

EUSALP - Beyond borders together

Revised Action Plan & Work Plans 2026 - 2028



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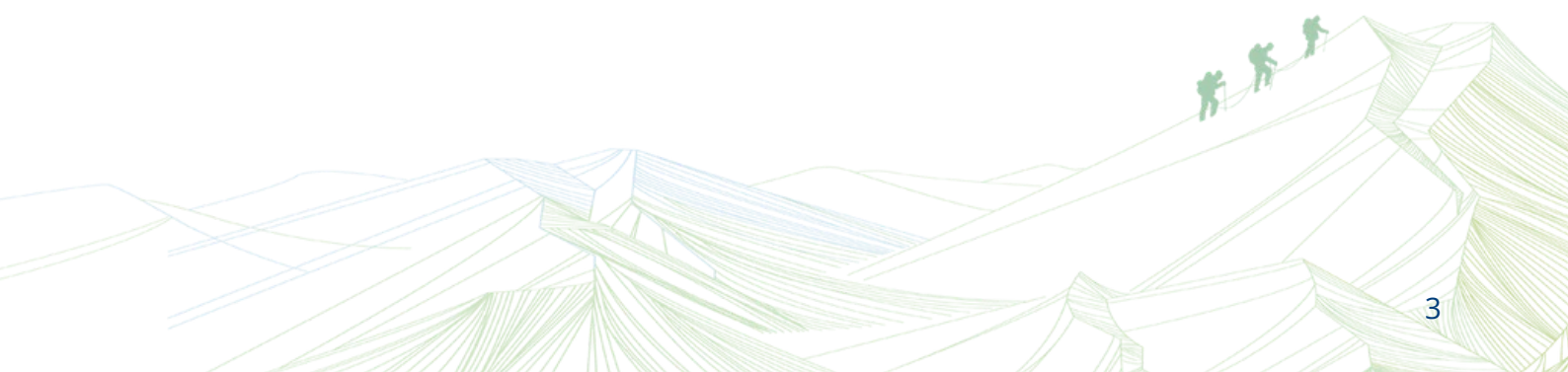
Introduction

Between 2009 and 2015, the European Council endorsed the creation of four European Union macro-regional strategies. By enabling countries to pool resources and take a cross-sectoral and multi-level governance approach to cooperation, the strategies tackle issues that no single country can effectively address alone.

The European Commission adopted the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region in July 2015, at the request of the seven participating countries. The Strategy was endorsed by the European Council on 28 June 2016. As a European macro-regional strategy, it aims to make more effective use of existing financial resources, strengthen coordination among institutions and policies, and improve coordination of existing legislation.

The Alpine region is home to 80 million people (about 15% of the entire EU population) and encompasses 48 regions across five EU Member States (Germany, France, Italy, Austria and Slovenia) and two non-EU countries (Liechtenstein and Switzerland). Located in the heart of Europe, it boasts a strong network of major metropolises, Alpine towns and villages, making it one of the wealthiest, most attractive, competitive, innovative and productive regions in Europe. With its unique geographical and natural features, the region is home to some of Europe's most important water resources and is one of the continent's main biodiversity sanctuaries. Due to its unique characteristics, the Alpine region faces specific challenges, from the severe impacts of climate change – melting glaciers, rising natural hazards, and disrupted water cycles – to socio-economic issues like ageing populations, youth migration, and unequal infrastructure.

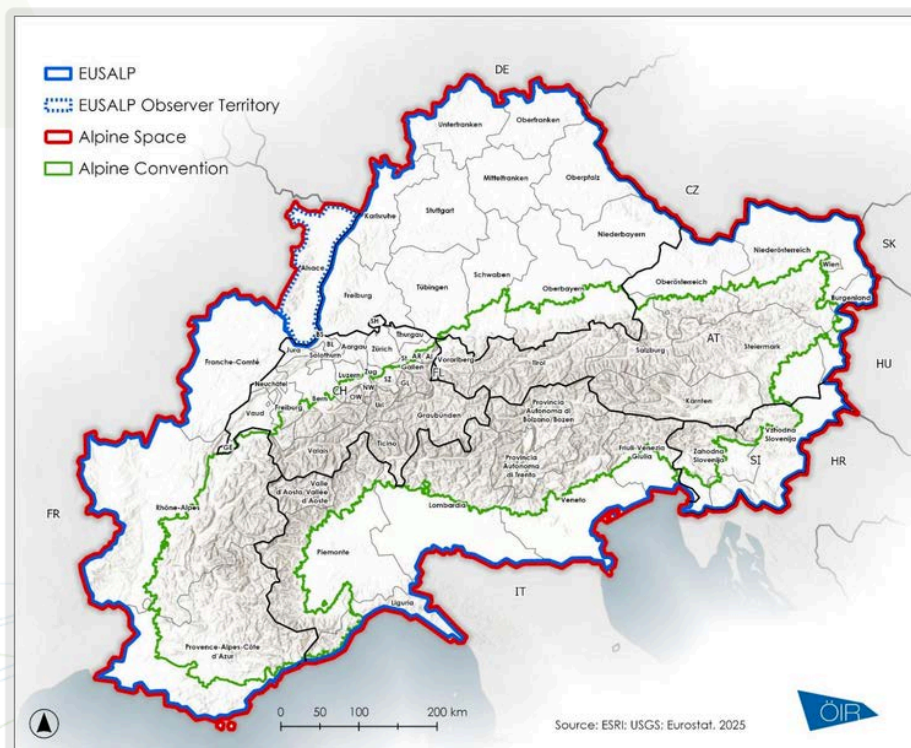
The main objective of the Strategy is to build a framework for governmental and non governmental cooperation between various stakeholders, fostering cross-border strategic approaches, projects, networking and cooperation on key topics for the benefit of the Alpine region as a whole. Where there is a collective need and interest across the Alps, the Strategy provides a framework for better cooperation.



The action plan for the Strategy, adopted in 2015, focuses on strengthening mutual solidarity between the Alpine regions to enhance the region's attractiveness and competitiveness, reducing social and regional inequalities and ensuring the preservation and sustainable management of its unique natural environment. The funding document of the Strategy 1 laid the path towards a new relationship between metropolitan, peri-mountain, mountain and remote areas, focusing on three priorities: competitiveness and innovation, environmentally friendly mobility and connectivity and sustainable management of energy, natural and cultural resources.

A decade after the Strategy was adopted, the world has changed significantly. The geopolitical climate is becoming increasingly unstable amid Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, the lingering socio-economic effects of the Covid pandemic and rapid technological progress. The effects of climate change are more apparent than ever, with increasingly frequent heatwaves, the comparatively rare occurrence of snowy winters, and a surge in natural disasters due to intense rainfall. These new external conditions, coupled with new and updated priorities and initiatives of the European Union, such as the Clean Industrial Deal and the Union of Skills, make it necessary to update the action plan and reassess the Strategy's implementation to ensure alignment with the region's contemporary geopolitical and policy challenges. Additionally, after 10 years of implementation, internal processes and structures have evolved, and new bodies and governance mechanisms have emerged within the macro-region.

The new action plan is an updated and refocused version of the initial action plan, concentrating on matters of political and strategic significance. The updated plan will support the Strategy in addressing upcoming challenges, encouraging cross-border exchanges and solutions for a sustainable, prosperous Alpine region.



Part 1: a revised Action Plan to rise to new challenges

The Alpine region is acutely affected by climate change and socio-economic issues. In response to these challenges, the revised action plan sets comprehensive goals to foster resilience, innovation, inclusion and sustainable governance across the region. Since 2023, participating countries and the Commission have worked together in a multi-level, coordinated manner to produce a revised action plan that takes account of the geopolitical and policy developments since the Strategy was first drawn up.

What is new?

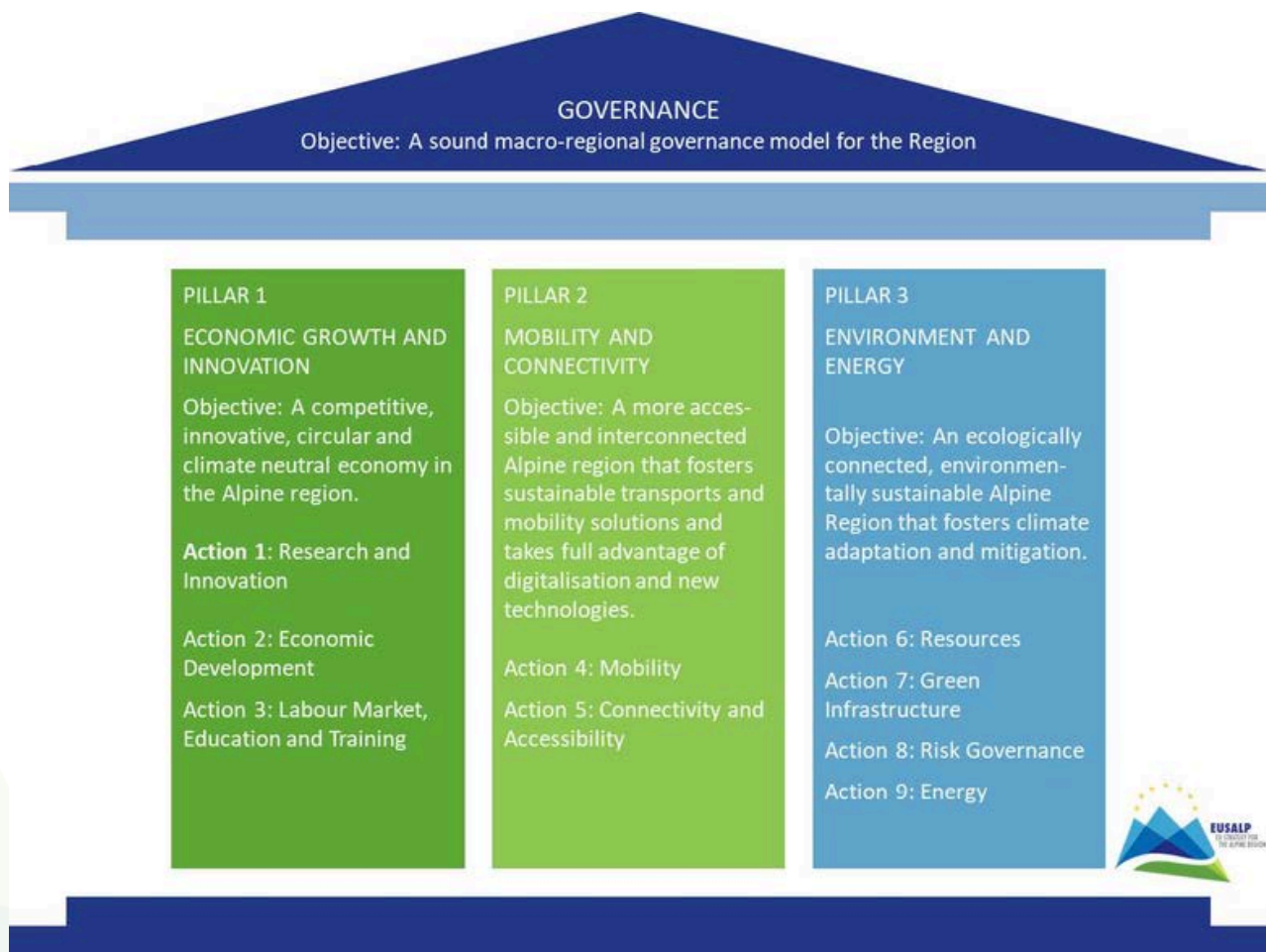
1) A mission-based approach, which aims to tackle significant challenges of Alpine wide relevance by setting ambitious yet realistic objectives and providing the political steer and visibility needed to implement the Strategy. Missions are designed to facilitate synergies and promote better connections between actions and projects in a specific area. They involve the political level more closely by designating a mission rapporteur, an elected politician appointed by the General Assembly. Missions are prepared in close cooperation with the Executive Board and the action groups, involving various stakeholders.

2) Changes to the Strategy's governance system : Action plan now provides a full overview of the structures in place. These include: The board of action group leaders and the trio presidency. Following consultations with stakeholders, the governance of the Strategy has been strengthened over time through the creation of these new bodies.

Action group leaders are responsible for implementing concrete projects, and the board facilitates synergies and cooperation. The trio presidency ensures continuity between past, current and future presidencies.

In 2021, the Youth Council has been involved in all levels of governance. It contributes to the strategy through projects and fosters connections among young people across the Alpine region. Another important change to the governance was to establish the technical support structure with its secretariat in 2023. The secretariat supports both the decision making bodies of the Strategy and its implementers, the action groups.

Thematic policy pillars



Governance and implementation of the strategy

The Strategy's governance is designed to facilitate capacity building and is clear-cut and result oriented, thereby enhancing Alpine cooperation. It ensures the active participation of national, regional and local stakeholders, along with representatives from the economic sector, academia, civil society and the general public, especially young people.

It guarantees that the key implementers of the Strategy are duly empowered with a clear mandate to carry out their responsibilities. It also ensures clear and comprehensive communication at all levels regarding the Strategy's outcomes and added value.

Bodies

The General Assembly is the Strategy's highest political decision-making body, setting strategic priorities and goals. It consists of high-level political representatives from participating states and regions, along with observers such as the Youth Council, the Alpine Convention and the Interreg Alpine Space programme. The European Commission participates as a facilitator and co-chair, ensuring alignment with EU legislation but without voting rights.

The Presidency rotates annually among partner states. It plays a critical role in chairing the General Assembly and Executive Board meetings, developing the annual work programme and organising sector-specific ministerial meetings.

The Executive Board is responsible for implementing the action plan and includes national coordinators and representatives from participating regions and states.

The Youth Council, the Alpine Convention, and other bodies observe its proceedings. The National coordinators have a crucial role in overseeing and assisting with the design and implementation of the Strategy and promoting stakeholder participation.

Work plans are triennial programmes designed to translate the objectives stated in the action plan and the missions approved by the General Assembly into concrete results.

They ensure policy coherence between the action plan and the projects and initiatives implemented by action groups. The work plans are focused and realistic and reflect the Strategy's ambitions, incorporating guidance from the General Assembly and the Executive Board.



Scan to read our revised Action Plan

Part 2: Work Plans to make it real

Action Group 1: Research and innovation – “To develop an effective research and innovation ecosystem in the Alpine region”

The Alpine Region hosts a dense network of internationally recognised research and innovation centres, supported by high R&D investment and world-class universities and research infrastructures. Organised in clusters and aligned with smart specialisation strategies, these assets underpin regional competitiveness in key sectors such as energy, green technologies, advanced manufacturing, new materials and ICT. However, innovation capacity, access to funding and digital uptake remain unevenly distributed, with strong concentration in urban areas and fewer hubs in rural regions. The Strategy addresses these disparities by promoting smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, supporting the identification of shared R&I priorities and enabling coherent policy mixes that strengthen innovation performance across the Alpine macro-region.

Key Achievements 2023-2025

During the 2023–2025 period, AG1 has pursued a spatial-led approach to R&I, notably through its structured cooperation with the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies (DASTU) of the Polytechnic University of Milan.



This cooperation resulted in activities such as academic seminars and public presentations at the Polytechnic of Milan, as well as a contribution to the International Mountain Conference, where results from the research project “Territorial regeneration for the digital and ecological transition in the Alpine area” were presented.

In 2023–2025, AG1 tested this approach through a pilot project in the Valtellina Valley, working with local communities to strengthen links between production, advanced training and research networks; this experience is documented as an AG1 Success Story.



Building on these activities, AG1 adopted Policy Recommendations in 2025 on territorial planning, EUSALP governance and social innovation, which directly inform the current Work Plan and AG1's future positioning.

Main priorities 2026- 2028

For the period 2026–2028, AG1 will focus on activities contributing to the three main topics highlighted in the EUSALP Action Plan 2025, being aware that the right level of ambition is crucial. Resources are directed to activities with expected high macro-regional added value, strong feasibility, and clear measurability. The three main topics for AG1 are:

- Alpine-wide coordination of research and/or innovation policies,
- Fostering exchanges between research institutions, businesses and public authorities,
- Supporting a more geographically balanced development of innovation and research.

Key Activities 2026-2028

During 2026–2028, AG1 will deliver a coherent set of activities to strengthen Alpine-wide coordination of innovation policies and support a territorially balanced development of R&I. Core actions include collecting and showcasing social innovation practices through workshops, visual materials and policy recommendations, alongside a systematic analysis of innovation governance systems based on projects and targeted studies.



**INTELLIGENT TOURISM SOLUTIONS FOR
A PROSPEROUS FUTURE OF THE ALPINE
REGION IN TIMES OF CHALLENGES**
EUSALP Alpine AI-Hackathon for students 2026
- 6-8 June 2026 – Kempten (Allgäu), Bavaria,
Germany

AG1 will pilot innovative engagement of youth through the EUSALP Alpine AI Hackathon for students, integrating digital tools and AI. In parallel, AG1 will intensify cooperation with Alpine Space and other programmes through regular harvesting sessions and support to project result dissemination. Further activities focus on mapping R&I institutions and networks, establishing recurring low-threshold exchange formats, building an expert network of R&I multiplier agencies, continuing work on the spatial dimension of R&I, supporting decentral and rural hubs, and reinforcing AG1 governance, cross-AG cooperation and links with key Alpine and macro-regional stakeholders.



Discover more about Action Group 1

Action Group 2: Economic development – “To increase the economic potential of strategic sectors”

Origins of AG2:

The Alpine Region is economically diverse but fragmented, with SMEs facing pressures from climate change, global market disruptions and uneven innovation capacity. Key sectors agriculture and forestry, tourism, energy and industry require stronger cooperation, more sustainable and circular value chains, and wider adoption of digital solutions. Action Group 2 (“To increase the economic potential of strategic sectors”) identifies those sectors that can benefit most from macro-regional action and implements concrete measures to improve their economic and social environment. Its added value lies in enhancing the use of Alpine-specific resources and strengthening framework conditions and opportunities for SMEs. AG2 also fosters synergies across sectors and supports the green and digital transitions, in line with EU priorities such as the Clean Industrial Deal and the circular economy. The overall goal for the next period is to foster the Alpine economy by promoting Alpine territories as innovative, green and connected.

Key Achievements 2023-2026

During the 2023–2025 period, AG2 achieved tangible results in consolidating its strategic priorities at both policy and technical levels. The relaunch of the Hydrogen Task Force and the delivery of policy recommendations in 2025 strengthened a coherent Alpine-wide approach to green hydrogen, ensuring continuity with the 2026–2028 focus on hydrogen valleys and low-carbon transition.

At technical level, close cooperation with AG5 led to a joint study on data and artificial intelligence, providing concrete methodologies and best practices for digital and industrial transformation. In parallel, regular AG2 meetings, thematic events, youth-focused initiatives (event held in June 2025 at the San Domenico Ski resort, Domodossola) and stakeholder exchanges strengthened knowledge sharing, visibility and continuity.



Main priorities 2026- 2028

For the 2026-2028 period, it has been decided to identify five priorities:

1. Lobbying for Mountain Areas
2. Promoting an EUSALP dimension for hydrogen valleys
3. Supporting the relevance of data and AI for digital industries
4. Fostering sustainable tourism and resource management linked to major sports events
5. Supporting circular-economy practices across sectors

These priorities reflect and operationalize the main topics listed in the 2025 adopted Action Plan. They aim, indeed, at improving framework conditions for SMEs, supporting strategic sectors through cross border coordination, strengthening digital and green transitions, and fostering sustainable resource use.

Key activities 2026-2028:

During 2026–2028, AG2 will implement a structured set of activities addressing green and digital transition across industry, tourism, and circular value chains.

Key actions include EU-level political mobilisation for mountain areas, participation in macro-regional events, and closer cooperation with other MRS and EUSALP Action Groups.

AG2 will finalise and disseminate its Hydrogen Position Paper, establish an Alpine hydrogen valleys network, capitalise projects such as SkHyline, and organise a joint event on energy transition and decarbonised mobility.

In parallel, AG2 will advance smart industry through project proposals, policy recommendations, and capacity-building on data and AI. Sustainable tourism actions will focus on major sports events and destination transition, while circular economy efforts will centre on finalising, disseminating, and capitalising the EUSALP Circular Economy Roadmap in coordination with EU programmes.

These priorities reflect and operationalize the main topics listed in the 2025 adopted Action Plan. They aim, indeed, at improving framework conditions for SMEs, supporting strategic sectors through cross border coordination, strengthening digital and green transitions, and fostering sustainable resource use.



San Domenico Ski Resort



San Domenico Ski Resort

Main topics of the key activities:

Fostering the green and digital 'twin transition', with a focus on smart industries:

- Giving a Eusalp dimension to hydrogen valleys
- Increasing relevance of data and ai for ag2, with a focus on digital industries

Innovative sustainable tourism:

- Foster sustainable tourism and resource management with a focus on 2026/2030 olympic games and major sports events

Agricultural and sustainable products and services throughout the full value chain:

- Promotion of circular economy (textile, buildings, food and forest)



Discover more about Action Group 2

Action Group 3: Labour Market, Education and Training – “Improving the relevance of labour market policies, education and training for strategic sectors”

The Alpine labour market offers diverse employment opportunities, from traditional crafts and agriculture to advanced industrial, energy, service and tourism sectors, often with strong seasonal patterns. Employment levels are generally above the European average, supported by cross-border labour mobility and integration.

However, significant territorial disparities persist due to geographic constraints, demographic decline and depopulation.

These challenges are reinforced by limited accessibility and difficulties in attracting and retaining skilled workers, particularly in STEM and agri-food sectors. Brain drain and unequal access to training further weaken local capacities.

While digital connectivity and teleworking offer new opportunities, structural gaps remain. The Strategy promotes an integrated Alpine education, training and labour market framework to improve skills alignment and support adaptation to climate, demographic and technological transitions.

Key Achievements 2023-2025

AG3 activities under the 2023-2025 Work Plan produced key results to be further developed in 2026-2028.

In the field of soft skills, a toolset for the assessment of soft skills such as communication, creativity and teamwork was developed and tested in Austria, Italy and Slovenia.

The toolset was translated into all EUSALP languages and widely disseminated, supported by AG3’s “Soft Skill Conference” in Izola and Trieste that strengthened institutional and macro-regional cooperation. Youth and jobs initiatives, particularly Discover Mountain Jobs in France and Italy, explored evolving mountain professions, climate impacts and value-chain transitions, generating comparative analysis and good practice exchange.

Additional studies on multi-activity mountain jobs and remote work reinforced this work. Cooperation with the Youth Council and other Action Groups, alongside regular AG3 LABs, enhanced coordination, trust, knowledge sharing and strategic implementation capacity across the Alpine region.



Main priorities 2026- 2028

AG3 will consolidate past achievements and reinforcing priorities such as soft skills, youth employment, remote work and learning, while integrating current labour market transformations and Alpine value chain opportunities. The main topics for AG3 are:

- Improving conditions to increase access to jobs and attract highly qualified labour to counter brain drain, loss of labour force and depopulation in peripheral areas;
- Developing joint training initiatives to improve upskilling and reskilling in line with market needs, transformations and crises;
- Supporting the development of Alpine value chains that prioritise local products based on traditional knowledge and production practices;
- Raising awareness of remote working and learning to support skilled / intellectual / entrepreneurial jobs in decentralised and rural areas.

Key activities 2026-2028:

AG3's 2026-2028 activities aim to enhance skills development, youth opportunities and labour market resilience across the Alpine region.



A central priority is the consolidation and diffusion of the soft skills toolset through digital training, shared methodologies and a dedicated pilot initiative, extending its application to education, employment services and cross-border mobility.

Beyond soft skills, AG3 also promotes a broader, future-oriented skills framework integrating AI collaboration, circular economy principles, sector-specific hard skills and emerging human-machine interaction competences. In parallel, actions support youth mobility through a more unified Alpine educational space, increased cooperation between VET systems and enterprises, and the promotion of quality dual training.

Further activities focus on raising awareness of professional opportunities in mountain areas ("Discover Mountain Jobs"), fostering remote working and learning, strengthening innovation hubs, supporting workers during market transitions, and reinforcing cooperation with other macro-regional strategies.



Discover more about Action Group 3

Action Group 4: Mobility - “Promoting intermodality and interoperability in passenger and freight transport”

The Alpine Region is a major European transit area, but its mountainous geography and environmental sensitivity create specific challenges for transport and mobility. Good connectivity is essential for commuters, tourism, local economies and freight flows, while infrastructure development must respect spatial and natural constraints.



Co-led by the EGTC European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino and the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region, EUSALP Action Group 4 promotes sustainable, efficient and resilient mobility by supporting intermodality, interoperability and better coordination between passenger and freight transport systems.

Its work contributes to cleaner transport, stronger rail and multimodal solutions, improved cross-border links and better integration with the wider European transport network.



Key Tangible Achievements 2023-2025 :

- EUSALP AG4 Project Labelling (ongoing) - so far, 22 projects have received the label
- Policy recommendations: Boosting energy efficiency in Alpine freight transport and tourism mobility (2025)
- LinkingAlps - Innovative Tools and Strategies for Linking Mobility Services for a Decarbonised Alpine space (Interreg Alpine Space, completed)
- Study on the external costs generated by transalpine transport
- EUSALP Mobility Conference (ongoing)
- Alpine Platform of Knowledge (PoK) for Mobility and Transport (ongoing)
- Resilience of transport infrastructure in the Alpine Region

Priorities 2026-2028:

For the period 2026–2028, AG4 will support sustainable, efficient and resilient mobility in the Alpine Region through five priorities:

- Energy transition and decarbonisation: Promoting cleaner road and rail transport through electrification, alternative fuels and charging/refuelling infrastructure.
- Smart clean logistics: Supporting the shift from road freight to rail, combined and multimodal transport, with more efficient logistics hubs and digital tools.
- Smart and sustainable passenger transport: Encouraging shared mobility, Mobility as a Service walking, cycling and last-mile solutions, especially in rural and peripheral areas.
- Links with TEN-T nodes: Improving connections between Alpine regions and major TEN-T nodes through stronger public transport and cross-border links.
- Resilient transport infrastructure: Adapting infrastructure to climate change, natural hazards and disruptions through climate-proof and coordinated solutions.



Key activities 2026-2028

During 2026–2028, AG4 will support a more sustainable, efficient and resilient transport system in the Alpine Region. On decarbonisation, AG4 will monitor charging and refuelling infrastructure for alternative fuels for the uptake of zero-emission vehicles and analyse pricing, taxation and charging systems.

In freight transport, AG4 will promote the shift from road to rail, combined and multimodal transport.

For passenger transport, AG4 will focus on sustainable local, regional and cross-border mobility, including tourism and last-mile solutions. AG4 will also identify missing links between Alpine regions and TEN-T nodes by analysing transport poverty in terms of accessibility, availability and affordability.

AG4 will address infrastructure resilience by promoting the coordination of road and rail infrastructure works and unforeseen disruptions on transalpine corridors. The EUSALP AG4 Project Labelling identifies impactful mobility initiatives with macro-regional relevance, helping those projects gain recognition and access to funding at national and EU levels.



Action Group 5: Connectivity and Accessibility – “Connecting people digitally and promoting accessibility to public services”

Digitalisation and connectivity present significant opportunities and challenges for the Alpine region, where access remains uneven due to complex geophysical conditions that hinder infrastructure development. These limitations restrict access to public services in remote areas. Advances in digital technologies, including satellite connectivity, offer solutions but require adaptable and forward-looking approaches due to rapid technological change. Enhanced digital connectivity can stimulate sustainable economic growth, foster social innovation, support entrepreneurship, and enable teleworking, thereby helping to retain young and skilled workers in isolated areas. At a macro-regional level, the Strategy provides a framework to steer and future-proof the digital transition, promote the use of data and artificial intelligence, strengthen cooperation, and enhance competitiveness, while supporting the goal of carbon neutrality.



Key Tangible Achievements 2023-2025 :

Between 2023 and 2025, AG5 strengthened its position as the Alpine hub for digital transformation. At policy level, it coordinated Cross-cutting Priority 1 on Alpine digitalisation, contributed to the revision of the Action Plan, and initiated a joint study with AG2 on data spaces and artificial intelligence. High-level political engagement through “Digital Alps Conference” and the 5G-Sitacor event underscored the importance of resilient connectivity and digital inclusion in mountainous areas. AG5 delivered three Digital Alps Conference editions between 2023 and 2025, organised SmartCommUnity study visits, and expanded the Smart Alps network through good practices and thematic webinars, all now accessible online. Youth involvement was ensured through active participation of the EUSALP Youth Council, and through the engagement of over 100 students in workshops on Alpine megatrends.



Priorities 2026-2028:

AG5's priorities align with the three thematic clusters of the revised Action Plan and build on the 2023-2025 focus areas, ensuring continuity in the new cycle. Together, they aim to strengthen digital capacity in the Alpine region, address structural and geographical constraints, and maximise public value. The main topics are:

- Digital transformation of (mountainous) areas
- Future-proof digital infrastructure
- Relevance of data and artificial intelligence in the Alpine region

The three priorities function as cross-cutting enablers across all EUSALP topics. They are integrated through the lenses of DIGITAL4PEOPLE, DIGITAL4GREEN and DIGITAL4ECONOMY, linking digitalisation to social inclusion, sustainability and economic development.

Key activities 2026-2028 :

For the period 2026-2028, AG5 will pursue a comprehensive programme to advance inclusive, resilient and innovative digital transition in Alpine territories. Activities will focus on strengthening smart and sustainable communities through the Smart Alps network, fostering peer learning, shared toolkits and cross-border cooperation, while maintaining strategic exchanges at European and macro-regional level. AG5 will actively contribute to the EUSALP political process, culminating in a Joint Political Declaration on the digital transformation of Alpine areas.

Further priorities include updating and promoting a policy roadmap for future-proof digital infrastructures, resilient connectivity and data ecosystems, and supporting cybersecurity awareness. AG5 will promote remote and hybrid work and learning as tools for territorial attractiveness and skills retention. Strong emphasis will be placed on data and artificial intelligence through youth-driven AI Hackathons, quick wins on inclusive digital public services, and pilot use cases on digital technologies for sustainability, risk management and economic development. These actions will be supported by annual Digital Alps Conferences, consolidated policy recommendations, project capitalisation, and targeted capacity-building sessions.



Action Group 6: Resources – “Preserving and capturing the value of natural and cultural resources”

The Alpine region has exceptional natural and cultural heritage, comprising diverse mountain habitats with very high biodiversity and abundant water resources from rivers, lakes, and glaciers, which underpin its role as Europe’s “water tower.” This environment is highly vulnerable: over the past century, temperatures have increased at twice the global average, driving glacier and permafrost melt, water scarcity, and biodiversity change. These impacts threaten ecosystems, food and water security, cultural heritage, and winter tourism. Land-use conflicts, particularly between environmental protection and economic exploitation, are intensified by limited settlement space in Alpine valleys. Sustainable resource use, biodiversity conservation, and cultural heritage protection offer intrinsic value and economic benefits, shaped by historical development pathways. Macro-regional, circular, and nature-based approaches are essential. Cultural diversity and UNESCO inscriptions further reinforce the significance of Alpine resources. AG6 seeks to balance preservation with sustainable economic use.

Key Achievements 2023-2025 :

Between 2023 and 2025, AG6’s work focused on priority themes – water, forestry and agriculture, soil and biodiversity, and cultural heritage – in continuity with previous work plans. Key policy outputs included the AG6 Policy Recommendations “Current issues of Alpine water management”, aligned with the EU Water Resilience Strategy, and the Crossroads Biodiversity Message, developed following the 2023 Crossroads Biodiversity Workshop. AG6 also renewed the Task Force “Multifunctional Forests and Sustainable Use of Timber” and contributed to the CCP3 Input Paper “Mind the Gap in Water Management”. It organised the 3rd Territorial Brands Conference and the 2nd EUSALP Landscape Conference, while promoting Alpine Food Heritage towards UNESCO inscription. In this period, the webinar series “Resource Talks: Voices from AG6” was also launched to foster exchanges between the AG and European projects.

Priorities 2026-2028:

AG6 will continue its activities in 2026–2028 by consolidating and expanding the results of the 2023–2025 Work Plan, in full alignment with the EUSALP Action Plan. The new Work Plan ensures continuity of priorities while strengthening integrated, transnational approaches to sustainability. AG6 will capitalise on best practices, stakeholder cooperation, and policy alignment to enhance climate resilience, biodiversity protection, and sustainable resource use. Particular emphasis is placed on linking macro-regional strategies with local implementation and on valorising natural and cultural assets through value-chain perspectives that support balanced territorial development across the Alpine region. The two main topics are:

Strengthening the integrated management of water and soil resources

Utilizing and restoring natural and cultural resources sustainably along the value chain.

Priorities 2026-2028:

AG6 will continue its activities in 2026–2028 by consolidating and expanding the results of the 2023–2025 Work Plan, in full alignment with the EUSALP Action Plan. The new Work Plan ensures continuity of priorities while strengthening integrated, transnational approaches to sustainability. AG6 will capitalise on best practices, stakeholder cooperation, and policy alignment to enhance climate resilience, biodiversity protection, and sustainable resource use. Particular emphasis is placed on linking macro-regional strategies with local implementation and on valorising natural and cultural assets through value-chain perspectives that support balanced territorial development across the Alpine region. The two main topics are:

Strengthening the integrated management of water and soil resources

Utilizing and restoring natural and cultural resources sustainably along the value chain.



Key Activities 2026-2028:

For the period 2026-2028, AG6 will implement a broad and integrated programme of activities structured around water, soil, and the sustainable use of natural and cultural resources. In the water sector, AG6 will promote co-creative, multi-actor approaches by mapping projects that apply innovative nature-based solutions to integrated water cycle and biodiversity management. It will also strengthen public participation by identifying initiatives that use voluntary, multi-level governance tools to improve stakeholder involvement in cross-border and cross-regional waterbody management. Soil-focused activities will include mapping projects that foster healthy, water-retentive and climate-resilient soils, enhance soil organic matter and carbon sequestration, and reduce land take. AG6 will further develop an Alpine-wide operational concept to support co-created local actions for multifunctional and regenerative land-use planning. In parallel, AG6 will advance cultural and economic valorisation by organising the fourth edition of the conference on territorial branding and Alpine natural fibres and by supporting the multinational UNESCO inscription of Alpine Food Heritage. Cross-cutting actions include the “AG6 Resource Talks” webinar series, capacity-building labs, the 3rd AG6 Landscape Conference in 2027, and the consolidation of policy recommendations aligned with EUSALP priorities.



Action Group 7: Ecological Connectivity – “To develop an ecological connectivity across the Alpine region”

The Alpine Region hosts a high share of protected areas, which coexist with densely used territories for transport, settlement and tourism, resulting in strong fragmentation and growing pressures on biodiversity. Ecological connectivity is increasingly threatened, particularly in narrow Alpine valleys, where infrastructure and urban development disrupt traditional wildlife migration corridors linking the Alps with other European mountain regions. Maintaining functional ecosystem connectivity is essential for biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services and overall resilience. The Strategy addresses these challenges by promoting a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas that strengthens ecological links between core Alpine and peri-Alpine areas, rural and urban territories, and other mountain regions. This approach supports nature restoration while delivering environmental, social and economic benefits across the Alpine macro-region.

Key Achievements 2023-2025 :

During the 2023–2025 period, AG7 delivered tangible results in advancing green infrastructure and ecological connectivity as key foundations for biodiversity and well-being in the Alpine Region. At technical level, AG7 incubated project proposals on peatlands and rivers, implemented a pan-Alpine mapping of over 150 EU-funded nature restoration projects, and produced a dedicated factsheet positioning the Alps as a model region for ecological transition. It also delivered three editions of the GI Goes Business Award and organised targeted workshops, notably on ecological connectivity at the EUSALP Annual Forum 2025, while contributing to several high-level Alpine and European events.



At policy level, AG7 co-shaped joint inputs on water management, co-organised international biodiversity and nature restoration conferences, contributed to the EU consultation on the Nature Restoration Regulation, and delivered policy recommendations on ecological connectivity to the Executive Board. Youth involvement was ensured through the active participation of the EUSALP Youth Council in AG7 meetings and award juries.

Main priorities 2026-2028

For the period 2026–2028, AG7 will focus on:

- Promoting ecological connectivity and avoiding further fragmentation (focus on infrastructure operators, territorial connectivity challenges and youth engagement through mobility- and learning-based initiatives).
- Restoration of natural resources (updating and promoting the nature restoration database, with attention to (peri-)urban areas and green and blue infrastructure).
- Strengthening coordination of networks and protected areas (cooperation with ALPARC and the Alpine Convention to safeguard key ecological corridors beyond protected areas and the EUSALP perimeter)
- Common development of a trans-sectoral strategic landscape vision (AG7 contribution of expertise to a shared Alpine landscape vision, subject to political consensus on spatial planning).

Key activities 2026-2028:

During 2026–2028, AG7 will deliver a targeted set of actions to promote ecological connectivity and support nature restoration across the Alpine Region. Core activities include mapping, selecting and disseminating concrete examples of functional ecological connectivity in large infrastructures such as railways, roads, urban areas and energy grids, as well as co-organising an interregional eco-connectivity conference together with the Danube Region and other macro-regional partners. AG7 will also focus on safeguarding “last ecological corridors” by selecting and highlighting one to two strategic corridors beyond protected areas, in close cooperation with ALPARC, addressing bottlenecks in non-protected areas and lowlands. Youth engagement will be fostered through cooperation with the Yoalin initiative, integrating connectivity and biodiversity topics into sustainable youth travel across the Alps. In parallel, AG7 will advance nature restoration through dedicated actions such as the RePeat event on peatlands, workshops on green and blue infrastructure in urban and peri-urban areas (UrbaGreen), and the upgrade and promotion of the Alpine nature restoration database as a practical tool for regions and countries.



Action Group 8: Risk Governance – “Preserving and capturing the value of natural and cultural resources”

Owing to its geomorphological characteristics, the Alpine region is highly exposed to natural hazards that can significantly affect ecosystems, populations, and infrastructure. Climate change, combined with limited settlement space, is increasing risks to public and private assets. The disproportionate rise in temperatures accelerates glacier melt and permafrost thaw, while more frequent and intense rainfall leads to landslides and rockfalls. These processes heighten the vulnerability of climate-sensitive sectors and amplify economic risks across the region. Addressing these challenges requires integrated risk management approaches that balance risk reduction with economic development, social welfare, mobility, and tourism. Nature-based solutions are essential components of climate change adaptation and disaster risk management. In this context, AG8 focuses on advancing natural hazard risk management measures and supporting climate adaptation policies based on vulnerability and impact assessments.

Key Achievements 2023-2025 :

During the 2023-2025 period, AG8 achieved substantial progress in advancing climate change adaptation and natural hazard risk governance in the Alpine region. Key outputs included the policy recommendations “Enhancing vertical governance of CCA in the Alpine space” and “Adapting to natural hazards in the Alps”, as well as the expertise and policy Enquête “50 years hazard zone maps”. AG8 strengthened and interconnected Alpine risk governance networks, notably EUSALP, PLANALP/Alpine Convention and INTERPRAEVENT. Technical achievements comprised workshops with the ADAPTNOW and X-RISK-CC projects, a Working Paper on Nature-based Solutions, and continued development of the Climate Adaptation Platform for the Alps (CAPA). AG8 also collaborated closely with several Interreg projects and supported the establishment of a transnational “peoples network” in risk governance. The EUSALP Youth Council was actively involved in workshops, meetings and the preparation of policy recommendations.



Main priorities 2026-2028

The priorities of AG8 respond to the intensifying impacts of climate change and natural hazards in the Alpine region. The AG promotes coordinated transnational action to improve risk assessment, research cooperation, and governance. By strengthening preparedness, socio-economic resilience, and policy coherence, AG8 supports sustainable development, safety, and integrated solutions, including nature-based approaches and effective risk governance across Alpine territories. The main topics are:

Strengthening transnational cooperation in developing hazard and risk assessment methodologies and building on existing cooperation

Pooling research activities on disaster risk management and climate change adaptation and mitigation across the Alpine region

Analysing the socio-economic consequences of climate-related natural disasters and establishing good risk governance

Key activities 2026-2028:

During the 2026-2028 period, AG8 will focus on consolidating and expanding its activities to strengthen climate change adaptation and natural hazard risk management in the Alpine region. A core priority is the continued implementation of the CAPA Platform roadmap, including the expansion of its knowledge base and enhanced outreach to stakeholders. AG8 will actively promote the uptake of key transnational policy recommendations and project outputs from the previous period, notably through the 2027 AG8 Conference on natural hazard management and climate change adaptation in the Alps and through a dedicated analytical study aligned. Collaboration with international projects and the Alpine Convention, including PLANALP and the Alpine Climate Board, will be strengthened through regular knowledge-transfer meetings, such as the “Harvesting Sessions”. AG8 will also cooperate with Interreg projects such as BeCo – Beyond Conflicts, KLISOV, and AlpsFuturePaths, addressing conflict management, social acceptance, and forward-looking adaptation pathways to support widely accepted nature-based and climate adaptation measures.



Discover more about Action Group 8

Action group 9: To make the territory a model region for energy efficiency and renewable energy

The Alpine region is a key area for renewable energy production and has strong potential to improve energy efficiency. EUSALP Action Group 9 promotes the energy transition in the Alpine Region by supporting energy efficiency, renewable energy deployment, decarbonisation, innovation and cross-border cooperation.

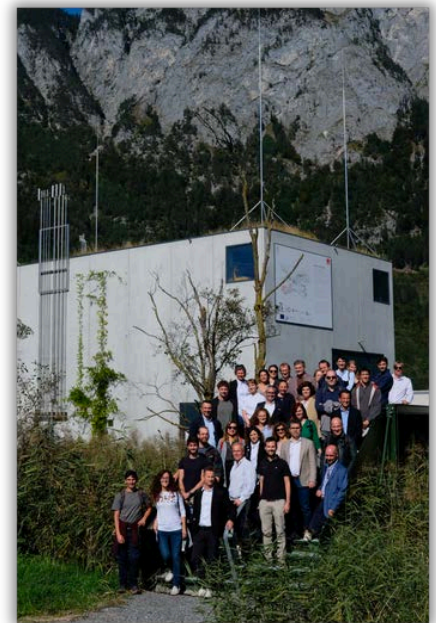
Its work focuses on balancing energy production and infrastructure development with environmental protection, land use, landscape preservation and social acceptance. AG9 also supports cooperation among regions, municipalities, energy actors and stakeholders to develop integrated, sustainable and resilient energy solutions adapted to Alpine conditions.

Key Achievements 2023-2025 :

2023: Establishment of the Alpine energy data platform

2024: Conduction of the EUSALP Energy Award 2024 “Energy transition in SME’s”; EUSALP Energy Conference

2025: EUSALP AG9 Harvesting Session to engage with stakeholders and science with the goal to collect policy advice to advance the energy transition in the Alps; Elaboration of Policy Recommendations regarding Green Hydrogen Deployment in the Alps



Main priorities 2026-2028:

During the 2026–2028 work plan period, EUSALP Action Group 9 will focus on three thematic areas:

- Renovation wave: supporting the renovation of residential buildings, with a focus on cost-efficient interventions in relation to avoided CO₂ emissions.
- Power grids and storage infrastructure: collecting and sharing good practices and policy instruments through expert workshops.
- Hydrogen cooperation: organising a networking event to connect Alpine Hydrogen Valleys, projects and regional working groups.

The EUSALP Youth Council

The EUSALP Youth Council is a EUSALP body that enables young people to participate in the Strategy's governance and activities, ensuring their ideas and viewpoints are actively heard and considered. Appointed annually, it gives youth a legitimate role in discussing strategic objectives and contributing to the implementation of EUSALP priorities.



The Council strengthens connections between young people across Alpine regions and institutional decision-making bodies, fostering dialogue and cooperation. Its members take part as observers in the General Assembly and Executive Board, reinforcing youth representation at the highest levels. In addition, the Council develops proposals for concrete actions and projects, which it presents to implementing bodies and Action Groups, while also leading its own initiatives aimed at engaging and empowering young people throughout the Alpine region.

Key Achievements 2023-2025:

Between 2023 and 2025, the EUSALP Youth Council delivered concrete and impactful achievements through concrete activities, policy contributions, and outreach. It actively engaged in flagship initiatives such as ARPAF III "Made in the Alps", where it helped integrate youth perspectives on sustainable consumption and local economies, and the event in collaboration with AG2 "Shaping the Future of Alpine Ski Resorts", contributing solutions on climate adaptation, economic resilience, and intergenerational dialogue. The Council also supported and promoted initiatives like Pitch Your Project, YOALIN (Youth Alpine Interrail), and AG3's "Discover Mountain Jobs", while advancing thematic work on environment, mobility, education, and economic development through structured groups and annual position papers.



In addition, the Youth Council strengthened cooperation with EUSALP Action Groups and contributed to concrete outputs such as workshops, surveys, and awareness campaigns. It played a visible role in major Alpine and European events, including EUSALP Annual Forums, Digital Alps Conference, MRS Days, and the Alpine Rivers Symposium. Acting as true ambassadors of the Strategy, its members consistently represented EUSALP across these platforms, promoting youth engagement, fostering partnerships, and reinforcing the visibility and relevance of EUSALP at both regional and European levels.

Position Paper 2025-2026:

For the 2025-2026 mandate, the EUSALP Youth Council's thematic groups have outlined detailed, action-oriented priorities. TG1 (Sustainable Tourism) is paving the way to promoting year-round, eco-friendly tourism by highlighting eco-villages and lesser-known destinations, working on awareness campaigns, field visits, and building networks with Alpine youth organisations and Interreg projects. TG1 additionally contributed to the organisation of the Alpine AI Hackathon, in collaboration with AG1, AG5, and the EUSALP Bavarian Presidency, linking tourism with digital innovation. TG2 (Mobility and Connectivity) focuses on improving sustainable transport by supporting YOALIN and Pitch Your Project, raising awareness on sustainable mobility for EUSALP events, contributing to AG4's Mobility Conference, and advancing ideas such as a cross-border Alpine Youth Ticket, shared data systems, and integrated booking platforms. TG3 (Alpine Resources and Risk Governance) develops awareness campaigns, educational activities, and partnerships with Action Groups, Interreg projects, and institutions, while participating in key events such as AG6's Landscape Conference to address climate risks, resilience, and cultural heritage. TG4 (Education, Soft Skills and Digitalization) is strictly collaborating with AG3 on the organisation of a joint event, "Stay Local, Learn Global", aimed at promoting decentralised higher education in the Alpine region.

The way ahead

Each July, new members are appointed and gather at a dedicated teambuilding event to organise thematic work and define their roadmap, ensuring continuity and fresh perspectives. Several ongoing activities will be further strengthened, including flagship initiatives such as "Stay Local, Learn Global" (planned for 2027) and future editions of the Alpine AI Hackathon. The Council will also maintain close cooperation with EUSALP Action Groups through key events (Digital Alps, Landscape and Mobility Conferences), while continuing its active participation in Executive Board meetings, General Assemblies, Annual Fora, and broader communication events at Alpine and EU levels.



Cooperation with other governance structures and entities in the Alpine Region

The Interreg Alpine Space programme and the Alpine Convention play an important role in implementing the Strategy. Their relationships and cooperation between them reflect the importance of building synergies, shared visions and added value for the Alpine region.

Cooperation with the Interreg Alpine Space programme

The **Interreg Alpine Space programme** has always been a strategically important instrument for implementing the Strategy. The programme and the Strategy share similar objectives and cover a similar geographical area. The Alpine Space programme supports the vision and objectives for the Alpine region developed by the Strategy within the EU regulatory framework for transnational Interreg programmes. Although not a governance body in the strict sense, the Alpine Space programme plays a key role in Alpine governance by supporting the development and financing of fundamental projects and activities of the Strategy underpinning its thematic and governance aims. Close coordination and collaboration between the Strategy and the programme are therefore crucial to ensure the success of both by facilitating strategically meaningful, high-quality projects that align with their shared goals.

Cooperation with the Alpine Convention

The Alpine Convention and the Strategy are complementary and synergetic in many ways, with strong overlaps in the themes they address. However, they differ in their role and legal nature. While the Strategy is a macro-regional strategy, the Alpine Convention is a legally binding treaty. Furthermore, their geographical scope differs significantly, as the Alpine Convention is limited to the Alpine mountain areas.

The Alpine Convention's framework convention has been ratified by all the Strategy's member states and the EU, meaning it is also part of EU environmental legislation. The eight thematic protocols have been ratified by most contracting parties, except Switzerland and, for some protocols, the EU.

The Strategy strives to strengthen exchange and cooperation with the Alpine Convention, to ensure legal compliance, foster synergies and avoid duplication of work processes, e.g. those of their respective bodies.

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