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Introduction

The Alpine Research and INnovation Capacity Governance Project (Short: A-RING) aims on exploiting economic opportunities within the Alpine Region (AR) through pooling region wide effort for the tackling of major challenges. To develop the Alpine Area, supporting the innovative growth and ensuring great research collaboration amongst different partners of the AR are essential. Within the frame of the Smart Specialization Strategies (S3/RIS), as guiding definition of relevant topics, collaborations between businesses, research institutions and governance are the driver to develop new research topics, fostering innovation and developing the rural alpine regions.

The Alpine Research and Innovation Chart (Short: Alpine R&I Chart) aims on presenting an action plan for transnational cooperation network among academia and business sector representatives with the goal to strengthen AR Research and Innovation. The Alpine R&I Chart is accordingly outlining tested approaches and public services to support the flourishing of cross-border relations. Mechanisms of matchmaking describe the construction of useful events to match cross-regional partners for research projects. Thereon building seed lab events present the design thinking approach to develop innovative ideas, giving new project consortia a mechanism on developing ideas for joint projects.

The overall objective is to ensure an innovative alpine area. Within the chart, it is outlined how government institutions can support reaching this goal by bringing institutions together and fostering research projects. It therefore contains a visualisation of functional connections/relations gathered from the Ecosystem Relation Tool Model on joining forces within the alpine area. Aiming on building strong collaborations, which support the innovative growth of the entire region by delivering new ideas, solutions and products.

A list of useful services describe the urge for a joint online presentation as a specific product to support the manifesting of S3 approaches, the development of alpine collaborations and joining alpine forces by presenting projects results.



Executive Summary

A-RING Alpine R&I Chart Overview

The A-RING Alpine R&I Chart is an action plan for transnational cooperation network among academia and business sector representatives, to strengthen AR Research and Innovation with visualisation of functional connections/relations, funding programmes and list of joint actions. During the Matchmaking Parleys and the Alpine Seed Labs, the A-RING project tested activities to bring organisations, interested in innovative collaboration projects, together and to foster transnational cooperation. The Relation Tool Model tracks relations in the R&I sector among universities, research centres, laboratories & SMEs, integrating Re-Search Alps dataset to support Public Authorities development of new public policies and enhancement of collaboration dynamics.

Methods & Activities



Matchmaking Parley

- Events in Germany, France, Italy, Slovenia and Austria
- Using pre-event forms to collect information about participants to match potential partners effectively

Alpine Seed Lab

- Design Thinking Workshop to ideate innovative collaboration projects
- Co-creating a project agenda to facilitate further action of interested partners

Relation Tool Model

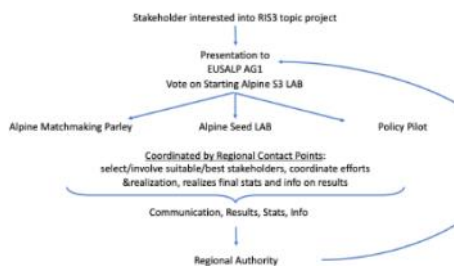
- Integrating Re-Search Alps datasets with quantitative research to track relations of institutions in the alpine R&I sector

- Establishment of an alpine office, which organises matchmaking events, interacts with stakeholders to work on needed funding and presents Smart Specialization Strategy (S3) to the local stakeholders
- Establishment of support institutions across the entire alpine area, that provide information on funding opportunities, accompany in the process and create partnerships (in exchange with the Alpine Office)
- Development of ONE platform that brings all desired data to a joint
- Adaptation of existing or development of new funding opportunities to support alpine regional cooperation (smaller consortia, longer timeframe, coordinated for trans-regional collaboration)

Joint Actions & Services



Alpine R&I Relations



- Regional characteristics show differences in RIS3 strategy building processes. Tendency: smaller territory, less diverse potential stakeholders, higher geographical homogeneity -> more open process of involvement
- Relations can be fostered on macro-regional level by bottom-up support services (like one-stop website and Alpine S3 Lab implementation process) and top-down support services (Glossary and Funding Guides)
- Relations can be fostered on regional level by addressing the need for information readiness, information clarity, Fostering contacts among different stakeholders, and lowering perceived bars for triple helix collaboration (cf.: Joint Actions & Services)



1. Alpine wide Cooperation

The coordination and cooperation effort in order to harmonise S3 implementation across the AR will require a triple helix approach (Galvao et al., 2019). The triple helix approach consists of the involvement of the three main stakeholders of R&I, namely academia, business and PA/society, in a coordinated effort towards a shared goal. The approach evolved together with stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1980; Freeman et al., 2012) and the evolution of sustainable development discourse, finding a first configuration by Andrew Van de Ven (2007) in his theory of “engaged scholarship”, where academics of all disciplines are invited to take an interest in real world problems and to engage with the private sector and PA in order to create theories, strategies and ways of implementing solutions to such problems. European Cohesion policy and strategy was designed to find stakeholder engagement solutions in order to achieve European socio-economic development.

1.1. Action Plan for Transnational Cooperation

In order to support the cross-regional collaboration within the alpine area business and academic representative seek for momentums of exchange and matchmaking. It is within this phase of contact building, that the two strains of helix need support to intervene and meet. With the formulated desire of both sides for specific networking events in mind, a matchmaking process was prepared, tested and adapted in order to support cooperation.

Tested collaboration methods targeting to join triple helix stakeholders in their innovative approaches by forming partnerships across regional borders:



Figure 1 Process to develop new alpine collaborations

The matchmaking parleys as mechanism to match cooperation partners

Most relevant while setting up the matching events is the request for a neutral organiser of the events, without a self-interest of being partner yet only with the thrive of brining institutions at one table. It is desired that PA institute an alpine office coordinating and initiating networking events. As a tested suggestion the below visualized mechanism can be established within this frame and used in order support the building of relations.

Matchmaking is an interactive process that leads to a shared vision as well as to an adaptive goal and target setting. It is a workshop format that brings together stakeholders from across the Alpine Space to align their interests or issues. The aim is to identify areas of agreement and potential for cooperation so that synergies can be exploited. Especially in projects with a strategic long-term orientation, it is intended to share existing economic resources to achieve efficient use for all stakeholders.

The four phases aim on brining partners of the alpine area at one table and matching them based on their work fields and important focus topics. These topics can emerge from the pool of smart specialization strategies, but are not limited to these. However, it is here to note, that the usefulness of the events increases rapidly with the narrowing of the topics on a specific





sub-topic. Bringing people together in the frame of mobility is as an example of a much too broad approach, which can be segmented in detail into sub-topics such as e-mobility, transport optimization, smart mobility for tourism, mobility data and data sharing and alike.

Process of the Matchmaking Parleys as Action Plan on bringing people together

Phase 1 and 2: The first phase, initiating the matching process, is easily conducted by sharing a survey link with the interested persons as registration link. The prospects fill out the profile page online and share their interests, searched type of partnership, and comparing information supporting their own presentation and the pre-matching of the participants (c.f.) Within the second phase, the neutral established alpine representative can based on these information define small groups for the initial phase and a first “get-to-know” round.

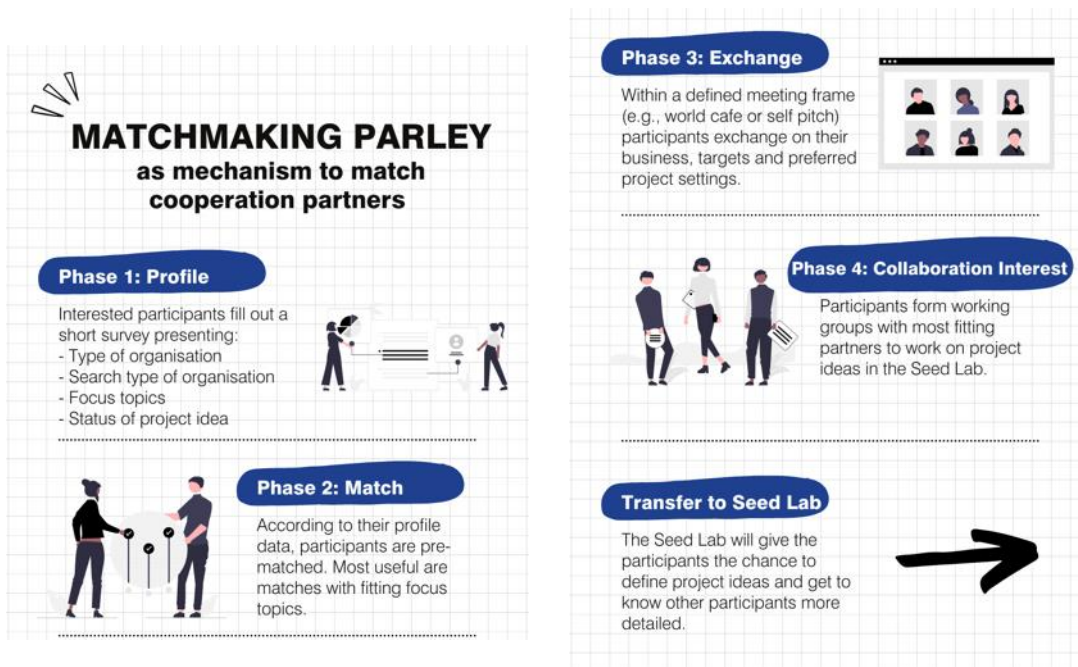


Figure 2 Matchmaking Parley - Process to build collaboration

Phase 3: To initiate the exchange a pitch round sets of the meeting introducing each participant to the peers. Within one group it is advised to have about 5 participants assigned within a joint focus field. A useful mechanism to bring these people together is a simple world café organization, which lets participants rotate along several subtopic approaches. The world café can easily be introduced in both an online and physical meeting. The online meeting however presumably increases the range and rate of participants, targeting to bring people together from the entire alpine area.

Event plan according to the implementation guide: At the beginning, the participants are welcomed, and an introduction of the organizer follows, i.e., the institution that is conducting the



national M-P. The participants are then told what the goal of the event is and how the workshop will proceed.

After the introduction, sessions will begin based on the World Café Method, which is a workshop method for hosting large groups dialogues (>12). In multiple rounds the large group is split in (different) smaller subgroups to discuss a set of questions. There will be short breaks between sessions to allow participants to switch tables. A 20-to-30-minute break is planned after the second session. More information is available in the *Implementation guide M-P and S-L* in chapter 2.1 *Preparation of the national M-Ps and the national S-Ls*.¹

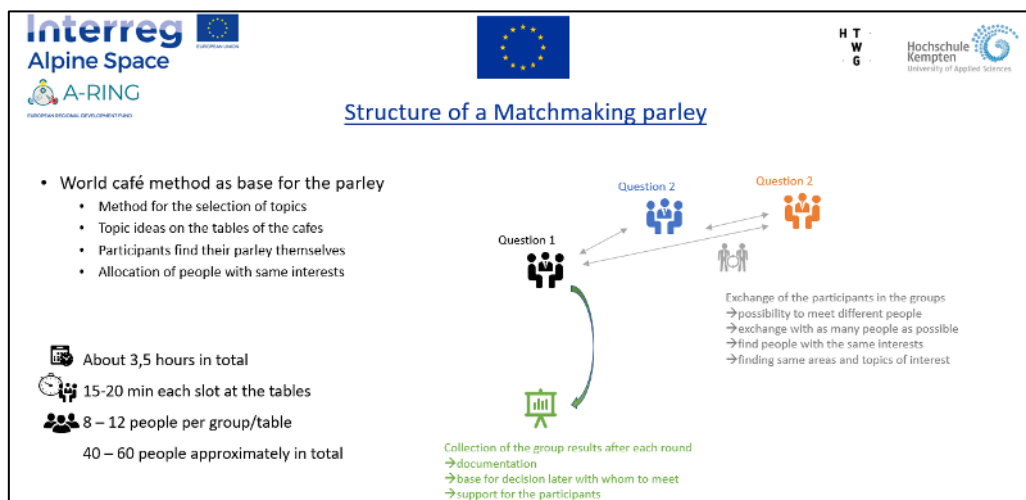


Figure 4: World Café Method as a tool for the national M-P

Phase 4: Each table is supervised by a topic leader. The latter will present the results on his topic to all participants after the last session. During the presentation of results, it will also be determined which participants will work on which topic in the subsequent S-L. All findings are summarized and recorded according to the specifications for documentation. The event will conclude with an aperitif where participants can share ideas and connect. There should also always be room for an informal exchange, either online in smaller groups or through offering a coffee corner or alike for further networking.

Transfer to Seed Lab is a suggestion if one want to further exploit the support process into an idea generation process. The developed Seed Lab approach, which can be fully comprehended with reading the *Implementation-Guide M-P and S-L*, is a tool to support matched partners with the generation of project ideas². Most of the times, at least one partner has a specific project idea in mind and is already using this idea to look for a perfect fitting partner to work it out.

¹ Implementation Guide Matchmaking Parley and Seed Lab <https://www.alpine-space.org/projects/a-ring/en/project-results/wpt3/d.t3.2.2---matchmaking-parley-d.t3.2.3---seed-lab-innovative-r-i-action>

² Implementation Guide Matchmaking Parley and Seed Lab <https://www.alpine-space.org/projects/a-ring/en/project-results/wpt3/d.t3.2.2---matchmaking-parley-d.t3.2.3---seed-lab-innovative-r-i-action>

In case of a high interest in an open idea generation process, the design thinking process proved valuable for the interaction and ideation, too.

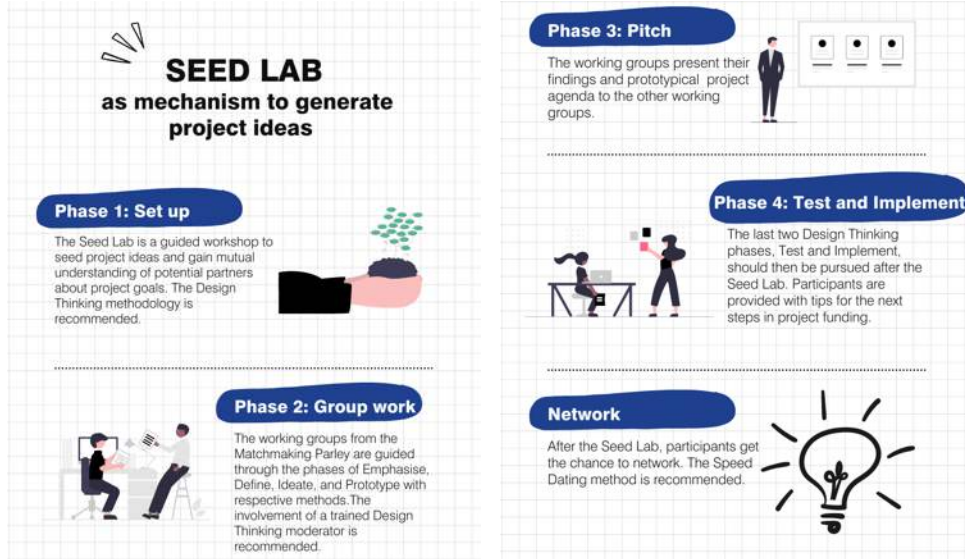


Figure 5 Seed Lab mechanism to generate project ideas

Recommendations for supporting collaboration in the alpine region

A description of each recommendation can be found in the “Policy Recommendation Sheet” uploaded on the A-RING website³. In conclusion as a summary, they are the following suggestion for anyone wanting to foster collaboration through matching players within the alpine area:

- Alpine-wide events with cross-regional representatives
- Topic should be narrow enough to meet specific partners
- Establishment of regional contact point
- Neutral organiser with mere focus to connect people and no intend to meet people for own projects
- Regular networking events and specific events with the opening of calls
- Preparation of a matching platform that allows meeting new contacts based on a profile, including the S3 focus area, the institution type, previous projects and alike

³ A-Ring website: <https://www.alpine-space.org/projects/a-ring/en/home>

1.2. Interaction of Alpine Triple Helix Stakeholders

Building S3 Strategies and Policies with the involvement of stakeholders, according to the Triple/Quadruple Helix theories and practices, happen inside the Alpine Region in two different observed ways:

- “Closed” Triple Helix involvement process
- “Open” Triple Helix Involvement process

Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of each and shows, that there are good Interdependence between the two kind of stakeholders involvement processes = Opportunity for collaboration:

	Closed	Open
Example (observed)	Lombardy Region	Burgenland Region
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great territorial and population dimensions • Great diversity and diversification of human activities inside the territory • Great diversity of territorial geographies • Very high numbers (and great diversity in dimensions) of potential stakeholders to involve in the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small territorial and relatively small population dimensions • Higher geographical Homogeneity • Higher homogeneity in human activities • Less diversity of potential stakeholders
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly bureaucratic - (official public call for submissions of interest; desk evaluation of each candidate according to pre-decided parameters; ex post evaluation of “performance” for involved stakeholders • Greater distance between stakeholders and policymakers • Very Duration (+8 years) • Good for building infrastructures • Low Flexibility • High risk of missing rapid innovations/ context changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Bureaucracy • Lower distance between stakeholders and policymakers • High paced/ agile (activities can be rapidly organized and put into action) • Flexible • Open to rapid changes in context • Risk of lacking capacity and resources for major infrastructural activities • Risk of missing scaling up opportunities
Results	Clusters (a high number) to reduce complexities and concentrate resources	Clusters (a low number) to upgrade scaling up capacities on most important opportunities
Good Interdependence between the two kind of stakeholders involvement processes = Opportunity for collaboration		

Table 1 RIS3 Triple Helix involvement processes inside the AR

1.2.1 How to create R&I Collaboration opportunities at Macro Regional Level

At EUSALP Level there are three major actions to be taken:

1. Website (to steer bottom-up initiatives):

- Links to Regional Contact points
- Links to Regional S3 Website
- Links to relevant S3 platforms/projects/databases
- Clear Explanation on Alpine S3 LAB process

A further outline on a suggested website can be viewed at Chapter 2.2 *Supporting Product: Platform as a collaboration tool*.

2. Glossary and Guide (top-down initiative):

- Preparing and updating a glossary for all Alpine Regions to RIS3 topics and tools – to be always at disposal on Websites and distributed to regions and even local PAs. This guide should list and link the various funding scheme for each topic accessible by the Alpine regions.

3. Alpine S3 Lab implementation (to steer bottom-up initiatives):

The Alpine S3 LAB (which is exportable to other macro-region, being a process), is a good initial and zero-cost effort to break the “inner circle” effect that we observed is endemic inside R&I project partnerships. With clear and easy to access initial infos, at disposal of each interested stakeholders inside the macro-region, the process for understanding who is working on a specific topic can bring to forming new partnerships and enlarge the Inner-circle. It does not seek to overtake the way in which partners for R&I projects seek for one another, but to provide an instrument that could be able to curb the negative externalities (i.e., inefficient) of such well-established practice.



1.2.2 How to create R&I Collaboration opportunities at Regional Level

Many aspects of and obstacles to triple helix and cross border collaborative efforts in R&I have been highlighted in this project by both research and business stakeholders.

The observations show **two problems** that arise both at the beginning of the collaborative efforts, hindering and harming them:

- Lack of information readiness and clarity
- “Inner Circle” Dynamics in partnership formation processes

These two major problems foster several “needs”, all of them strongly perceived by the AR stakeholders (reported and highlighted in Table 2)

The following table 2 presents five needs emerged from the stakeholders:

- “Information readiness”,
- “Fostering contacts among different stakeholders”,
- “Information clarity”,
- “Engagement: “Entering the inner circle” and “Information readiness and clarity for partnership finding/ building and project writing/submission”. These needs

Two kinds of tools can be used inside each single Alpine region to address the aforementioned needs:

- Information Infrastructures (enabling engagement processes)
- Engagement processes

The most important caveat in the ideation and realization of both information infrastructures and Engagement Processes (needed to foster relationship building among stakeholders inside the region and across-borders) is that there is no “one size that fits them all” concept in this case, as demonstrated by all observations. They will need to be **tailored around the different stakeholders.**

Accordingly, Table 2 lists and briefly shows the above-named needs of alpine stakeholders and brings them together with some suggested solutions, described in their important features. Therewith this table aims on displaying measures to lessen the Inner Circle problem in Alpine R&I collaborations and to eliminate the information asymmetry between PAs and other stakeholders. These should bring more successful R&I collaborations and at least opportunities at a regional level.

	Infrastructures		Processes
NEED 1	Information readiness	NEED 2	Fostering contacts among different stakeholders
SOLUTION	“One-Stop Website” on S3	SOLUTION	Marketing Strategy Plan for S3
IMPORTANT Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English translation for all website contents Regional Funding strategies and calls in English 	IMPORTANT Features	Communication and Event Strategy to be planned in advance diffusing knowledge on S3 topics priorities and bringing interested people together
NEED 3	Information clarity	NEED 4	Engagement: “Entering the inner circle”
IMPORTANT Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Website: Stakeholder dedicated parts written into their specific technical/ relevant languages Stakeholders differentiated as follows: Business (Start ups; SMEs; BIG/Well established companies); Research/ Academia; Local PAs; Foreign Interested Parties (Business; Academia; PAs) 	IMPORTANT Features	The “enabling” condition is to lower the perceived level of bureaucracy/ administrative efforts needed to collaborate in triple helix contexts. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Peer to Peer Business vs Academia Business vs PA Academia vs PA
NEED 5	Information readiness and clarity for partnership finding/ building and project writing/submission		
SOLUTION	External Regional Contact Office		
IMPORTANT Features	Separated- autonomous designated entity		

Table 2 Fostering collaborations inside the AR: Needs and Tools to address them

The infrastructures that might help to foster stakeholders’ relations (if properly set up and with the right processes) can be summed up in one: a well-functioning Regional Contact Point (Figure 5).

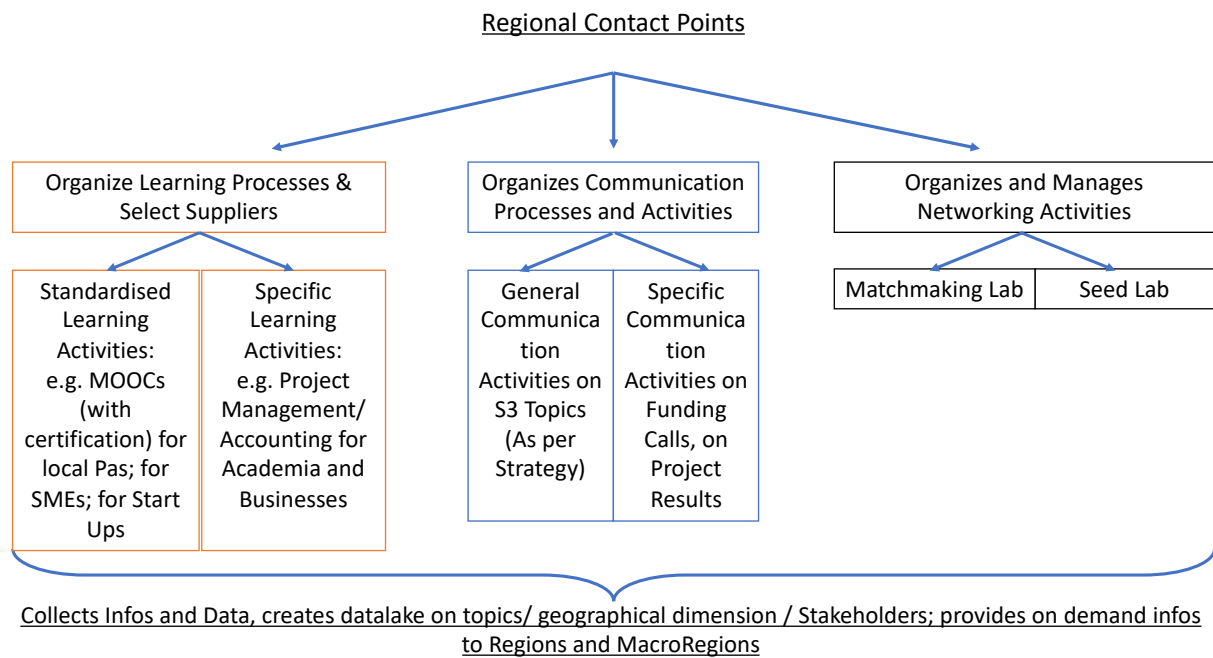


Figure 6 Regional Contact Point and its functionalities

A Regional RIS3 Contact point should

- ***be, in fact, a separated entity from the PA.*** This is a first condition to avoid the bureaucracy trap and the use of “PA jargon” incomprehensible to all other stakeholders. This condition also helps to avoid the internal agendas risk⁴.
- ***have a matrix structure.*** This is to accommodate the different expertise needed (compare Table 3 and 4). The matrix structure is the most complex among organizational structures and requires a fully functioning incentive and performance management structure to accompany it, in order to work properly (that’s why the need for the RCP is to be independent from the PA).
- ***be Not for Profit Organization/ Benefit Company.*** It should be important that the Regional Contact Point would not be part of a PA, to avoid its bureaucracy, and at the same time it should be equally important to maintain the concept of being servant to society at large. Foundations seems to be the better form of organization to serve this twofold objective and in many observed cases foundations are already taking care of sponsoring R&I and organizing networking and early seed funds for R&I inside a specific territory. Foundations need to leverage economy of scale and where such economies won’t be possible a benefit company with a strong social purpose dedicated to R&I of a territory should fit the role. Both kind of organizations are able to open up sub-businesses and to receive funds from many sources, granting flexibilities and manoeuvring space.

⁴ The risk associated to each civil servant career agenda: priority of actions assigned on the basis of the different civil servants’ private agendas, rather than on the stakeholders’ needs.

Matrix Example Regional Contact Point	Business	Academia	Local PAs	Cross-Regional PAs
Topic 1	Expertise on Topic1/ Business			Expertise Topic 1/ Other Region PA
Topic 2		Expertise Topic 2/ Academia		
Topic 3			Expertise Topic 3/ Local PA	

Table 3 Matrix organization for Larger Region's RCP

Matrix Example Regional Contact Point	Macro Region 1	Macro Region 2	Macro Region 3
Topic 1	Expertise on Topic1/ Macro Region 1		
Topic 2		Expertise Topic 2/ Macro Region 2	
Topic 3			Expertise Topic 3/ Macro Region 3

Table 4 Matrix organization for Smaller Region's RCP

Inside the Alpine Region, a bottom up initiative for a collaboration processes in R&I could be pictured as in Figure 7.

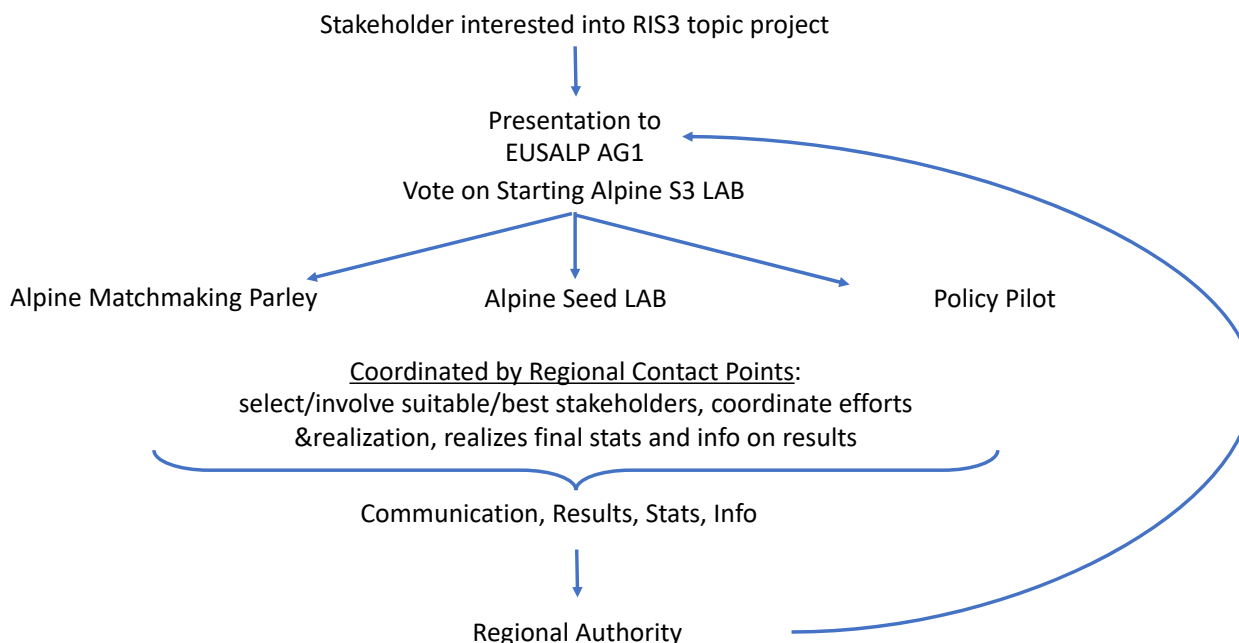


Figure 7 Bottom Up approach and feedback loop on collaboration on RIS3 in the Alpine Region



Figure 8 proposes a final synthetic image about the Relation Model that can be pursued inside the Alpine region, underlying the different relations and also the different services provided or supervised by the different stakeholder and in particular by the RCP.

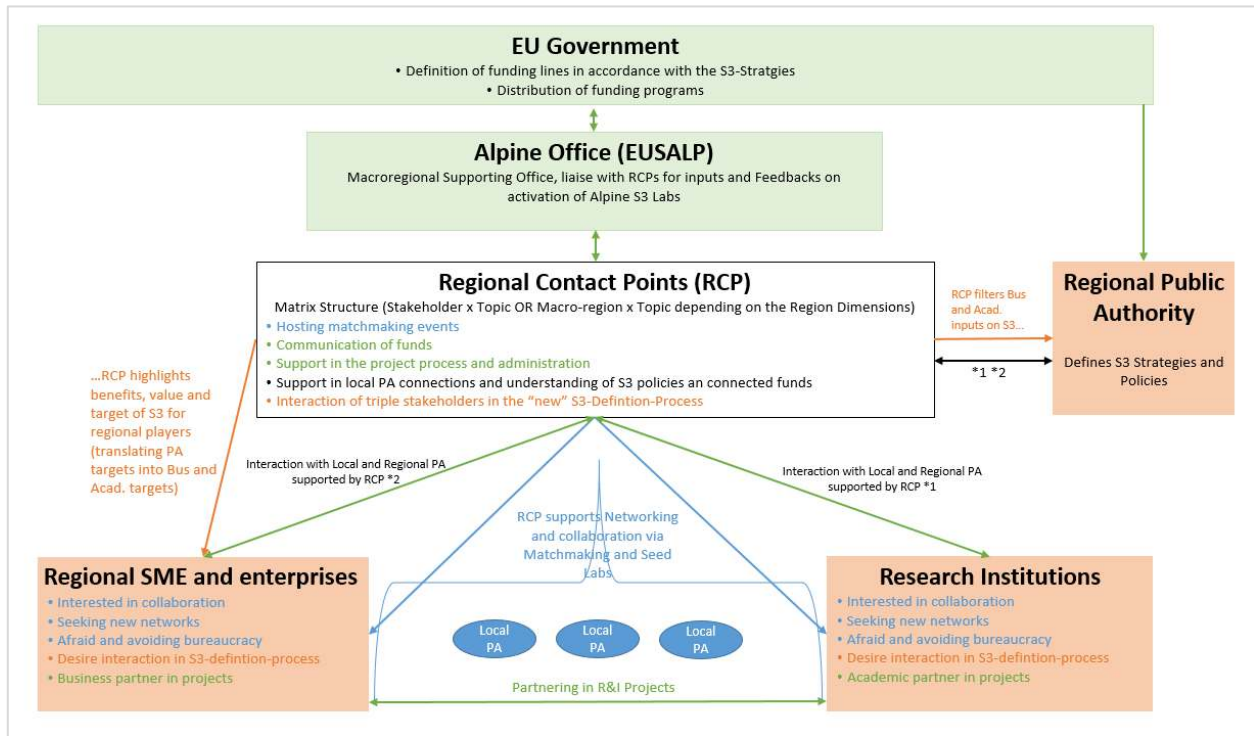


Figure 8 Relation Model supporting Collaborations

1.3. Funding Programs to support Cooperation within the Alpine Region

An important role in bringing people together to develop new technical solutions, innovative approaches and regional supportive collaboration is a suitable funding. It was proclaimed in the meetings that the current opportunities of funding are either too bureaucratic, not meeting the actual needs or not available for the partnerships. It is therefore, highly needed that the calls are revisited and thought through. When engaging with those benefiting from the funds, new considerations of the required outlines get obvious quickly. Within the A-RING project, this was the major goal of WP T3: understanding the needs and requirements of businesses and academia to work together and start of new innovative projects. The long-term value of reworking the funds, is the innovative growth and development of the alpine regions. Accordingly, the following list of recommendation is worked out based on the SME, enterprise, BSO and academic points of view.

Recommendations for supporting collaboration through funding

A description of each recommendation can be found in the “Policy Recommendation Sheet” uploaded on the A-RING website. In conclusion, there are the following suggestion for public authorities and business support organisations to foster collaboration in the alpine area:

- low-threshold and cross-regional funding opportunities are essential to build alpine area cooperation: Smaller funding to set up cooperation and get in contact with each other
- specific support for the conduction could be to share basic information on calculation and contracts and lower bureaucracy, therewith allow the focus on the content related work
- more preparation time: communication of topic one year prior to the actual call opening
- long-term financing is essential for attractive funding schemes and can fill the gap of good work force generation in many institutions
- cross-regional funding is not available or bound to too many bureaucratic obstacles

Cross-regional funding: ARDIA-Net Approaches

The AlpsConnect Cross-regional Cooperation Scheme⁵ was developed under the ARDIA-Net project funded under the Interreg Alpine Space programme. The base of the project and funding ideas follow the priorities set by regional governments in their smart specialization strategies⁶, short S3, which organize and structure the regional innovation activities for future focus areas. The S3 also shape the regional public funding schemes, as a means to implement policy strategies in the specific region - usually without the option for cross-border cooperation. Accordingly, research showed that there is a gap concerning funding schemes for research, development and innovation (RDI) with a cross-regional focus.⁷ Thus, ARDIA-Net designed AlpsConnect, a scheme to foster cross-regional synergies in public funding programmes. One of the main reasons for this persistent funding gap for cross-regional RDI-activities (implementing regional priorities of particular relevance for areas like the Alpine Region), is the lack of multi-regional governance structures for cross-regional cooperation in S3-implementation⁸. In building such a functional multi-level governance scheme, ARDIA-Net points out a set of minimum requirements:

⁵ ARDIA-Net: Factsheet AlpsConnect Cross-regional Cooperation Scheme (2022)

<https://www.alpine-space.org/projects/ardia-net/results/press-release/factsheet-ardia-net-rev3.pdf>

⁶ For further information visit the Smart Specialisation Platform: <https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

⁷ ARDIA-Net: Potential public funding sources on regional, national and EU level (2021)

https://www.alpine-space.org/projects/ardia-net/results/d.t1.1.1_potential-public-funding-sources-on-regional-national-and-eu-level_final-update.pdf

⁸ Dermastia, M. and Osvald, D. (2018), Study to Prepare A Synchronised Funding Scheme For Bioeconomy Development In The Alpine Region. Interreg AlpGov.



- Commitment of participating Alpine Region partners needed (political and financial) especially for a pilot / discovery period.
- Reasonable efforts for implementation but requiring as less changes as possible in terms of administrative procedures, while funds should not be crossing borders.
- Possibility to select call scopes according to individual S3 priorities.
- Likelihood of short-term implementation
- Aspiring long term impact on both the RDI landscape in the Alpine Region as well as the individual S3 implementation.

Taking a step further, ARDIA-Net developed a collaboration approach including three options for possible funding schemes⁹ at the core of the AlpsConnect approach:

Cooperation between single projects: good for funding of existing partnerships - a) synergies between existing, already funded projects as a basis for immediate cooperation or b) project groups work together towards one common goal while they apply with single projects to fully independent funding schemes and aim for a cooperation between their individual projects after successful funding decision; a low-threshold approach to jointly tackle a shared problem → support of knowledge exchange and content-related partnerships

Cross-regional cooperation projects: this solution aims at programme owners (public authorities), keeps all procedures and regulations in terms of submission and funding separate across the participating regional funding authorities, while allowing a joint, synchronised evaluation process → cross-regional content generation, but regional funding regulations

Joint synchronized calls & coordination office: this solution aims at programme owners (public authorities), identifying joint common goals and funding need (based on S3), setting up a joint synchronized call (e.g. Innovation Express 2021¹⁰) by combining existing regional funding approaches managed by a coordination office, suitable for bigger cross-regional consortia to apply for the newly set synchronized call → synchronized calls for proposals, based on common topics of strategic importance (S3)

As documented in the ARDIA-Net Policy Memo 3, the experience of launching the Innovation Express 2021 call concluded that it is worth applying on a broader basis in the Alpine space and other macro-regions for three main reasons: it brings together new actors in a simple way, it is driven by the participating regions and it is SME friendly.¹¹ The call focused on AI in healthcare

⁹ More details and instructions about the how to implement each Option is included in Pfaller, P., Ammerl, T., Keller, M., Reingruber, I. 2021. *Key elements of an S3 based funding scheme including target group needs analysis. ARDIA-Net Report.*

https://www.alpine-space.org/projects/ardia-net/results/d.t1.1.1_key-elements-of-an-s3-based-funding-scheme_final-update_1.pdf

¹⁰ <https://innovation-express-2021.b2match.io/> or see annex “Innovation Express 2021” under, ARDIA-Net: Potential public funding sources on regional, national and EU level (2021)

https://www.alpine-space.org/projects/ardia-net/results/d.t1.1.1_potential-public-funding-sources-on-regional-national-and-eu-level_final-update.pdf

¹¹ ARDIA-Net POLICY MEMO #03: Experiences of the Innovation Express 2021 Call: Lessons Learned and Policy Implications of the First Alpine Region Cross-regional Funding Scheme 06/12/2021

applications and digital solutions in sustainable industry. Four regions collaborated and went through a matchmaking event and found themselves together with fitting regional programs.

Using the insights generated in the ARDIA-Net project, it is recommended, that Public Authorities and Policy Makers use the proposed ARDIA-Net AlpsConnect mechanisms, especially the Joint Synchronized Call & Coordination Office (e.g. in the "Innovation Express"), in order to set a funding framework for cross-regional cooperation projects. As already stressed by the ARDIA-Net project¹², by using the mechanism no funds are crossing borders, regions remain completely independent in their funding decisions, no new funding programs must be established, and no new legal frameworks must be developed.

In order to foster innovative collaboration projects across borders, regional governments can use their formulated S3 to find partner-regions that are willing to synchronize funding calls, underlining the importance of the outward-looking dimension of S3.

¹² Please also see Pfaller, P., Ammerl, T., Keller, M., Reingruber, I. 2021. *Key elements of an S3 based funding scheme including target group needs analysis. ARDIA-Net Report.* and https://www.alpine-space.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Sergi-Costa_ARDIA-Net_SCosta_20211122.pdf

2. List of Joint Actions

Joint actions facilitate collaboration and co-creative innovation processes across the entire Alpine Region and assist in bringing stakeholders together. Within the following chapter services and products, the public authorities can support the innovative practices of stakeholders within the region. The most useful support action would be the development of a “one-stop-shop”, a common platform for all needed information. This can be understood as a supporting product when the online platform aims to act as a collaboration tool.

2.1. List of recommended Services

To present a comprehensive overview of services a short list presents in summary the outlined recommendations as specific services:

- Establishment of an alpine office, which organises matchmaking events, interacts with stakeholders to work on needed funding and presents S3 into the local stakeholder groups
 - events, centrally organised with focus on one subtopic such as artificial intelligence as part of digitalization
 - display of contact persons for building cooperation
 - organised and financed cluster meeting with relevant national / local public representative
- Establishment of support institutions across the entire alpine area, that provide information on funding opportunities, accompany in the process and create partnerships (in exchange with the Alpine Office).
 - The practice of “BAYFor”, a regional agency focussing on supporting funding-application and partner-connections, is especially helpful for SMEs and Businesses. Guiding interested stakeholders through available funding-schemes and connecting same-minded.
 - almost 1/3 of the survey responders knew of support offices for finding a partnership, accordingly communication efforts must go into the direction of make them more visible if present, or to clarify to stakeholders what would be the most convenient (depending on set of alternatives) if there isn't a public office.
- Development of ONE platform that brings all desired data to a joint place
 - platform, presenting the relevant topics and interests, previous projects
 - Combination or connection of several existing EU Pages would be possible:
 - [S3 platform](#): but with a more regional focus
 - [CORDIS](#) page: presentation of research results from projects
 - [Funding Tenders](#): possibility to match with profiles, to build cooperation
- Adaptation of existing or Development of new funding opportunities to support alpine regional cooperation
 - Smaller funding in terms of financial support but especially in terms of amount of partners
 - Longer financing periods, which allow a better planning and acquisition of personnel

- Additional funding for the use of the generated ideas after the project is officially finished

2.2. Supporting Product: Platform as a collaboration tool

An online presence in form of a big alpine platform is estimated as most important, supportive and beneficial tool to foster collaboration, manifest the Smart Specialization Strategy (s3) approaches and flourish alpine-wide the levels of innovation.

There are many pages already online supporting in the process of gathering information, which is vital for the SMEs as the survey showed.¹³The most relevant platform are the S3 platform, presenting countries or federal state S3 topics, the CORDIS website, which presents projects results from Alpine projects and the Funding tenders website, which offers the presentation through profiles to match with potential partners. All of them show an aspect which is interesting to the stakeholders, however the pages are not known and the search and use of them is too time consuming. If one would combine these pages and add some more beneficial tools such as a guiding Chabot, the presentation of events and open calls and some further documents, this page could be a very useful toolbox for all stakeholders in the alpine area.

The website needs however, to be operated by a neutral alpine office and always kept up-to-date by them. Here the matchmaking processes can start with the profiles and the events can be pushed to bring people together in specific topic related events.

The following list presents the key elements for such an interesting website. It's development would make an interesting follow up project, beneficial to the entire alpine area.

Website Content:

- Smart Specialization
 - Overview in definition
 - Presentation of value, benefit and goal
 - All S3 focus topics in English
 - Regional S3 presentation, federal S3 and country S3
 - Connection to funding schemes (funding is based on S3 orientation?)
 - Contact point on PA level? Or BSO?
- Funding
 - Open calls
 - Planned calls (tropic on year prior)
 - FAQ and tips
 - Document (collaboration contracts, terms and conditions, calculation example)
- Projects

¹³ Question 6



- Finished projects
- Project results
- Learnings
- Connected projects
- Link to project websites if still relevant
- Tags of the S3 topics
- Profiles – Partner matching
 - Profiles with indications on
 - Company focus / field
 - Relevant S3 topics
 - Funded programs
 - current projects
 - Contact person
- Starting page:
 - Overview on the mentioned points
 - Upcoming events
 - Networking opportunities
 - News: finished projects, new calls
 - General contact information
 - Login to profile backend
 - Chatbot: To guide one through the page, help find answers, quick information exchange





3. Indications on Smart Specialization Strategies

Smart Specialization Strategies, also called Research and Innovation Strategies (RIS and S3), target the definition of regional core topics and focus the policy support and investments on the national key priorities. Therewith, they function as place-based innovation policy concepts, which support the regional prioritization or innovation fields, sectors and technologies.¹⁴

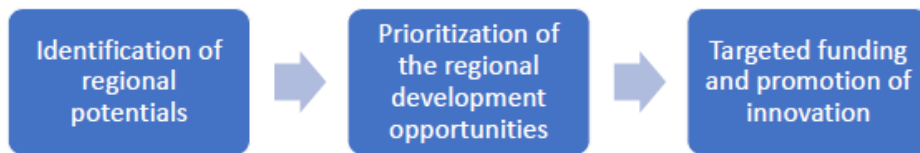


Figure 9: Process of defining the S3 topics within a region

Accordingly, these strategies drive the governmental decisions on funding directions, innovation fostering und support mechanism. However, putting these strategic political approaches into consideration of the gathered business and academic feedback, it can quickly be seen that promotion activities, transparency considerations and global narratives are essential to manifest these into the research society. Business and academic representatives outlined that the term and its meaning are unaware to them and the chosen topics of focus to broad and top-level to clearly identify with. Accordingly, this paper want to outline a clear recommendation for public authorities to invest in the explanation of the terms and meaning, the transparent new design of processes as well as promotion.

3.1. Supporting the S3 establishment in Businesses and Academia through Public Authority actions

In general it can be said, that businesses and academic researches alpine wide are mostly not familiar with the term, its aim and usefulness. In order to support them in approaching the matter of Smart Specialization Strategies (S3) some clear recommendations can be made to the public authorities:

- Definition of terms
The communication of the value, target and benefits for ALL triple helix stakeholders, especially Business stakeholders, is essential to establish the S3 as a widely used tool.
- English Translation
Especially the regional strategic approaches are perceived as useful in terms of building collaborations and of high interest for setting up cross-regional partnerships. However, when investigating the regional S3 descriptions, it gets obvious that they often are only available in their local languages. One common online outline of all alpine relevant topics in English, will according to made investigations support the collaboration of alpine stakeholders. An easy access to this information joints same-minded players.

¹⁴ Morisson, A. & Pattinson, M. (2020). Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3). Lille: Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform.



- Simpler wording**
 A simpler wording makes it more comprehensive for Non-PA stakeholders, whom are not in contact with these descriptions on a daily base. The simplifying of the term will ensure transparency and ensure a common joint understanding of the goal, focus and use. The likeliness of active use of the strategic approach is to raise with the opportunity to fully grasp the intention.
- Promotion and Communication of the value, target and benefits to the stakeholders**
 With the presentation of the understandable terms, specific regional topics and outline of the described benefits emerging from the S3 definitions, a campaign to broadcast the information towards the triple helix stakeholders shall establish the approach in their minds: spreading the existence, showing the benefit and value of the S3 definition; especially targeted towards SMEs and Business stakeholders.
- Breakdown to local regional approaches rather than on federal state base**
 In terms of supporting the development of alpine partnerships, the outline of local strategic approaches would allow the investigation of regional topic clusters and allow a general selection of research areas based on the interesting topic.
- Topics need to meet the relevance of SME and academia research fields to be applicable and acceptable to them**
 The selection of more relevant S3 topics, which can be possible when focusing on regional and a more specifically adaptation to local needs then on the federal state level, will actually support the collaboration search of the regions stakeholders. They can quickly understand the different focus topics of the areas.
- Contact person and Interaction with stakeholders to support engagement**
 Establishing a contact person among the government to support S3 inquiries and be present for the triple helix stakeholders as well as the involvement through the interaction with stakeholders and the engagement of the PA supports the consideration of S3 topics → further suggestion in following subchapter.

3.2. Interaction of Public Authorities with Businesses and Academia to support Smart Specialization Strategies

The engagement of a local contact point allows an easy access to the topics for all triple helix stakeholders and acts as a central source of information to booster the general region. Accordingly, a representative of the public authority should act as a bridge and needs to:

- engage with local Businesses and Academia to establish and define the local focus topics,
- be available for external requests, representing the overall region with the aim on supporting the local level of innovation and driving local topics on an alpine scale by implementing cross-regional collaborations.

Furthermore, the engagement of the region and S3 representing person in local networks will be highlighting specific advantages of the S3 for local stakeholders, is able to outline the added value and benefits of their use and pushes the comprehension within the triple helix stakeholders.

As outlined, the engagement of local PA towards local Businesses and Academia fosters the use and understanding of S3. It is further highlighting local contact points and specific advantages of the S3 for local stakeholders. Inclusion of business and academia in the process of defining new S3 approaches on regional base (the stakeholders mentioned they do not orientate their business at S3 but if it fits to them that is nice, they do not understand the value as it does not represent their reality)

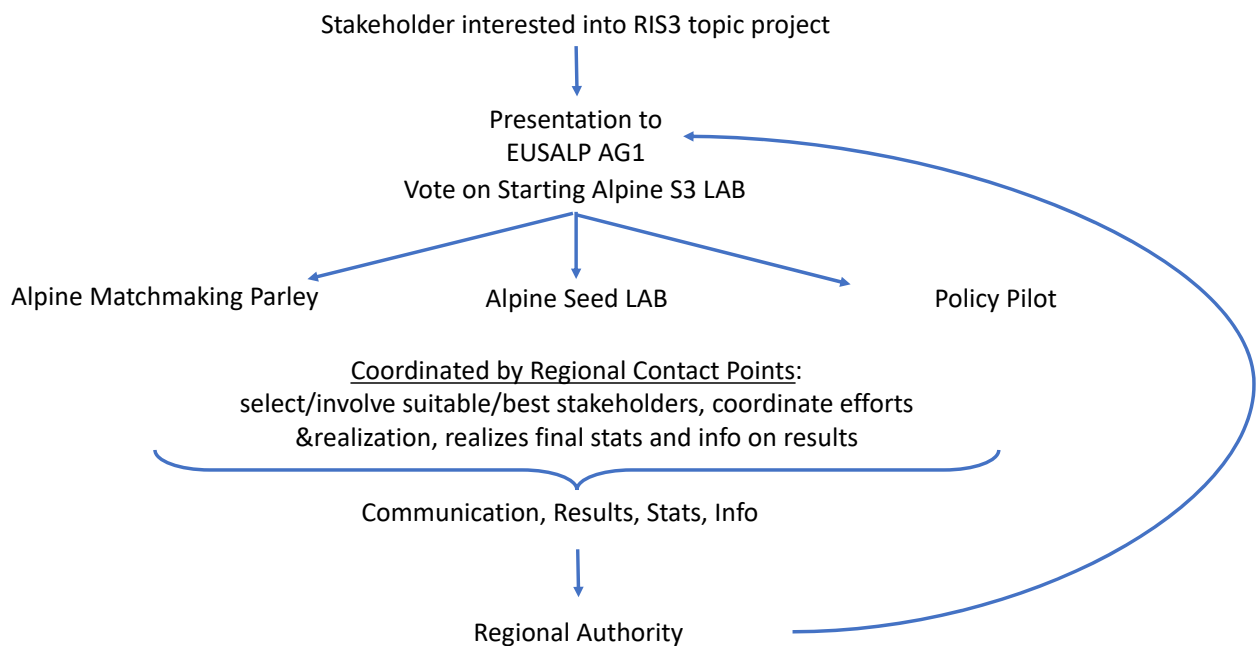


Figure 10 Bottom Up approach and feedback loop on collaboration on RIS3 in the Alpine Region





Appendix

Appendix 1 Questionnaire for the Matching of Participant Profile (Matchmaking)

Name of the representative	
Name of the institution	
Contact Information: Phone Mail Business Address	
Area of business	Wählen Sie ein Element aus.
Company Type	Wählen Sie ein Element aus.
Field of interest	Wählen Sie ein Element aus.
Topics of interest	<p>Mobility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> E-Mobility <input type="checkbox"/> Automotive Mobility <input type="checkbox"/> Battery systems and storage <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrogen <input type="checkbox"/> Powertrain Technologies <input type="checkbox"/> Public Transportation <p>Digitalization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Data Science <input type="checkbox"/> ICT-Security <input type="checkbox"/> Industry 4.0 <input type="checkbox"/> Internet of Things <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial Intelligence <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Training <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Infrastructure <input type="checkbox"/> Smart Cities <input type="checkbox"/> Smart Villages <p>Sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Green and renewable Energy <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Energy Sources <input type="checkbox"/> Smart Resourcing <input type="checkbox"/> Clean Production <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Innovation <input type="checkbox"/> Circular Economy <input type="checkbox"/> Green Manufacturing

<p>What are you looking for?</p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Funding of an existing idea <input type="checkbox"/> General funding input <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation with industry <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation with academic research <input type="checkbox"/> General alpine wide matching </p>
<p>Idea Presentation: Do you already have an idea for a joint project?</p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, and I am happy to share it in the matching group through a short pitch to find a perfect match <input type="checkbox"/> No, no idea yet but I am eager to partner with transnational institutions and bring their idea forward <input type="checkbox"/> I just want to see if the matching works </p>

Consent to the use of the presented data: I hereby consent to the use of the data to merge interested participants. I am aware that the data for this purpose will be stored on the computers of the project staff and processed by them. I hereby consent to the storage and project-related use of the data.

Consent to record the event: I hereby consent to the recording of the event. The organiser reserves the right to use it as an online stream at a later date. By registering, you agree that images, sound and text/chat may be recorded and that the transmitted data may be stored and processed in accordance with the data protection regulations and used by the organiser to contact you.



Appendix 2 Desk Analysis of R&I Platforms and Projects



Format	Topic and Sub Topic	Purposes	Business model	Interesting for/into Alpine Region Shared S3 Topics	Evaluation of interest	Regions, cities or areas involved
1 - TRANSFORM https://www.transformca.org/landing-page/shared-mobility	Sustainable communities - research, networking, raising funds and planning green communities.	Increases the green mobility in the Bay Area and California. Promotes walkable communities with excellent transportation choices to connect people of all incomes to opportunity and reduces pollution.	Nonprofit organization, raising funds and donations. The website is open and no needs inscription.	Circular economy, Smart Mobility, AI, Sustainable tourism, life-sciences technologies for healthcare.	Interesting for green mobility solutions and urbanistic projects for green communities.	California, Bay Area.
2 - ENTRANCE https://www.entrance-platform.eu/	Sustainable Mobility - Matchmaking platform for innovative transport and mobility tools and services	Reducing the European CO2 emissions and pollutants caused by the transport and mobility sector. The overall concept focus of the ENTRANCE project lies in the “supply-demand-finance” triangle that is envisaged for all transport and mobility modes and all relevant stakeholders.	Funded by Horizon 2020 EU and private partners. Free account.	Smart Mobility, AI, life-sciences technologies for healthcare.	Interesting because the project lies in the “supply-demand-finance” triangle.	7 European Country: Italy, Spain, Belgium, Norway, France, Germany, The Netherlands.

<p>3 - POLICY LEARNING PLATFORM</p> <p>https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/</p>	<p>Sustainable growth - research, technological development and innovation, low carbon economy, the environment and resource efficiency, SME competitiveness.</p>	<p>The Policy Learning Platform is the second action of the Interreg Europe programme, established to boost EU-wide policy learning and capitalisation on practices from regional development policies. The platform is a space for continuous learning where the policymaking community in Europe can tap into the knowhow of experts and peers.</p>	<p>European funds, new program 2021-2027.</p> <p>Free account to all policy makers in Europe.</p>	<p>Circular economy, Smart mobility, AI, life-sciences technologies for healthcare. Free account.</p>	<p>Very interesting because in this platform are involved different kind of subjects and in the advanced search there is possibility to select the S3 platform.</p>	<p>Europe</p>
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<p>4 - OPENU (European University Foundation) https://uni-foundation.eu/project/openu/</p>	<p>Sustainable mobility - platform for European universities networking, research, and students mobility.</p>	<p>Supporting the establishment of European Universities. The EUF is an influential advocate for a substantial increase of the quantity and quality of student mobility, regularly putting forward new ideas, policies and recommendations. They have a history of developing the Erasmus programme.</p>	<p>This project has been funded with the support from the European Commission and co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of EU. The project is open only for Universities (Staff members from EUF Universities, Erasmus+ project coordinators (KA2, KA3), project applicants, project advisors and staff members from project units/departments)</p>	<p>AI (digitalization), sustainable mobility. Reserved to the EUF network University.</p>	<p>Not so interesting because is closed and too specific.</p>	<p>See university involved here: https://uni-foundation.eu/university/university-of-porto/</p>
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<p>5 - PLATONE https://www.platone-h2020.eu/</p>	<p>Renewable energy resources - advanced management platforms for operation of distribution network.</p>	<p>Unlock grid flexibility and to realize an open and non-discriminatory market, linking users, aggregators and operators.</p>	<p>The project receives funding from EU's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program. It's a 12 partners consortium from public and private realities.</p>	<p>AI, circular economy, life-sciences technologies for healthcare. Needs preregistration.</p>	<p>Quite interesting because is only about distribution system operators.</p>	<p>12 partner from Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy.</p>
<p>6 - SMARTICIPATE https://www.smarticipate.eu/</p>	<p>Smart cities - network to share projects between public administrations and citizens.</p>	<p>Enhancing urban planning and increasing the involvement of citizens.</p>	<p>The project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020. Free account.</p>	<p>AI, smart mobility. life-sciences technologies for healthcare.</p>	<p>Quite interesting because is about cities.</p>	<p>Cities involved: Milan, Hamburg, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London. Partners: https://www.smarticipate.eu/about/project-partners/</p>

<p>7 - BRIDGE</p> <p>https://www.h2020-bridge.eu/</p>	<p>Smart grid - research, networking platform, energy storage, islands and digitalization</p>	<p>It aims to foster knowledge sharing among projects as well as a dialogue between innovation and market regulation, through different Working Groups. The goal is to increase the impact that projects have to speed up the energy transition.</p>	<p>The project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020, and now from Horizon Europe. Restricted account.</p>	<p>AI, smart mobility, circular economy, life-sciences technologies for healthcare.</p>	<p>Very interesting because there are working groups about Data Management, Regulation, Customer Engagement, Business Model.</p>	<p>All the European Country are involved except Lithuania. A few pilot sites are hosted outside the EU in Israel, USA, and China.</p>
<p>8 - CICERONE (CEPS)</p> <p>https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-projects/cicerone-circular-economy-platform-for-european-priorities-strategic-agenda/</p>	<p>Circular economy - networking platform, research, events, publications.</p>	<p>Brings together programme owners, research organizations and other stakeholders to create a platform for efficient Circular Economy programming.</p>	<p>Horizon 2020 EU-funded project. Different kind of membership with registration fee. The CEPS' funding comes from a variety of sources, including corporate and institutional membership fees, research projects, foundation grants and conference fees.</p>	<p>AI, circular economy, smart mobility, life-sciences technologies for healthcare.</p>	<p>Very interesting because in this platform are involved different kind of subject to share informations.</p>	<p>See partners here: https://cicerone-h2020.eu/partners/</p>

<p>9 - PANTERA</p> <p>https://pantera-platform.eu/</p>	<p>Green energy - research and innovation, platform for sustainable energy</p>	<p>Ensure a sustainable, secure and affordable energy supply in the EU. The main objective of PANTERA project is to deliver an interactive multi-functional platform of pan European status and influence capable of leveraging coherence and trust as a pull towards enhanced R&I in energy systems centred around an integrated grid active and responsive.</p>	<p>Funded by Horizon 2020 EU. The project consortium is led by FOSS Research Centre for Sustainable Energy, University of Cyprus and consists of 9 partners. Restricted account, there I a questionnaire to be admitted.</p>	<p>AI, circular economy, life-sciences technologies for healthcare.</p>	<p>Interesting for the energy research approach for local energy systems.</p>	<p>The project consortium is led by FOSS Research Centre for Sustainable Energy, University of Cyprus and consists of 9 partners from Germany, Italy, Norway, Latvia, Cyprus, Ireland and Bulgaria.</p>
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<p>10 - EUROPEAN CLUSTER COLLABORATION PLATFORM (ECCP)</p> <p>https://clustercollaboration.eu/</p>	<p>Sustainable resources - Green and digital transformation networking, organizing events, research, publication resilience, industrial ecosystem, European cluster partnership, platform to share informations between industrial clusters.</p>	<p>Resource efficiency. Make EU's economy sustainable. The European Resource Efficiency Knowledge Centre (EREK) is one of the tools deployed by the European Commission to achieve such an ambition.</p>	<p>Funded by EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME).</p> <p>Free account.</p>	<p>AI, circular economy, life-sciences technologies for healthcare.</p>	<p>Very interesting for the clusters ecosystem.</p>	<p>European partners (Spain, Lithuania, Italy, Turkey, Estonia, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, France, Sweden, Germany, Finland..), but also international s (Switzerland, UK, Colombia, Barbados, Argentina, Japan...)</p>
<p>11 - AI4EU</p> <p>https://www.ai4europe.eu/</p>	<p>Artificial Intelligence - connects research and business application, platform to share informations.</p>	<p>The European AI on Demand Platform brings together the AI community while promoting European values. The platform is a facilitator of knowledge transfer from research to business application.</p>	<p>Funded by Horizon 2020 EU. Open source platform for the development, training, sharing and deployment of AI models. Free account.</p>	<p>AI, circular economy, life-sciences technologies for healthcare.</p>	<p>Very interesting because it seems to be the biggest platform about AI applications in industry at the moment.</p>	<p>See community here: https://www.ai4europe.eu/ai-community/organizations</p>

<p>12 - BE OPEN (Open science in transport)</p> <p>https://beopen-project.eu/</p>	<p>Smart mobility - research, promote, regulate and standardize Open Science in transport.</p>	<p>The project aims to assist in operation analysing Open Science in transport research at the level, through a series of targeted coordination and support activities.</p>	<p>Funded by Horizon 2020. Free account.</p>	<p>AI, circular economy, life-sciences technologies for healthcare.</p>	<p>Interesting because “brings together a strong partnership comprising leading transport research institutions and research networks at pan-European level, covering all transport modes (i.e. road, rail, water, air), and partners with high level expertise in Open Science practice”</p>	<p>See here partners and board: https://beopen-project.eu/partners</p>
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<p>13 - ARDIA-NET</p> <p>https://www.alpine-space.org/projects/ardia-net/en/home</p>	<p>Circular bioeconomy in Alpine region - optimize resources and communication. Green economy, zero emissions, digitalization, developing alpine regions.</p>	<p>ARDIA-Net aims to develop a multilevel, multinational and coherent Alpine RDI Area for cross-regional and interdisciplinary cooperation and implement a joint funding framework and pilot projects addressing circular bioeconomy and health economy megatrends.</p>	<p>Co-financed by EU and Interreg Alpine Space. The website is open and no needs inscription.</p>	<p>Circular economy, Smart Mobility, AI, Sustainable tourism, life-sciences technologies for healthcare.</p>	<p>Very very interesting because is specific about Alpine Regions.</p>	<p>Bavarian Research Alliance (DE), Business Upper Austria (AT), Innovation and Technology Transfer Salzburg (AT), Lombardy Green Chemistry Association (IT), Poly4EmI (SI), University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland – School of Engineering and Architecture of Fribourg (CH) and SC Sviluppo Chimica (IT).</p>
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<p>14 - EU S3 PLATFORM</p> <p>https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/</p>	<p>Sustainable growth - networking, digital innovation, agri food, blue growth, green energy, industrial modernization and transition, education, sustainable development.</p>	<p>Smart Specialisation strategy (S3) is a place-based innovation policy concept to support regional prioritisation in innovative sectors, fields or technologies through the 'entrepreneurial discovery process (EDP)', a bottom-up approach to reveal what a region does best in terms of its scientific and technological endowments</p>	<p>Funded by EU. Registration on the S3 Platform is open to regional and national administrations of EU, candidate, neighbouring countries and to any other non-EU third country national or regional administration that wish to be involved and participate in the S3 Platform.</p>	<p>Circular economy, Smart Mobility, AI, Sustainable tourism, life-sciences technologies for healthcare.</p>	<p>Very interesting</p>	<p>Areas involved here:</p> <p>https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/lagging-regions</p>
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