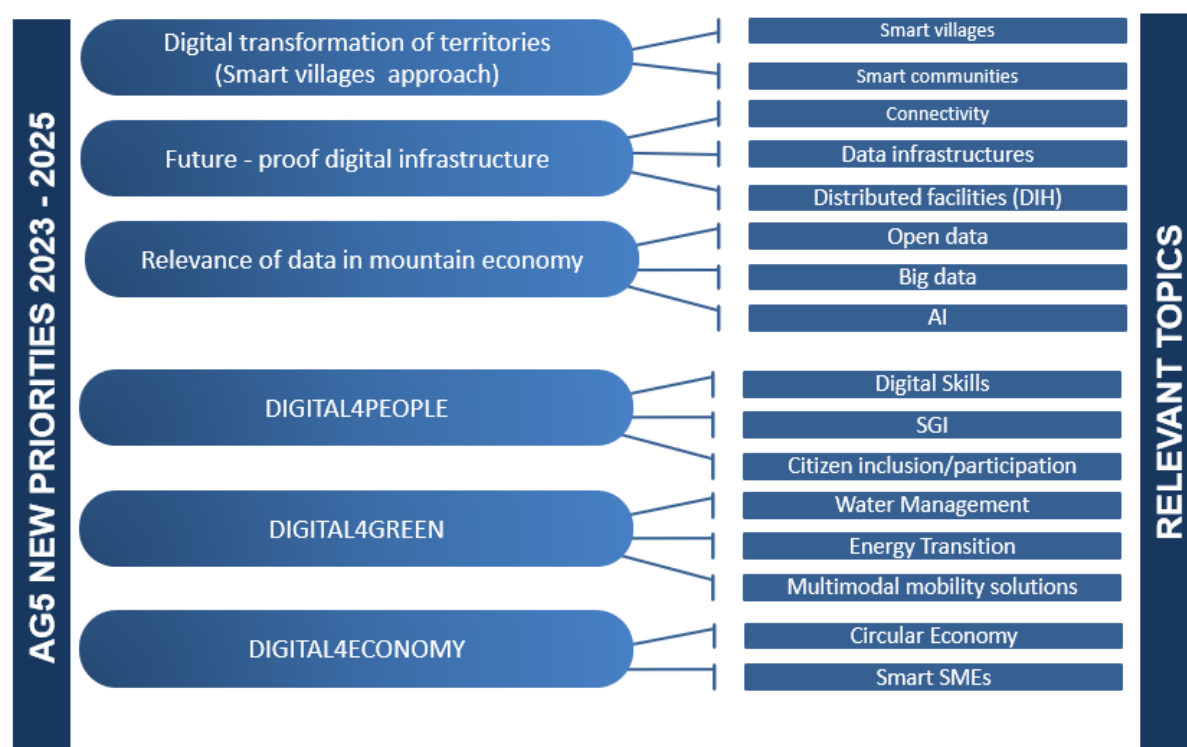
Finally, **policies** relevant to these topics **were included in the policy cycle** to discuss them with all relevant stakeholders in the Alpine area

AG5 Key Achievements 2020-2022:

Priority	Key Achievements
Smart Villages cross-sectoral strategic initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of existing Smart Villages and smart regions initiatives in the Alpine area and related financial support mechanisms - Dissemination activities during DACs with dedicated workshops - Roadshow in Trieste during DAC 2022 - SV studies on EUSALP website - Launch of Smart Alps network - Embedding of SV approach within FDN - Policy recommendations
Digital infrastructures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roadmap to identify key elements for future-proofing digital infrastructures - Policy recommendations
Open data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Study on potentials of Open Data for the Alpine Space within the framework of the EUSALP Strategy - Roadmap on Open Data - Action plan on Open Data - Policy recommendations
Cross-border mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Installation of a new Subgroup within AG4 - Integration of the findings into the policy cycle
Services of General Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publication of a Thesis paper on SGI - Publication of Best practices on E-Health - Publication of Best practices on 5G and SGI
Smart SMEs	<p>ARPAF Smart SMEs project with AG2 and AG3.</p> <p>Digitalization of natural fiber-based value chains SMEs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - collection of existing knowledge on digitisation to assess the level of digitisation of SMEs and identify problems hindering the implementation of digitisation process - collection of best practices and identification of new indicators for measuring the maturity level of digitalization in selected value chains - desk research to identify existing digital tools suitable for SMEs - action plan with a list of intervention fields, actions, timeline, stakeholders identification and risk assessment

PRIORITIES 2023-2025

1. Key issues and activities



The AG5 identified the **Digital transition of the Alpine territories** as the main priority for 2023-2025.

The table below outlines initiatives, priorities and activities for promoting digital transition in the Alpine region. These include the digital transformation of Alpine territories, relevance of digital infrastructure for growth and sustainability, relevance of data in the mountain economy, promoting digitalisation for local communities and economic players, facilitating circular economy, fast-tracking energy transition, and promoting sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources, in particular water management. Activities include exchanging good practices, developing policies, studying potentials of digitalisation, and capitalizing results from relevant projects. Collaborative events such as conferences are also important for sharing best practices and exploring funding opportunities.

AG5 Priorities 2023-2025:

Initiative	Priority/Relevant Topics	Activities
Disseminate and evolve Smart Villages approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Transformation of Territories (Smart Villages, Smart Communities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop AG5 Flagship initiative on Smart Communities - exchange of best practices and capacity building actions via the Smart Alps network - capitalise results from others relevant projects - sharing of best practices during DAC workshops - develop a joint political declaration on the relevance of Digital transformation of territories and the approach to be endorsed
Communicate the importance of digital infrastructures also in remote areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future-proof Digital Infrastructures (Connectivity, Data Infrastructures, Distributed facilities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promote a territorial ecosystem approach for data infrastructures - capitalise results from relevant projects - sharing of best practices during DAC workshops or during other events
Foster the relevance of Data in mountain economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance of Data in mountain economy (Open data, Big data, AI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sharing of best practices during DAC workshops - explore data relevance in main priorities (e.g. satellite data for water management) - capitalise results from relevant projects - dissemination during other events
Embedding of AG5 priorities into relevant programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Transformation of Territories Future-proof Digital Infrastructures Relevance of Data in mountain economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - definition of policies - embedding of policies within FDN - contribute to the overall embedding process of EUSALP

The horizontal priorities to which digitisation can contribute (Digital4People, Digital4Green, Digital4Economy) are addressed by cross-cutting priorities in collaboration with other AGs and can be further enhanced by specific AG5 activities during the workplan programming period.

2. Strategic flagship initiatives

Since the beginning of its activities, AG5 has explored how new technologies and digital can support the development and attractiveness of remote and rural areas. Through the Smart Villages approach and the subsequent SmartVillages project of the Alpine Space Programme, a common vision has been developed on how a digitally supported participatory approach can be instrumental in revitalising remote areas facing demographic decline, testing the approach in various test areas and defining digital tools and platforms that can support other territories that want to undertake a digital transformation process.

To foster the smart and sustainable transition of territories and on the basis of the successful Smart Villages initiative, AG5 promoted the emergence of a new concept, the **Smart Communities**, evolving the Smart Villages approach into a Smart and Sustainable Communities approach, including in the Smart Villages the valorisation of local cultural heritage and environmental sustainability.

By the new **AG5 flagship initiative on Smart Communities**, the most relevant impact that will be achieved will be to:

- Create a common definition of the Smart Community concept across alpine territories and generations
- Counter the depopulation of mountain and rural areas using digitalisation for their development
- Preserve a local identity that is shared by old and new generations
- Support a common smart and sustainable transition of mountain and rural areas
- Create a network of Alpine villages that is a reference point and leads to a modern vision of the Alps

Smart communities are communities of people, in mountain or rural areas, that are proud and aware of their identity, their territory, their craftsmanship, their products and their close-knit social fabric, and that want to become active players in determining their own future, owning and driving the changes that the future, and any digital transition, may entail. Smart communities are open to innovate, to learn and to inspire, and to work holistically towards smart and sustainable rural and mountain areas, that are lively and lived, and that can be or become attractive to live and work for all age groups.

Under the strategic initiative of digital transformation and to further develop and expand the Smart Communities concept, the AG5 initiated several initiatives such as the creation and coordination of a specific cross-cutting priority on “promoting digitalisation for local communities and economic players in the Alpine Region”, the launch of a network of Alpine Smart Villages and, in particular, starting the project SmartCommUnity with several members of the Action Group 5 and 9 as active partners.

Through the results of the SmartCommUnity project, starting from data and knowledge gathered on the field from the 12 test areas, the foundations will be laid for a more intense, engaging and strategic-political oriented initiative that can be capitalised over time by a joint

declaration on the relevance of digital transformation of territories, going further and bringing the benefit of digital transformation to all rural and mountain areas of EUSALP interested in joining the process.

By **Smart Communities approach**, AG5 aims to create a transnational community aimed at changing both habits and perceptions of smart rural and mountain areas, promoting a sense of a structured Alpine community with common challenges and visions.

In particular, through the SmartCommUnity project, the project partners aim to go beyond the Smart Villages approach and create an informal network of Alpine villages and regions, the Smart Alps network, coordinated by local political representatives of municipalities and regions that aims to:

- disseminate the Smart and Sustainable Communities approach and promote the intelligent transformation of mountain and rural areas in the Alpine space
- encourage the exchange of information and experience between Smart Villages and Smart Regions in the Alpine region
- convey a modern image of mountain and rural areas
- promote contacts with similar networks and initiatives for mountain and rural areas throughout Europe

The Smart Alps network, chaired by the Smart Alps committee composed of mayors from the Alpine area of EUSALP, was established as the core of the Test Areas of the previous SmartVillages project and will later expand with the Test Areas of the SmartCommUnity project with the ambition of enlarge the network with other communities.

Smart Alps activities include facilitating the capacity building of rural areas, promote existing digital tools and solutions and develop new innovative and interactive digital tools for local communities.

By working closely with all Test Areas at the EUSALP level and testing innovative solutions for the smart transition, other partner areas and Alpine regions will be inspired to follow suit. With the goal of making the Smart Alps network self-sustainable, the Smart Alps committee, with the support of AG5, will consider how to ensure the continuity of the network, e.g. by introducing membership fees or other forms of financing to guarantee its sustainability beyond the end of the SmartCommUnity project.

SmartCommUnity started in November 2022 and will end in October 2025 involving partners from all over the Alps. The main timeline for the initiative is the following:

- 2023: put the partners to work together on pilot areas,
- 2024: bring onboard to the Smart Alps network the communities from pilot areas,
- 2025: further enlarge the network with other communities.

Smart Communities in a nutshell:

A transnational community

Through various synergic actions, including the cross-cutting priority on digital, the Smart Alps alpine village network and the SmartCommUnity project, the aim is to bring the benefit of digital transformation to all rural and mountain areas of EUSALP interested in joining the process, creating a transnational community to change both the practices and perceptions of smart rural and mountain areas, fostering a sense of a connected Alpine community with common challenges and visions.

Digital tools and innovative solutions

The 12 project partners of SmartCommUnity will facilitate capacity building of rural and mountain areas, promote existing digital tools and solutions and develop innovative and interactive digital tools.

Closely work with all Test Areas at EUSALP level

Experiment innovative solutions for the smart transition of the test areas and inspire additional areas in the partner and other Alpine regions to follow suit.

The Smart Communities flagship initiative in particular aims to :

- Create a common definition of the Smart Community concept across alpine territories and generations
- Counter the depopulation of mountain and rural areas using digitalisation for their development
- Preserve a local identity that is shared by old and new generations
- Support a common smart and sustainable transition of mountain and rural areas
- Create a network of Alpine villages that is a reference point and leads to a modern vision of the Alps

3. Cross-cutting priorities

AG5, in order to think of the cross-cutting priority initiative, started from the European Digital Strategy that will make in Alpine region the digital transformation that everyone is experiencing in their lives work for people, businesses and the planet, in line with EU values. It's based on 3 streams of action:

- Technology that works for people,
- A fair and competitive digital economy,
- An open, democratic and sustainable society

The full transition to the digital age we are all experiencing plays a key role for the future development and resilience of the Alpine territories and this transformation need to be fair, sustainable and competitive.

For this reason, AG5, in collaboration with AG1, AG2, AG3 and AG9, thought of developing a cross-cutting priority (CCP) on **“promoting digitalisation for local communities and economic players in the Alpine Region”**. This initiative may be enriched by the other AGs that wish to participate in this CCP.

The cross-cutting priority aims to disseminate and support networking on the main priorities for digital transition of Alpine territories, such as the development of local communities and economic actors, through 5 main pillars:

- smart and sustainable communities
- key enabling technologies (KET) for local economic players
- data economy enabled by data spaces and open platforms
- co-working, remote working and learning
- digital skills and digital learning

The main objectives of the cross-cutting priority are to:

- collect and disseminate best practices and tools on smart and sustainable communities to enable mountain communities to become smart and sustainable themselves. This will be achieved through the AG5 flagship initiative SmartCommUnity and other related initiatives.
- investigate how to unleash the potentials of the data and data economy through Alpine data spaces (and other KETs) and open platforms catalogue on key EUSALP priorities. This will be achieved through a study on data spaces and related key platforms useful for EUSALP and for local economic players and by contributions from other relevant projects as Next Gen. EU Agritech Project and Cervino. A focus will also be on sharing satellite data for climate adaptation policies. support the adoption of co-working and remote working, training and learning practices in inner areas, and foster digital skills and digital learning practices. The network of VET schools in the Alps (i.e. AG3 flagship initiative) will contribute to the achievement of these objectives.

Working together, the AGs will promote new methodologies and tools to fully exploit the benefits of digitisation.

The AG5, through the participation of its members, will also be active in the other cross-cutting priorities contributing:

- to explore how digitalisation can facilitate the circular economy in short supply chain,
- support the transition to H2 through digital technology
- promote a sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources, especially on smart water management.

These initiatives are fully coherent with the AG5 Priorities 2023-2025, in particular with the so-called DIGITAL4ECONOMY, DIGITAL4PEOPLE AND DIGITAL4GREEN priorities.

AG5 cross-cutting priorities:

CC Priority	Relevant Topics	Activities
Promoting digitalisation for local communities and economic players in the Alpine Region (Lead by AG5)	Tools for local communities	- collect and diffuse best practices and tools on smart and sustainable communities
	Relevant Data spaces and open platforms for EUSALP	- study on the potentials of data spaces in the context of alpine priorities (e.g. water, wood, etc) and open platforms catalogue on key EUSALP priorities
	Coworking and remote working	- support the adoption of coworking and remote working, training and learning for peripheral areas
	Digital skills and digital learning practices	- foster the acquisition of digital skills in educational and professional contexts as well as the adoption/diffusion of digital learning practices
Facilitating circular economy in short supply chains	Contribution of digitisation to the circular economy	- Promote the use of digitisation in the circular economy by dedicated workshop during DAC
Fast-tracking Energy transition for a Carbon Neutral Alpine Region	Exploring how digitalisation can support the transition to H2	- Participation to the H2 focus group - Presentation of ideas and good practices
Promoting a sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources, especially water	Contribution of the digitisation in water management	- Participation to the water task force - Presentation of ideas and good practices

COMMUNICATION

1. Dissemination and communication activities

Through the Support EUSALP project and the establishment of the Technical Support Structure (TSS), communication activities will be developed consistently and each AG will benefit from a dedicated team. AG5 will therefore contribute to **common communication activities** under the TSS umbrella.

Moreover, the AG5 will develop its communication activities **through three main channels: the new EUSALP website**, updating the Action Group 5 page and related content; **the LinkedIn channel**, disseminating relevant content and getting in touch with interested stakeholders; **the content dissemination activities**, participating in project events and stakeholder networks (i.e. BCO networks).

As a main communication activity, AG5 will continue to organise the **Digital Alps Conference (DAC)**.

Thanks to the **Smart Alps network**, the AG5 will also get in touch with remote areas that need capacity building to foster the digital transformation of territories and the spread of the Smart Villages approach.

AG5 communication channels:

- EUSALP website
- LinkedIn channel
- Events in stakeholder networks

2. Events

The AG5 will continue to organise the **Digital Alps Conference as the main communication event** of the topics of interest on digitalisation.

The Digital Alps Conference is a major event of EUSALP. The event is promoted by Action Group 5 with the aim to bring together all initiatives and projects dealing with digitalization in the Alps and to unleash the potentials of digitalization. The conference is organized on two days, presenting both plenary sessions and thematic workshops with participation of regional institutions and European Commission (see additional information on <https://digitalalps.eu/>).

The aim of the AG5 is to organise the conference in the country that will hold the annual EUSALP Presidency (2023 Switzerland, 2024 Slovenia, 2025 Austria). This will allow to get in touch with more key stakeholders and to increase the visibility. If this is not possible, the AG5 will look for other options to hold the Digital Alps Conference (other host countries or online). In the year 2022, the Conference was organized together with AG3 in Trieste (Italy) within the EUSALP Italian Presidency Program.

Target public for the Digital Alps Conference are:

- representatives from EUSALP and the Alpine Space Programme
- representative from public authorities and service providers dealing with digitalization
- representatives from existing networks dealing with digitalization in the Alpine area (BCO Network, S3 Strategies, Smart Alps Network etc.) and key stakeholders
- general public interested in digitalization

In addition to the Digital Alps Conference, the AG5 will participate in various workshops and events of international relevance to showcase the results of the Action Group's work.

A partial list of these events includes those organised by the EU Macro-regional week, those of Euromontana, the Broadband Competence Offices network and the European Week of Regions.

Besides participating in these international outreach events, the AG5 will continue to offer support for the participation of all its members in other specific events to further disseminate issues relevant to the digital transformation of the Alps.

AG5 events:

Digital Alps Conference

Digital Alps Conference, organised annually by Action Group 5, aims to bring together different digitalisation initiatives and projects in the Alps to unleash their potential.

Relevant Digital-related Events

Organise/contribute to workshops on the digital aspect of specific topics (circular economy, energy transition, etc.).

Specific Dissemination events

Participation of AG5 members in specific dissemination events relevant to the digital transformation of the Alps

WORK PLAN OUTPUTS AND RESULTS

AG5 aims to continue promoting the digital transformation of the Alpine region through various initiatives such as Smart Community, Smart Villages, and exchanging best practices with the Financial Dialogue Network. They plan to test the development opportunities of Alpine territories sustained by the digitalisation in some test areas. They also want to explore the possibilities of connectivity in inaccessible areas and establish an ecosystemic approach of local data infrastructures. AG5 aims to promote the use of open data and help manage the climate impact on the region, exploring the potential of frontier technologies such as AI. They will also contribute on facilitating the circular economy, fast-tracking energy transition, and

promoting sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources, in particular water management. Lastly, they will collaborate with other AGs to disseminate and support networking on priorities for digital transition of Alpine territories.

Indicators	Target
n. joint political declarations	1
A proposal for a joint political declaration will be developed by the end of the Support EUSALP project (2025) on the relevance of Digital transformation of territories and the approach to be endorsed	
n. cross-border/transnational events	3
Organization of an annual relevant event on digital topics	
n. joint policy recommendation	1
A set of policies recommendations will be elaborated on experiences on the territories or specific sectoral studies	
n. project to be submitted on the Alpine Space Programme (incubated in the Action Group)	3
Possible projects will be presented for the digital transformation of territories, the improvement of climate change planning tools and water management, the contribution to the circular economy or within the other AG5 priorities	
n. project to be submitted on others European Programmes (incubated in the Action Group)	1
A possible project idea on remote working for cross-border areas or within the other AG5 priorities will be submitted to a transnational cooperation programme	
n. of papers / research works to be published	1
AG5 will explore through dedicated studies relevant topics such as AI for local economic players of the Alps, potentials of data spaces in the context of alpine priorities, innovative distributed facilities for multi-service delivery or dissemination of digital skills in remote areas	
other: Stakeholders network supported	1
AG5 will support the development of a network of Alpine Smart Communities that can mainstream the Smart Villages approach through communication, exchange of good practice and capacity building actions	