



CONNECTIVITY AND BIODIVERSITY

AG7 – Green Infrastructure

shaping future together

The following Policy Recommendations have been elaborated by the members of the Actions Groups of EUSALP, reflect the expertise of the AGs members and are meant for voluntary implementation by the decision makers when it comes to the Alpine Region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Alps remain a stronghold of relatively well-preserved habitats, rich biodiversity, and areas of high natural value. However, they face a significant threat of becoming ecologically isolated, lacking vital corridors that connect them to other important natural regions.

To safeguard their ecological integrity, it is essential to address the issues of ecological connectivity and nature restoration—both within the EUSALP region and in collaboration with neighbouring territories.

INTRODUCTION

- **Policy objective**

The importance of cross-border ecological connectivity as a necessity to maintain biodiversity and restore the nature. Nature restoration is seen as one of the recurring challenges and tools to achieve local, regional and global ecological targets.

The Alps remain a stronghold of relatively well-preserved habitats, rich biodiversity, and areas of high natural value. However, they face a significant threat of becoming ecologically isolated, lacking vital corridors that connect them to other important natural regions.

To safeguard their ecological integrity, it is essential to address the issues of ecological connectivity and nature restoration—both within the EUSALP region and in collaboration with neighboring territories.

For the wider Alpine territory, this means strengthening the health of forests, watercourses and continuity of rivers, natural habitats, promotion of the conservation of species and environmental sustainability by also including semi-natural and urban areas. The expected results include an increase in restored areas, greater biodiversity, and a better capacity of ecosystems to adapt to climate change. These benefits are essential for the Alpine region, as they help protect natural resources, improve the quality of life for local communities, and support nature-based economies.

- **Target groups**

The main target group are public (and management) authorities at different levels and chambers representing farmers and businesses.

Specifically, it targets those directly involved in the management and protection of ecosystems, such as landowners, agricultural and forestry companies, and the communities living in the affected areas. The goal is to engage all these groups to promote conservation, restoration, and sustainability of ecosystems, fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors to achieve effective and lasting results.

- **Intended outcomes**

The main outcome is the joint planning and implementation of cross-border ecological connectivity and nature restoration measures.

- **Challenges to be tackled**

- **EU and non-EU countries (different policies and tools should not be an obstacle to address cross-border cooperation on the topic)**
- **National decisions vs. pan-Alpine relevance (overcoming the administrative borders)**

Alpine Space

- Financing of cross-border restoration projects (cohesion of financial instruments, joint financing, continuation of LIFE funding)
- Going beyond EUSALP (connectivity outside Alpine biogeographic region)
- Synergies with Alpine Convention (sharing tasks, especially with Alpine Biodiversity Board)

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS (LIST)

Policy Recommendations for Promoting Transboundary Ecological Connectivity and Sustainable Natural Resource Management ¹

EU level:

- **Clarification on how non-EU countries interact with EU law**
Developing international agreements that ensure shared protection of open spaces and natural resources is essential.
- **Addressing nature restoration at macroregional scale**
- **Keeping financial mechanism such as LIFE**

National/regional/local level:

- **Harmonization of (Inter)national Policies and Regulations**
It is recommended to strengthen cooperation among neighbouring countries, EU and non-EU.
- **Sustainable and Ecologically Conscious Infrastructure**
Designing and implementing public infrastructure (roads, bridges, transport networks) with a focus on biodiversity protection is a necessity.
- **Financing of Intersectoral Cooperation Projects**
It is recommended to establish funding mechanisms that support partnerships across sectors such as agriculture, nature conservation, urban planning, and green economy.
- **Engagement of Local Communities and Stakeholders**
Ensure that local administrations and communities understand the place and role that they hold in cross-boundary areas.
- **Implementation of measures**

Cross-border level:

- **Development of Transboundary Ecological Corridors**
The corridors should be established within the Alps and with neighbouring natural areas.
- **Expansion and Strengthening of Transboundary Protected Areas**
- **Shared Monitoring and Data Management**
Data sharing and joint assessment frameworks should be prioritized to support adaptive management.
- **Capitalization of successful practices and political tools**
- **Strengthening cooperation with Alpine convention**

¹ Reference:

OpenSpaceAlps – Alpine Space project

LifelineMDD - Danube Transnational Program

ALBIONET2023 – Alpine Space project

AG7 – Nature Restoration in practice, from initiatives to implementation

Directive 2024/3019

IMPLEMENTATION

General implementation guidelines

Identification of Responsible Actors

The successful implementation of (cross-border) nature restoration requires clear identification of responsible actors. These include policy makers, government agencies at local, regional and national levels, which will oversee the planning, funding, implementation and enforcement of restoration projects. Environmental ministries or departments typically lead these efforts, working in collaboration with regional authorities. Additionally, local communities, NGOs, research institutions, and private sector partners play vital roles in executing restoration activities, monitoring progress, and ensuring sustainable practices.

Potential Enablers

Strong political commitment and supportive policies are essential to provide a conducive environment for action on the macroregional scale. Public awareness campaigns can mobilize community participation and foster a culture of environmental stewardship. Technological innovations, such as remote sensing and GIS tools, can enhance monitoring and planning. Moreover, partnerships with international organizations and access to funding sources—like grants or green finance—can significantly boost implementation efforts.

Resource Requirements

Financial investments are needed for project planning, land acquisition or management, reforestation, habitat restoration, and ongoing maintenance. Human resources, including trained environmental specialists, project managers, and local workers, are crucial for executing activities effectively. Additionally, access to scientific data, monitoring equipment, and infrastructure (such as nurseries or restoration sites) are vital components. The main step to be followed is macroregional cooperation and coordination from planning to the implementation of cross-border measures.

CONTACT PERSON(S)

Annalisa Cevasco, AG7 Co-Leader*ANCI Liguria*annalisa.cevasco@anciliguria.eu**Miro Kristan, AG7 Co-Leader***Pososki Razvojni Center*miro.kristan@prc.si