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EUSALP INNOVATION FACILITY

Feasibility study for the development of the EUSALP IF
Final Report

Interreg
Alpine Space
AlpGov

EUROPEAN UNION

Vienna and Vaduz, 21 June 2022

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Client

Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz
Rosenkavalierplatz 2
81925 München
Deutschland

Contractor (consortium)

Rosinak & Partner ZT GmbH
Götz Charity Consulting Aktiengesellschaft

Authors

Wolfgang Pfefferkorn, Rosinak & Partner ZT GmbH
Elisabeth Stix, Rosinak & Partner ZT GmbH

Andi Götz, Götz Charity Consulting Aktiengesellschaft

Vienna and Vaduz

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1. Introduction – EUSALP Innovation Facility

1.1. Scope of the project

The service to be provided consists of preparing a study in coordination with the Project Coordination and an "EIF Advisory Group" on the feasibility of a new type of financing instrument within the EUSALP called the **"EUSALP Innovation Facility" (EIF)**.

Macro-regional strategies such as the EUSALP will only be able to fulfill their role as laboratories for a modern Europe if the means are available to join forces, strengthen cooperation and to achieve economic, social and territorial cohesion. To this end, all available **sources of funding**, whether European, international, national, regional, public or private, must be used. Within the framework of EU-funding however, eligibility and other rules limit the flexibility for overall approaches covering different types of activities, territories or partners to be involved. In some cases – e.g. cross-sectoral - it seems almost impossible to gain financial support in this context.

Hence, the assessment of the feasibility of a specific and **flexible funding opportunity** separate from other funding programmes – the so called "EUSALP Innovation Facility" (EIF) – was defined as one Strategic priority policy area.

The intention of this service therefore lies in **exploring the feasibility** and potential frame-conditions how to mobilize further funding sources for short time, dynamic and cross-sectoral funding requirements for serving a wide range of potential and varied beneficiaries – also considering private financial support such as enterprises or foundations. In this context, the most practicable type of financing as well as the potential amount of funds (constant or flexible) should be examined.

The feasibility study intends to create a basis for making better use of sources of finance outside of the "classic" public funding instruments with the involvement of the private sector.

The output of this project should therefore be a feasibility study on a "EUSALP Innovation Facility" (EIF) containing:

- A needs analysis and matching with potential funding sources,
- Potential legal structures and prerequisites,
- Potential governance schemes (administration, rules of procedure, decision making), also in relation to EUSALP governance,
- A profile for such an instrument (topics, nature of activities),
- Results of the dialogue process with the Project Coordination and outlining the process ahead.

2. Sampling (Part Ia)

2.1. A brief overview: What is EUSALP?

2.1.1. European Union macro-regional strategies (MRS)

European Union macro-regional strategies (MRS) were firstly launched in 2009. MRS have been promoted as key instruments for the implementation and interconnection of EU policies and programmes as well as to foster cohesion and competitiveness across larger (functional) areas. MRS therefore pursue a specific territorial focus.

The first MRS to be endorsed by the European Council was the EU-Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) in 2009.

Since then three more MRS have been established: the EU-Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) in 2011, the EU-Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) in 2014 and as the youngest the **EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP)** in 2015.

As an overarching strategy a **'Macro-regional strategy'** "means an integrated framework endorsed by the European Council, which may be supported by the European Structural and Investment Funds among others, to address common challenges faced by a defined geographical area relating to EU Member States and third countries located in the same geographical area which thereby benefit from strengthened cooperation contributing to achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion[1]".

In other words, MRS such as EUSALP build an integrated framework for addressing common challenges, bringing together stakeholders from different sectors, governmental levels, and countries in a multinational and multiregional context. All MRS are accompanied by a rolling action plan to be regularly updated in the light of new, emerging needs and changing contexts.

2.1.2. European Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP)

The preparatory work for **EUSALP** started around 2011 and was based on initiatives and steps taken by a large number of different alpine stakeholders. Cooperation and collaboration in the Alpine region could already look back on a long tradition and the establishment of various institutions and governance structures like the Alpine Convention, Arge-Alp, Alpe-Adria, Euregios, trilateral cooperation between Slovenia, Northeast-Italy and Austria and other structures. The Interreg Alpine Space programme has also existed since the year 2000 and has made a decisive contribution to strengthening transnational cooperation in the Alpine region.

These preparatory steps and processes finally led to the European Council's meeting on 19-20 December 2013, granting the European Commission the mandate to develop a macro-regional EU strategy for the Alpine region by June 2015 in cooperation with the member states. On 28 July 2015, EUSALP was published by the European Commission (EC) and the communication and action plan was adopted by the College of the Commission. After confirmation by the General Affairs Council in

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/de/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/, 2021-03-02.

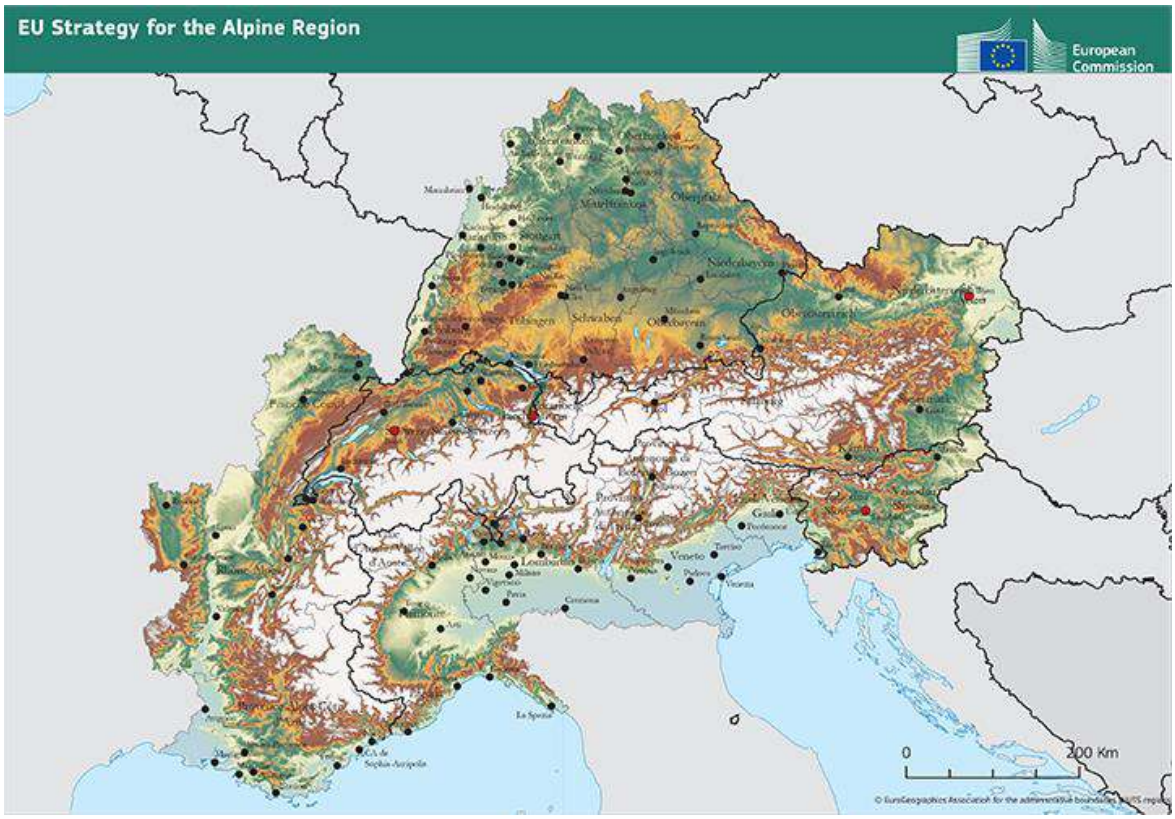
November 2015, EUSALP was adopted by the European Council on 28 June 2016. The implementation has been running since the first half of 2016.

EUSALP was thus developed in a joint process by the EC, the EU-member and partner states and regions covering the Alpine region and other stakeholders, and adopted through corresponding acts at EU- and partner-state level. However, like the other MRS, EUSALP does not have its own legal entity and can be understood as a political agreement among EC, European Council, partner states and the regions.

2.1.2.1. Territorial coverage

The territory of EUSALP covers the **Alpine region** with its seven states, of which five are EU-member states (Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia) and two are non-EU countries (Liechtenstein, Switzerland). At regional level, 48 regions in these seven states are part of EUSALP. In the upcoming funding period 2021-2027, EUSALP will be geographically aligned with the Alpine Space programme (exception: Region Alsace in France is part of the Alpine Space programme but not of EUSALP). Apart from that a wide range of further actors and institutions from administrations, academia and civil society are involved in the implementation of EUSALP.

Figure 1: Map of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region with 7 states and 48 regions



Source: https://www.alpine-region.eu/eusalp-eu-strategy-alpine-region (2021-06-02)

2.1.2.2. Governance structure

When implementing the MRS, the aim was not to create any new structures. EUSALP therefore should not create its own structures, but rather build on the networking of existing governmental structures and governance processes. The EUSALP governance-structure consists of a General Assembly, an Executive Board (EB) and nine thematic Action Groups (AG). These bodies are made up of members of national or regional governments.

The **General Assembly** consists of high-level political representatives of states and regions involved in the strategy, the European Commission, and the Alpine Convention (AC) as observer. The General Assembly politically guides the forthcoming of EUSALP and its activities.

The **Executive Board** is formed by representatives of states and regions as well as representatives from the European Commission, and as observers too, the Alpine Convention and the Interreg Alpine Space programme. The Executive Board provides strategic guidance concerning the management and implementation of EUSALP and its action plan. It steers and fosters the overall horizontal and vertical coordination of the strategy and the preparation of the General Assembly meetings. If necessary, the Executive Board can invite Action Group Leaders in charge of the implementation of actions to exchange certain themes. In addition, the Executive Board has to collect the reports of the Action Groups and monitor the overall implementation. To ensure coherence, the rotating chair of the Executive Board will coincide with the presidency of the General Assembly.

The **Action Groups** finally are in charge of the operational implementation auf EUSALP projects. The AGs too consist of representatives from the member states and regions in decision-making capacity but also of further stakeholder representatives in advisory capacity. Each AG has at least on, in most cases two AG leaders as chairpersons. The Action Group leaders are the drivers of the day-to-day business and operational implementation of AG projects. Their role, capacities, resources, and engagement therefore are a key element for the successful implementation of EUSALP.

Key tasks of the members of the different Action Groups are to develop expertise in a wide range of topics, to trigger the development of implementation activities, to stimulate investment and to ensure the transfer of knowledge and experiences among the involved organisations and individuals.

The **basic document** that describes the structures and guides the implementation as well as the strategic direction and implementation mechanisms is the EUSALP Action Plan. The Action Plan can be understood as a rolling document, to be updated in the light of new, emerging needs and changing contexts. Additionally, each Action Group defines its AG work programme, which has to be related to the Action Plan and the general strategic direction of EUSALP.

2.1.2.3. Policy Areas and Objectives

EUSALP contains three general **Thematic Policy Areas** and one cross-cutting Policy Area. The Policy Areas are further detailed by **Objectives**. The thematic areas and objectives are embedded in the overarching target system formulated by the EU and they address the most important challenges of the Alpine region:

- to tackle the economic, social and territorial imbalances existing in the Alpine Region,
- to stimulate an innovative and sustainable model of development,
- to foster the promotion of growth and jobs, and the preservation of natural and cultural assets in the area.

EUSALP focuses on areas of (macro-) regional and mutual interest. The priority areas and specific objectives selected hence reflect the commitment to cooperate and collaborate in this macro-regional context, to encourage common solutions and to raise unused potential.

Table 1: Thematic Policy Areas and Objectives of EUSALP

EUSALP: Thematic Policy Areas	EUSALP: Objectives
1st Thematic Policy Area: Economic Growth and Innovation	**Objective 1:** Fair access to job opportunities, building on the high competitiveness of the Region - Fostering sustainable growth and promoting innovation in the Alps: from theory to practice, from research centres to enterprises
2nd Thematic Policy Area: Mobility and Connectivity	**Objective** 2: Sustainable internal and external accessibility to all Connectivity for all: in search of a balanced territorial development through environmentally friendly mobility patterns, transports systems and communication services and infrastructures
3rd Thematic Policy Area: Environment and Energy	**Objective 3:** A more inclusive environmental framework for all and renewable and reliable energy solutions for the future - Ensuring sustainability in the Alps: preserving the Alpine heritage and promoting a sustainable use of natural and cultural resources
Cross-cutting Policy Area: Governance, including Institutional Capacity	**Objective 4:** A sound macro-regional governance model for the Region (to improve cooperation and the coordination of action) - Improving cooperation and the coordination of action in the Alpine Region

Source: https://www.alpine-region.eu/objectives (2021-06-02)

2.1.3. EUSALP AGs and their contribution to the Policy Areas

The implementation of activities and projects takes place primarily in the nine EUSALP AGs. The following table shows the list of the nine working groups and the Thematic Policy Areas, to the implementation of which they mainly contribute.

Table 2: EUSALP AGs and their contribution to the Policy Areas

EUSALP AG / Thematic Policy Areas	1 - Economic Growth and Innovation	2 - Mobility and Connectivity	3- Environment and Energy	Governance, incl. Institutional Capacity
AG 1 - Research & Innovation				
AG 2 – Economic development				
AG 3 – Labour market, education and training				
AG 4 – Mobility				
AG 5 – Connectivity and Accessibility				
AG 6 – Resources				
AG 7 – Green Infrastructure				
AG 8 – Risk Governance				
AG 9 – Energy				

Source: Own illustration according to https://www.alpine-region.eu/objectives (2021-06-02)

2.2. Possible funding schemes for EUSALP - background

Macro-regional strategies have been set up as unique integrated frameworks to foster multilevel institutional cooperation on common issues in a defined geographical area of the EU. Their existence originally was based on the understanding that no new EU funds, no additional EU formal structures and no new EU legislation should be established and instead they should be implemented by mobilising and aligning existing EU and national funding relevant to the objectives and actions of the strategy. The states and regions affected by the strategy should commit to drawing on the funding needed to implement the action plan.

In 2020 the EC published the most recent report on the implementation of the four MRS (COM(2020) 578 final), another report was published in 2019 (COM(2019) 21 final).

In the 2020`s report the EC stated that the MRS are highly relevant in delivering the EU priorities for 2019-2024 in their territories. Despite the turbulences the COVID-19 pandemic caused in 2020 and still ongoing, the platform for policy coordination across countries and among funds, sectors, governance levels and stakeholders provided by the MRS has been key in supporting the EU`s priorities. One of the most important current processes also concerning EUSALP was the ongoing “embedding process”. This process aims at aligning the relevant priorities of EU funding programmes 2021-2027 with the MRS. This embedding process led to reinforced interactions between strategies and programmes while preparing the 2021-2027 programme documents.

This “embedding” is expected to increase programmes’ impacts through better cooperation and coordination, to offer more concrete starting points for the needs of MRS and in addition to provide the MRS with the means to achieve their objectives. This should make a significant contribution to closing the gap between the MRS and funding opportunities, which was highlighted as a major challenge in the previous report (COM (2019) 21 final).

This report also highlighted that the Interreg programmes - despite their limited amounts of funding compared to other funds - have played a significant role in supporting the strategies’ implementation. The other funds at EU-level, other ESIF-programmes as well as national and other sources of funding have not been easily available to support the strategies and its projects.

Up to now, support for the activities of EUSALP mainly came from the Interreg Alpine Space programme. The Alpine Space programme contributed to the EUSALP considerably and effectively along all EUSALP Action Groups and alignment took place at different levels: strategic and operational coordination, information exchange, funding, multi-level governance and capacity building, mobilizing actors, stimulating networks, integration between projects and Action Groups, coordinated communication and awareness-raising activities.

Bridging the gap between the MRS’s needs and funding opportunities will remain a critical challenge for 2021-2027. The European Structural and Investment funds (ESI Funds) however offer significant financial resources and a wide range of tools and technical options that could help ensure synergies and complementarity.

The above-mentioned embedding process, which is already taking place in the programme planning phase, should generally enable a significantly better starting position for the MRS and thus also EUSALP for the period 2021-2027 in all EU-co-funded programmes. The starting point should therefore be improved. Nevertheless, further efforts in terms of coordination, cooperation and other innovative approaches will be required in order to be able to fully exploit the potential of the MRS in their respective territories and therefore also EUSALP in the Alpine region.

2.3. Existing innovation related EU funding schemes and programmes

In preparation for the next EU-funding period 2021-2027, in the scope of EUSALP several analyses of possible starting points and funding options for EUSALP objectives through existing EU-programmes and funds have been commissioned, the main focus lying on innovation-related funding programmes. The aim of this work was to show which of these funding programmes would be well suited for the implementation of the AG work programme and thus for the implementation of the EUSALP policy areas and objectives.

Furthermore, the programme bodies of these future EU programmes should be made aware of the possible funding concerns of EUSALP and should be provided with information about the funding needs.

In general, the results of this work (see literature) as well as additional desk research by the authors of this report provide a sound overview of which funds and programmes might be available for EUSALP concerns and the EUSALP AGs in the next EU funding period 2021-2027.

The **results of this overview** are presented in **table 3** on the next pages. The table shows the EU funds and programmes, a brief description of the scope of the funds as well as those EUSALP AGs that might obtain funding from this fund ("potentially affected EUSALP AG"). The table provides an overview and assignment of those EUSALP AGs where possible starting points are most likely to be seen, but this should not be understood as excluding to the other AGs.

Apart from the funds and programmes mentioned in table 3 further funding might be available for EUSALP, e.g. from **bank**s and other international **financial institutions**. In addition, **national and regional** budgetary resources might also be mobilised, in particular in the non-EU countries covered by EUSALP as they do not participate in each EU-funding programme.

Based on this overview, a needs and gap analysis can be carried out as the next step in order to identify possible starting points for the EUSALP EIF (see chapter 3).

Table 3 (I): Overview - existing innovation related EU funding schemes and programmes

Programme / Fund	Scope of the programme/fund	potentially affected EU-SALP-AG
ARPAF	The Alpine Region Preparatory Action Fund (ARPAF) was a preparatory fund set up on the initiative of the European Parliament to promote the implementation of EUSALP. ARPAF supported EUSALP Action Groups in implementing their work plans and establishing economic and social cooperation in the Alpine macro-region in the funding period 2014-2020. Out of the budget 2017 of the European Parliament, 2 Million Euros were allocated to ARPAF, which enabled EUSALP Action Groups to implement 6 projects (ARPAF I) over a period of 2 years. In 2018, an additional 1 Million Euros were provided to support 5 more ARPAF projects (ARPAF II), which have to be implemented until 2021. The European Commission (DG Regio) announced to dedicate parts of its 2021 technical assistance funds in order to co-finance small European projects like the ones co-financed in the past by the ARPAF. Land Salzburg as Managing Authority of the Alpine Space Programme who has already managed ARPAF I and II, will be asked to manage the technical assistance funds of DG Regio which will co-finance ARPAF-type projects (foreseen for the EB-meeting in July 2021).	All AGs
INTERREG	Interreg is one of the key instruments of the EU supporting cooperation across borders through project funding. Its aim is to jointly tackle common challenges and find shared solutions in fields such as health, environment, research, education, transport, sustainable energy, territorial development and more. Interreg is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and has different strands: cross border, transnational and interregional cooperation programmes. The transnational Interreg Alpine Space Programme has so far been one of the most important sources of funding for EUSALP projects, cross border programmes additionally have also been started to get used.	All AGs
ERDF mainstream programmes	The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) mainstream programmes foster economic and social cohesion in Europe and reduce the differences in the level of development of the regions. The ERDF supports, amongst other things, the financing of productive investments to create or maintain permanent jobs, of the improvement of infrastructural development, the activities of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), research projects for the development of new products, processes and services or corporate environmental measures.	All AGs

Source: Own compilation based on BLUE (2020), COWI et.al. (2017), EUSALP & ALPGOV, EUSALP (2019), EUSALP (Action Group 3), EUSALP (Action Group 4), EUSALP (Action Group 5), EUSALP (Action Group 6, 2019) and web research (long citations and websites see literature references).

Table 4 (II): Overview - existing innovation related EU funding schemes and programmes

Programme / Fund	Scope of the programme/fund	potentially affected EU-SALP-AG
ESF + mainstream programmes	The European Social Fund (ESF) promotes employment measures such as increasing the employment rate, improving the quality of jobs and greater integration of vulnerable groups into the labor market in the member states and their regions.	AG 2, AG 3
CAP	The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for all EU countries is managed and funded at European level from the resources of the EU's budget, coming from different funds: EAGF, EAFRD, EAGF. The "first pillar" of the CAP provides income support and market measures, the "second pillar" generally supports rural development. The CAP contributes to the sustainable development of rural areas through three long-term objectives: » fostering the competitiveness of agriculture & forestry; » ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, and climate action; » achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of employment. For EUSALP AGs, the second pillar may offer the best starting points.	AG 5, AG 6, AG 7 AG 8
LEADER	LEADER is a local development method which engages local actors in the design and delivery of strategies, decision-making and resource allocation for the development of rural areas. It is implemented by Local Action Groups (LAGs) on the basis of local development strategies, and covers around 60% of the rural population in the EU. LEADER is implemented under the national and regional Rural Development Programmes of each EU Member States and is co-financed by the EAFRD (see CAP, second pillar).	AG 3 AG 5 AG 6, AG 7, AG 8
Horizon Europe	Horizon Europe is the key funding programme for research and innovation in the EU and said to be one of the most financially strong funding instruments worldwide for R & I. Horizon Europe supports creating and better dispersing of excellent knowledge and technologies. Legal entities from the EU and associated countries can participate. The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges.	AG 1, AG 2, AG 5, AG 6, AG 7, AG 8, AG 9

Source: Own compilation based on BLUE (2020), COWI et.al. (2017), EUSALP & ALPGOV, EUSALP (2019), EUSALP (Action Group 3), EUSALP (Action Group 4), EUSALP (Action Group 5), EUSALP (Action Group 6, 2019) and web research (long citations and websites see literature references).

Table 5 (III): Overview - existing innovation related EU funding schemes and programmes

Programme / Fund	Scope of the programme/fund	EUSALP-AG
LIFE	LIFE (L'Instrument Financier pour l'Environnement) is an EU funding programme that exclusively supports environmental issues. LIFE finances measures in the areas of biodiversity, environmental and climate protection. The European Commission manages the programme. The LIFE programme 2021-2027 is divided into four sub-programmes: “Nature and biodiversity”, “Circular economy and quality of life”, “Climate change mitigation and adaptation” and “Clean energy transition”. LIFE “Climate change mitigation and adaptation” was substantially increased for this period. The projects to be financed must show a benefit to the European Union, promote sustainable development and provide solutions to major environmental challenges.	AG 2, AG 6, AG 7, AG 8 AG 9
DIGITAL	The “Digital Europe Programme” (DIGITAL) supports European society and companies to make optimal use of the digital transformation. The programme finances for example the development and expansion of digital capacities and infrastructures and supports the objective of creating a digital single market. Implementation is done mainly through coordinated and strategic co-investments with Member States in the areas of high-performance computing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and advanced digital skills in the private and public sectors.	AG 1 AG 2 AG 3
COSME	COSME is a funding programme which stands for the "Competitiveness Of companies and for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises". The objectives of COSME mainly comprise facilitating access to finance for SMEs and creating a favorable environment for start-ups and business expansions. COSME is the only specific support programme for small and medium-sized enterprises in the EU.	AG 2
Erasmus+	Erasmus + supports the promotion of education, training, youth and sport in Europe. The 2021–2027 programme focuses on social inclusion, green and digital change and the promotion of the participation of young people in democratic life. It supports priorities and activities set out in the European Education Area, the Digital Education Action Plan and the European Skills Agenda. The programme also supports the European Pillar of Social Rights and implements the EU Youth Strategy.	AG 3
CEF	The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) is a key EU funding instrument that facilitates targeted infrastructure investment in the areas of transport and mobility at European level. It supports the development of high performing, sustainable and interconnected trans-European networks in the fields of transport, energy and digital services. CEF investments provide the financing of important links in Europe's energy, transport and digital backbone.	AG 4, AG 5, AG 9

Source: Own compilation based on BLUE (2020), COWI et.al. (2017), EUSALP & ALPGOV, EUSALP (2019), EUSALP (Action Group 3), EUSALP (Action Group 4), EUSALP (Action Group 5), EUSALP (Action Group 6, 2019) and web research (long citations and websites see literature references).

3. Needs and gaps analysis (Part I b – simulating the scope for the EIF)

3.1. EUSALP: Needs – and gap-analysis

Which needs of the EUSALP can be met with existing instruments, programmes and funds? Which ones are not covered by it and could therefore potentially be covered by an EIF? The following needs and gap analysis provides an overview of the needs that seem to be met as well as unmet. The analysis is based on the overview in the previous chapter as well as a comprehensive literature analysis and the knowledge shared in the expert team.

Table 6: EUSALP – Met needs

Table: Met needs	Comment
Thematic scope of EUSALP Policy Areas and Objectives largely covered by existing (EU) funds	As the overview in chapter 2.3 shows, the thematic concerns of EUSALP and its AGs are largely covered by existing EU funds or programmes. One or more funds or programmes at European level are available for each EUSALP AG; further support is available at national or regional level.
EUSALP Policy Areas and Objectives coherent with EU objectives	The overview also shows the good coherence of EUSALP, its Policy Areas and Objectives with the overarching objectives of EU policies. EUSALP objectives fit in well with the EU target system, the thematic work of the EUSALP AGs can contribute to the implementation of the overarching EU objectives.
Challenges thematically covered	The overview also shows that the major challenges specified for the Alpine region are thematically covered by the work of the EUSALP AGs and possible funding opportunities. There is a certain inflexibility with regard to the long terms of the EU programmes and possible short-term challenges or requirements.
Funding needs for professional project partners covered	In recent years, a professional funding world has developed at EU level that offers starting points for a wide range of funding needs. The above-mentioned funds and programmes offer professional project partners a wide range of funding opportunities. However, the emphasis here is on "professional" project partners, as the administrative requirements are consistently high and processes from application to implementation and project completion are complex. In many cases, project partners also need appropriate own financial resources or the possibility of pre-financing.
Embedding in European structures and exchange with other MRS supported	The basic possibilities of embedding the EUSALP concerns in the European structures as well as with other MRS seem to be basically covered by the given programmes and funding schemes. In particular, accessing various funding options and further embedding only seems to have been partially successful (e.g. Horizon Europe, CEF,…).
New governance support by Alpine Space programme "TSS projects" in sight	The support from the Interreg Alpine Space programme has so far been one of the most important sources of funding for EUSALP issues and in the coming funding period the ASP will also offer a wide range of intensified starting points: of course, EUSALP AGs can again participate in content-related projects. In addition, the "Interreg specific

	objective" and the Technical-Support-Structure-projects (TSS-projects) provide special opportunities for governance-related activities of EUSALP. Futhermore, governance support für AG implementation is expected to be co-funded via the Alpine Space Programme.
Knowledge transfer and exchange ensured by institutions involved in EUSALP	It should not be forgotten that the EUSALP actors (AGs, Executive Board,…), who are integrated into the existing administrative structures on European, national and regional level, ensure networking, knowledge transfer and exchange with the existing programmes, funds and activities.

Source: Own compilation based on literature analysis and knowledge shared in expert team

Table 7: EUSALP – Unmet needs

Table: Unmet needs	Comments
Mobilization of further funds and programmes not yet fully exhausted	The mobilization of further funds and programmes for thematic and structural issues of the EUSALP beyond the Interreg Alpine Space programme has so far not been sufficiently successful or has not yet been fully exploited. The expanded possibilities of the ASP programme may support further impulses in that context (TSS,…).
Funding schemes difficult to call up from structural EUSALP point of view	The thematic funding needs in the main areas of concern, like research and innovation, appear to be well and appropriately covered for individual and/or “professional” project partners. For rather complex, cooperative governance structures such as the EUSALP and its bodies (e.g. EUSALP AGs), they seem to be too specific or difficult/complex to call up (e.g. see excellence funding by Horizon Europe) or, for structural or legal reasons, not to be retrievable (e.g. investment measures, needed target groups not involved in EUSALP).
Administration of many EU funds inflexible and not risk averse enough to set incentives	Funding programmes at EU level do not necessarily meet the requirements for dynamic, short-time, impulse-oriented, cooperative, innovation-oriented and risk averse funding. The current project management cycle of most of the EU-funded projects is rather strict in its requirements and evaluation principles and leaves rather low flexibility to adjust a project over its lifetime. In the area of innovation and research in particular, it would often be necessary to implement impulse-like programmes at short notice that also allow a certain financial risk to develop creative, new and innovative solutions. This particularly applies to experimental, creative, open and cross-sectoral approaches, test laboratories and approaches that go beyond “traditional” public funding streams.
Cooperation needs and cross-sectoral approaches not sufficiently covered	In particular, the MRS are intended to support cooperation and cross-sectoral activities in certain geographic areas. So far, the Interreg Alpine Space programme seems to be the best one to meet these needs. Possible other starting points for cross-sectoral and multinational projects either appear to be insufficiently known or not available to the EUSALP actors (e.g. for structural reasons, since the EUSALP actors come to a large extent from the public administration).

Few starting points for actors not having sufficient institutional capacity, local and regional actors or "out of the box partners"	Innovative, creative or experimental approaches are often developed by creative actors who, however, cannot always fall back on a comprehensive, professional administration, broad institutional capacities or financial resources. These actors are often not able to participate in the common EU funds and programmes, but they would be able to provide good, exciting and creative impulses, also related to EUSALP Objectives.
Implementation gap still existing	Many funds and programmes support research and development, but fail to bring the concerns down to earth, to implement them more strongly or to bring them closer to the citizens. More tangible, understandable and communicable approaches would be worthy of support here.
Involvement of other actors to be strengthened	Also based on structural issues, the EUSALP-circle is rather closed, a broader inclusion of different actors, also from the private sector, the academia and the public etc. is not yet given. Stimuli with regard to opening up to other actors, including broader groups of actors and the broader public could also contribute to improved access to further EU-funds and programmes. Here, impulses from the EUSALP would be helpful - in addition to the possibilities within the existing programmes.
EUSALP activities not concrete and specific enough to involve actors, strengthen Alpine focus	For many partners and actors outside the inner circle, EUSALP - like other MRS - is something rather abstract and hard to understand, which makes it difficult to start with concrete projects, even if this might thematically be possible. Even small incentives to make the EUSALP and its concerns more concrete, lively and tangible might subsequently also make it easier to collect standard funding.

Source: Own compilation based on literature analysis and knowledge shared in expert team

3.2. Possible starting points for an EIF

From the analysis above, the following **possible starting points for an EIF** might be derived:

- Support the mobilization of further existing funds and programmes by innovative settings and bringing together new stakeholders or relevant stakeholders,
- Bring in new stakeholders from the public and private sector for EUSALP matters and thus make it easier to call up existing funding,
- Set up possibilities particularly for innovative, experimental, creative, dynamic, open and cross sectoral approaches, test laboratories and approaches that go beyond "traditional" public funding streams,
- Create concrete starting points for "less professional", local and regional actors or "out of the box partners" – also to open up the EUSALP-circle,
- Support the closure of the implementation gap by more tangible, understandable and communicable approaches, projects or initiatives,
- Support innovative, spicy, lively, tangible and concrete testimonial projects or approaches of EUSALP to promote – also politically – the overall objectives of the strategy and its impacts.

4. Elaborating a selection of potential profiles and Reality check (Part II)

4.1. Potential legal structures (Part IIa)

It would go beyond the scope of this report to carry out an in-depth analysis of the legal possibilities of the seven countries concerned by EUSALP. Thus, the legal structures that seem the most appropriate for an EIF will be sketched out as a draft proposal and must be discussed and evaluated together with the EUSALP bodies along the process of finding the right legal structures. The criteria for considering a legal structure more appropriate or less were that the form chosen at the end shall allow the EIF to react dynamically in terms of time, content, and purpose on societal developments and to trigger innovative approaches. At the same time, the chosen legal form should be accessible and attractive for public funds and allow to also mobilising private funds. Governance of the body should be flexible and the structure should be able to react and be dynamic concerning contents. All concerned states and regions shall be involved not only in the governance, but also in the selection of projects and last but not least, it will be important how much effort has to be necessary to set up the structure.

Looking at the possibilities examined, the authors of the report developed a preference for one solution which they will propose in the following.

In the concept note it is mentioned that an EIF shall not represent an additional or separate element of the governance support structure within EUSALP but only serve as an instrument which can be used and processed by existing governance bodies. It is meant to support the implementation of innovative initiatives by complementing existing funds and activate new ones, while being fully in line with EUSALP priorities as set by the EUSALP bodies and coherent with the 4-thematic strategic initiatives.

The EIF is supposed to be a specific funding opportunity, a sort of innovation capital tool, which allows reacting **dynamically** in terms of **time**, **content** and **purpose** on societal developments and triggers **innovative approaches**. It shall serve a wide range of potential and varied beneficiaries – also considering private financial support such as enterprises, foundations etc. In this sense, it strategically provides backing for all cross-sectorial implementation initiatives in strengthening their implementation capacity. Not least, this initiative has the potential for high political impact. State and regional representatives can demonstrate to the public the institutional commitment to EUSALP and the role of the public administration as driver of innovation.

4.1.1. Foundation

Since one of the main objectives of the EIF is mobilizing and allocating funds, the establishment of a foundation might offer appropriate solutions.

4.1.1.1. A non-profit foundation under civil law, integrated in the EUSALP structures

For the creation of a foundation under civil law, the willingness for the creation of the foundation must be expressed by the founder(s) and a foundation charter has to be agreed on, which has to be approved by the foundation supervisory authority. In the charter, the details have to be defined, like the purpose of the foundation, the organs and their tasks etc.

The creation of a foundation under civil law by governmental bodies is quite common in some countries. E.g. in Germany, the following foundations were created under civil law (and hence not under public law, although created by public authorities): Kulturstiftung des Bundes[2], Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt[3], Deutsche Stiftung Verbraucherschutz[4] and others.

A foundation can be created by one person or legal entity or by several. There is no regulation that each co-founder has to contribute the same amount. In the case of an EIF this would mean that the authorities concerned by EUSALP could agree on a formula about who contributes how much, e.g. as a mix of inhabitants, surface, GDP etc.

The creation of the foundation is approved if the foundations resources are considered to be adequate for permanently reaching the goals of the foundations. The German law (§§ 80 ff. Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch BGB) does not explicitly require a minimum sum, but all supervisory authorities generally consider 100.000€ to be sufficient[5]. In Italy (Codice Civile, Titolo II, art 14–42 bis), for a foundation with a national scope, normally 50.000 to 100.000 € are considered to be sufficient[6]. In Austria (Bundesgesetz über Privatstiftungen), 70.000 € are needed[7], in Liechtenstein (Personen- und Gesellschaftsrechts Art. 552 ff) the minimal initial capital is 30.000 CHF[8] and in Switzerland (Art. 80 ff Zivilgesetzbuch) 50.000 CHF[9]. In Slovenia, the Foundation Act 1995 does not explicitly require a minimum sum; the initial capital has to be adequate for reaching the goals of the foundation.

It is, though, quite common that foundations raise additional funds after they were established and endowed with an initial capital by the founder(s). Many non-profit organizations are established as foundations, e.g. in some countries Greenpeace, WWF and others, and raising funds is part of their daily business. Thus, the money needed for fulfilling the purpose of a foundation can be provided by the founder(s), raised at private or public sources or covered by the commitment by one or several founders which e.g. may provide the administration, including offices and staff and/or finance certain types of support activities etc.

The founders will have to agree on the functioning and financing of the foundation management and administration. The costs can be covered e.g. from the initial capital if it is high enough for regularly covering the management costs, from regular donations by the founders, by capital gains from the investment of the initial capital, by deductions of a percentage of donations from third parties like companies or foundations that contribute to projects and initiatives, or by any other source defined by the founders.

The costs of management and administration of a foundation vary very much depending on the tasks defined for the respective bodies. E.g. if in the case of an “EIF Foundation” one of the founders agrees to provide offices and staff for an EIF, very little costs will remain to be covered by the foundation. However, this question is completely independent from legal solutions for an EIF and will have to be clarified regardless of the legal form chosen for an EIF.

[2] www.kulturstiftung-des-bundes.de
[3] www.dbu.de
[4] www.verbraucherstiftung.de
[5] https://www.stiftungen.org/stiftungen/basiswissen-stiftungen/stiftungsgruendung/rechtsfaehige-stiftung-buergerlichen-rechts.html
[6] https://www.associazioni.avvocatoferrante.it/il-riconoscimento-della-fondazione.html
[7] https://www.wko.at/service/wirtschaftsrecht-gewerberecht/Die_Privatstiftung.html
[8] https://www.stiftung-liechtenstein.info/wie-gruenden-stiftung-liechtenstein
[9] Swiss Foundations: Die Förderstiftung – Strategie-Führung-Management, 2010, Helbling und Lichtenhahn Verlag, Basel, S. 34

In some countries, foundations are by definition created for public benefit, in others they may have a private benefit scope, like so called family foundations, e.g. for the education of descendants. In others, the public benefit[10] can be proven to the authorities in order to be declared a public benefit foundation. In all cases, the control of the public benefit is strict because the fact of being of public benefit generally leads to (at least partial) tax exemption for both, the foundation and donators to the foundation. Independently of tax issues, in all legislations a national or regional supervisory authority exercises a strong and strict control of the foundations.

Also, it is very important to know that the assets of a foundation belong totally and irrevocably to the foundation and not to the founder(s). As soon as the foundation is established, "it belongs to itself." The assets pass from the founder(s) to the foundation and the founder(s) has/have no control over the assets anymore. It is completely impossible to return any money to the founder(s).

In most countries, it is extremely difficult or even impossible to change the purpose of the foundation once it is established[11]. Nevertheless, the purpose can be defined relatively open, thus giving space for interpretation by the council of the foundation.

Furthermore, a foundation is created for a permanent duration. In Switzerland e.g., the foundation can be dissolved by the supervisory authority only, and only in two cases: The foundation's purpose cannot be achieved anymore or the purpose has become illegal or immoral[12]. In Germany, as a second example, the supervisory authority can dissolve the foundation if achieving the foundation's purpose has become impossible or if the foundation is a "threat to the common good"[13].

In this light, it is difficult to be imagined that companies or foundations would be co-founders of an "EIF Foundation" because they would be "lifelong partners." This seems to be a contradiction to the idea of an "innovation capital tool, which allows reacting dynamically in terms of time, content and purpose on societal developments and triggers innovative approaches".

Nevertheless, a foundation with a limited initial capital to be contributed by the authorities (States, Regions, Länder) concerned by EUSALP, could serve as an instrument for raising funds from third parties like companies or foundations and investing them in projects or initiatives – short: be an innovation capital tool.

Thus, it would be possible that one or several regional or national entities create a **foundation under civil law**, by commonly investing a modest initial capital for the establishment of the foundation. The foundation could then start raising additional funds to fulfil its purpose. At the same time, it has to be kept in mind – as a summary of the above mentioned – that a foundation is a relatively formal instrument, strictly controlled by the supervisory authorities, with little flexibility, especially concerning changing the purpose or dissolving the foundation, with the impossibility of returning no longer needed money to the founder(s) or donator(s). Flexibility in the purpose can be reached by formulating the purpose very open, which on the other hand might lead to disagreement between the founders later on. The de facto impossibility to dissolve a foundation can on one hand guarantee stability, on the other hand at some point the necessity of giving up the activities might emerge for one reason or the

[10] An example for a list of purposes considered as of public benefit is §52 Abgabenordnung des deutschen Steuerrechts
[11] This is not the case in Liechtenstein, where the founder has great possibilities of influencing the foundation even after it is established (Marxer & Parnter, Liechtensteinisches Wirtschaftsrecht, Liechtenstein-Verlag, Schaan, 1. Auflage 2009)
[12] Art. 88 Zivilgesetzbuch
[13] §87 Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch

other, and the foundation does not have answers to that necessity. Also, integrating new members in the form of founders with the same rights will hardly be possible at a later stage.
Thus, if the legal form of a foundation under civil law is chosen, "innovation investors" like companies or foundations should not be involved as co-founders, but have the possibility of committing themselves in much lighter and more informal ways.

4.1.1.2. A non-profit foundation under public law, integrated in the EUSALP structures

There are various possibilities for creating a foundation under public law. This kind of foundation normally is chosen to fulfil a permanent task of a country, land/province etc. or even of a community. It requires an act of state, like a law or an administrative act to create the foundation. The characteristic of a public-law foundation is basically that it is integrated in the frame of a State, it is so to say "part of a state", fulfilling public tasks.

E.g. in Switzerland, the Pro Helvetia Foundation with the purpose of promoting Swiss arts and culture was created by the State through the "Pro Helvetia Law" of 1965 as the Swiss Confederation's cultural promotion institution for supporting projects that are of national interest. Its tasks are regulated in a separate law, the Culture Promotion Act (Kulturförderungsgesetz), in the Culture Promotion Ordinance (Kulturförderungsverordnung) and the Strategic objectives of the Swiss Government.

Public-law foundations normally are established with public funds. E.g. Italian jurisdiction requires that an institution to be considered a public-law institution at the same time a) was created to specifically satisfy needs of public interest which are not industrial or commercial, b) is given legal personality and c) is financed predominantly by the State, territorial authorities or other organisms of public law and controlled by these authorities[14]. In Germany, examples for public-law foundations are Kulturstiftung des Bundes, Stiftung Deutsches Historisches Museum and many others. In Germany, also the Bundesländer and the communities can establish public-law foundations. In Austria, the Austrian national public service broadcaster ORF is a public-law foundation, based on the national broadcasting law (ORF-Gesetz).

The examples mentioned above show that a foundation under public law – created through an administrative act of a public entity in one country – can hardly be imagined to fulfil permanent public tasks in other countries than the one in which it was created.

Although public-law foundations can be dissolved by a legal act, they are normally established for fulfilling a permanent public task.

The EIF it not created to fulfil a national or regional task and shall not be endowed mainly by one or several States or Regions but also and first of all by private actors. Thus, although this might not be impossible, the EIF can hardly be imagined to be created by one State or one Region/Bundesland through **a national or regional law and yet to fulfil permanent public tasks in many countries.**

4.1.2. Association

The "Association Alpine Town of the Year" as well as the Community Network "Alliance in the Alps" are associations whose non-profit status is recognized by law and that were founded in Germany by

[14] See e.g. Tribunale Amministrativo Regionale Lazio, Roma, Sez. III-quater, 24 novembre 2017, n. 11733

territorial entities (communities) from several countries. An association[15] is a very democratic institution and gives the same rights to all members, thus such a construct might enjoy even more trust and confidence by the actors than a foundation.

The creation of an association is relatively simple, a number of founding members is needed[16] and they have to agree on the common purpose and the common rules to be defined in statutes and in most – but not all – cases the association has to be registered. Competences can be delegated to a board and other organs of the association. New members can easily be admitted at any time and members who do not wish to be part of the association anymore can terminate the membership at any time.

No initial capital is needed for the creation of an association. The purpose of an association can be adapted whenever it seems necessary. Dissolving an association is much easier than it is for foundations. Often, statutes define that the consent of two thirds of the members is needed to dissolve the association.

As said above, the costs of management and administration do not depend on the legal form, but on the tasks defined for the respective bodies. However, one difference between foundation and association is the fact that an association does not necessarily have an initial capital. Thus, management and administration of an association would have to be covered from contributions by the members or by deductions of a percentage of donations from third parties like companies or foundations that contribute to projects and initiatives, or by any other source defined by the members.

The Community Network "Alliance in the Alps"[17]

The case of the Community Network "Alliance in the Alps" – founded in 1997 by twenty-three communities from seven countries in Slovenia, based upon German legislation – shows that great flexibility allows acting specifically according to the different tasks to be completed[18]. In a preamble to the statutes, the members refer to the Agenda 21 and to the Alpine Convention and underline the important role of the communities for the implementation of a sustainable development in the Alps. § 2 of the statutes define the implementation of the Agenda 21 and the Alpine Convention as the scope of the association, which shall serve as umbrella organization for the members. § 2.2 explicitly names acquiring financial resources from third parties as a task of the association.

Meanwhile, about 280 communities and municipal associations from Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and France are members of the association.

§ 10 of the statutes stipulate that the board consists of one member of each Alpine country. The members of the board are elected for the duration of two years and can be re-elected.

The activities of the association consist in providing support and expertise to the members, in representing community interests, in enabling the exchange of experience and to a very large extent in

[15] Italy: Codice Civile, art. 2247-2510, Germany: Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch §§ 21-79a), Austria: Vereinsgesetz 2002, France: Loi du 1er juillet 1901, Slovenia: Associations Act 1995, Switzerland: Zivilgesetzbuch, art. 60-79, Liechtenstein: Personen und Gesellschaftsrecht art. 246-260.

[16] Ranging from at least two (e.g. Austria, France) to at least seven (e.g. Germany)

[17] www.alpenallianz.org

[18] Skype Interview with a) Marc Nitschke, President, and Katharina Gasteiger, Managing Director, (1.6.2021) and b) Elke Klien, Program Management, involved since 1997, and Gabriele Greussing, Project Assistant, involved since 1997 (19.05.2021).

implementing common cross-border projects[19]. "The municipalities can rely on the experience of other municipalities in the Alps for their activities and obtain organisational knowledge, content support, and financial assistance without bureaucracy. This networking enables them to tackle meaningful and promising projects – with an impact in their community and beyond"[20].

> *Excursus: The Network Council.*
> *A "Network Council" appointed by the General Assembly of the Members supports and advises the association (§11). The Network Council consists of experts from politics, economy and associations/federations or other societal groups that are close the association's scope. From 2001 to 2005, the association each year awarded communities with the title "Community of the Future" (main prize of 4.000€, two second prizes of 1.500€). The association decided to entrust the Network Council with appointing the "Communities of the Future," although according to the statutes, the Council only has an advisory function and does not take decisions. Although – obviously – it is not desirable that in an EIF power is entrusted to bodies which would not have this power according to the statutes or founding acts, this example nevertheless shows that it can be adequate to delegate competences in certain cases, in order to be flexible and to allow decisions to be taken at the appropriate level.*
> *The advantage of delegating the decision to the Council was that the prize was not on suspicion of any political or partial influence. This model proved to be successful. Thus, the association entrusted the Network Council with even more important decisions. In the frame of the project Dynalp II, financed by the MAVA foundation for Nature, among other activities, project funds were assigned to Alpine communities, allowing them to implement projects in favour of sustainable development. The project sum was between 20.000€ and 40.000€ for each project, 500.000€ in total[21]. The project design, for the same reasons of scientifically sound and politically impartial decisions, conferred the decision to the Network Council. The proposal was accepted by the foundation and implemented from 2006 to 2009.*
> *This is a model that can serve as inspiration to the installation of EIF funding mechanisms.*
> *At the moment, no "Network Council" is appointed.*

Although the chosen legal form of an association seems to fit quite well for the members, even this solution bears some complicated aspects. E.g. changing the statutes has to follow administrative rules, and e.g. even if no financial matters are concerned, the competent financial authorities have to be involved in order to guarantee that the proposed changes of the statutes do not affect the status of a non-profit association in any way.

The Alpine Town of the Year Association[22]

The Alpine Town of the Year Association was created in 1997 and is an association of Alpine towns that have been awarded the title of "Alpine Town of the Year." The title commends an Alpine town for its particular commitment to the implementation of the Alpine Convention and is awarded by an international Jury.

As "Alliance in the Alps," the Alpine Town of the Year Association was founded based upon German legislation but is open to all towns awarded the title of "Alpine Town of the Year" from all the Alpine countries.

The association's scopes are to strengthen the "Alpine awareness," to involve the population, bridge building to the rural regions surrounding the towns, shaping a sustainable future, and strengthening cooperation among the Alpine towns. Its activities are organised around three poles: 1. Support for

[19] E.g. the Interreg Alpine Space Project HEALPS2 and many other cross-border-projects, see https://alpenallianz.org/en/projects
[20] https://alpenallianz.org/en/about-us/what-we-do
[21] Proposal by the Association Community Network Alliance of the Alps to the MAVA foundation for nature for "Dynalp II", Nov. 10th 2005, in German language, unpublished.
[22] www.alpinetowns.org

each city holding the title 'Alpine Town of the Year' for: project development, organisation of its annual programme as selected town, information, and training on the objectives of the Alpine Convention. 2. To promote the exchange of information and experiences between the 'Alpine Towns of the Year'. 3. To develop and coordinate projects enabling experimentation in member cities and cooperation between cities and with other key partners in the Alpine space.

Structures are very similar to the ones of the "Alpine Alliance"; the General Assembly of the Members elects a board for two years with the possibility of re-election, and is supported – not by a Network Council but – by a Jury, also to be elected every two years. The jury is a consulting body that suggests the next holders of the title "Alpine Town of the Year" and consults the association in different topics.

An **association** is much more flexible than a foundation. The board can be elected and new members of the board integrated regularly, no initial capital is needed, new members can be admitted at any time. If the association is not needed anymore, it can be dissolved without heavy formalities.

Thus, an **association might be an appropriate tool** to fulfil the tasks foreseen for the EIF. All regions concerned by EUSALP could be founding members; they could elect a board consisting of one member of each state of the EUSALP area, supported by a consulting organ of experts.

One important difference between foundation and association consists in the fact that an association does not need an initial capital.

4.1.3. A short look at other possible solutions

4.1.3.1. European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC)

Some of the conversation partners (see footnotes in the different chapters) mentioned that establishing an EGTC was taken into consideration but then rejected again. Although not only entities from EU countries, but also members from third countries can access to a EGTC, its scope is clearly defined[23] (Art. 7 (2): *"An EGTC shall act within the confines of the tasks given to it, namely the facilitation and promotion of territorial cooperation to strengthen Union economic, social and territorial cohesion, and the overcoming of internal market barriers".* Thus, this seems too narrow for the scopes of an EIF with the purpose of being a specific funding opportunity, a sort of innovation capital tool, which allows reacting dynamically on societal developments and triggers innovative approaches in many fields of action.

The limitation to "*act within the confines of the tasks given to it, namely the facilitation and promotion of territorial cooperation to strengthen Union economic, social and territorial cohesion, and the overcoming of internal market barriers"* makes the EGTC an instrument which does not offer the wide range of topics and activities an EIF will need.

[23] Art. 7 (2) of the Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC).

4.1.3.2. European Cooperative (SCE)

A European Cooperative Society (societas cooperativa Europaea SCE) may be set up within the territory of the European Community[24]. The focus of the SCE are the needs of the members[25] and "a SCE may not extend the benefits of its activities to non-members or allow them to participate in its business, except where its statutes provide otherwise[26]. Thus, serving the needs of non-members is an exception to the rule that the SCE serves to its members, as it is the main idea of a cooperative in general.

A SCE has a registered office in a member state, which can be transferred to another country under certain conditions[27].

The specific character of a cooperative is that the members jointly satisfy their (economic) needs. The outreach to as many other actors as possible is extremely untypical to a cooperative and also for a SCE only possible as an exception, not as a rule. Thus, any form of cooperative, including a SCE, does not seem to be an appropriate solution for an EIF.

4.1.3.3. Non-profit limited liability Company

A relatively simple construction is a limited liability company (German: Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung, GmbH, French: société à responsabilité limitée, Italian: società a garanzia limitata, Slovenian: Družba z omejeno odgovornostjo). In some countries it can be established as a non-profit company. It is possible to exclude shareholders from the right to vote and thus the rule "one share, one vote" can be changed according to the needs of the shareholders. Nevertheless, it remains a company with a certain capital stock to be invested by the founders or members/shareholders and it needs to be registered in the according trade register, which leads to a certain control by the state in which the company is founded. Accepting additional shareholders later on would lead to the necessity that either some of the existing shareholders sell some of their shares or that that statutes would have to be amended in order to increase the share capital. Thus, compared e.g. to an association which can accept new members, for a limited liability company this is somewhat more complicated.

The basic "one share, one vote" rule of any stock corporation and thus also of a non-profit limited liability company would be a challenge for commonly founding an EIF among Regions, Cantons, Länder and so on. The share capital would have to be divided among the founders in a clear way in order to provide all founders with equal power to vote. This can become somewhat complicated in case new members are accepted later on. Nonetheless, within the condition that a fair distribution of the share capital and thus of the right to vote needs to be defined, a non-profit liability company can be a flexible legal form for an EIF.

[24] Art. 1, 1 of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1435/2003 of 22 July 2003 on the Statute for a European Cooperative Society (SCE).
[25] "An SCE shall have as its principal object the satisfaction of its members' needs and/or the development of their economic and social activities, in particular through the conclusion of agreements with them to supply goods or services or to execute work of the kind that the SCE carries out or commissions" (Art. 1, 3)
[26] Art. 1, 4
[27] Art. 6 and 7

4.1.4. A purely intergovernmental initiative

As described above, an association is a relatively flexible legal structure, it needs no initial capital, its purpose can be adapted easily, new members can be admitted, it can be dissolved etc. On the other hand, a foundation is a relatively immobile, stiff structure with little flexibility. Other legal forms might be simple and show more flexibility than e.g. a foundation. Nonetheless, it has to be discussed with the EUSALP bodies whether a legal structure will be needed at all. EUSALP itself, like all Macro-Regional Strategies, from a legal point of view is a "nothing", an informal but yet very much structured co-operation of strategic nature, offering a political frame for activities and initiatives of the states and regions concerned by EUSALP.

As the following examples show, a purely intergovernmental initiative is very flexible and with its establishment costs and time can be saved for certifying documents and registering legal structures.

ARGE ALP[28]

The Working Community Alpine Regions (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Alpenländer, Comunità di Lavoro Regioni Alpine, ARGE ALP), was founded in 1972 and meanwhile gathers ten Regions, Provinces, Kantons or Bundesländer from Austria, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland.

The ARGE ALP is structured similar to an association, with the Conference of the heads of government (Konferenz der Regierungschefs, Conferenza dei capi di Governo) as the highest authority with the presidency changing every year and a Management Committee composed by civil servants (Leitungsausschuss, comitato direttivo) for the preparation of the Conferences of the heads of government and for the implementation of its decisions. Project groups of experts on the other hand are responsible for implementing the working programme. The administrative office is seated in Innsbruck, Austria.

The members commonly implement projects and initiatives. Members can propose and lead a project and invite the others to participate, like e.g. "Smart Working"[29], organized by ARGE ALP following an initiative by and under the leadership of the autonomous Province of Bolzano.

All contracts are concluded by the member leading a certain activity like a project or a conference. As in the case of the Alps-Adriatic-Alliance and the Internationale Bodenseekonferenz (see below), if a legal structure is needed for other purposes like e.g. to fulfil the part as a lead partner in an Interreg project, the administration of one member takes this role. Thus, the fact that the ARGE ALP is a purely intergovernmental initiative without any particular legal status, does not prevent the ARGE ALP from signing contracts or from carrying out projects[30].

In other words, the ARGE ALP – not having a legal structure but being based on a statute commonly decided by the heads of government – functions like an association and can delegate competences to groups or bodies of the ARGE ALP.

ALPS-ADRIATIC ALLIANCE[31]

The Alps-Adriatic Alliance was established in 2013 to replace the Working Community Alps-Adriatic (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Alpen-Adria) which had already been established in 1978. It consists of nine

[28] www.argealp.org
[29] www.argealp.org/de/projekte/d/smart-working
[30] Phone interview of May 26th with Fritz Staudigl from the General Secretariat of the ARGE ALP.
[31] https://alps-adriatic-alliance.org

regional entities from Austria, Italy, and Hungary plus of the Republics of Slovenia and Croatia. It explicitly was established to be a *"dynamic, flexible and low-threshold network-structure for project-oriented cooperation"* in the Alps-Adriatic area (alps-adriatic-alliance.org).

The existence of the Alps-Adriatic Alliance is based on a "Joint Statement and Rules of Procedure of the ALPS-ADRIATIC-ALLIANCE", it was founded as a "cooperation network for an indefinite period, but an evaluation shall take place every four years by the Alps-Adriatic Council as its highest body. The Alps-Adriatic Council as the assembly of all the members of the cooperation network is held every two years and its responsibility is "the decision on fundamental questions such as future focus areas of cooperation at the suggestion of members and/or the Thematic Coordination Points and the information of all members about the carried out projects and activities in the network on the jointly established topics" (4.1.2. of the Joint Statement and Rules of Procedure). All regular members either set up their own Contact Point or have access to a Contact Point, and its tasks are the technical preparation of the meetings of the Alps-Adriatic Council and the approval of project proposals and granting of financial aid from the common project budget for their implementation. The Alps-Adriatic Alliance installed a General Secretariat in Klagenfurt which is responsible for the administrative organisation and coordination of the cooperation network.

The costs are covered as follows (5.1.1. of the Joint Statement and Rules of Procedure): Each member bears the costs incurred by the members from the activities in the cooperation network. In addition, a common project budget is established by the members for the financing of important activities and projects, which are significant for the entire network; this budget is monitored by the General Secretariat and administered by the Steering Committee.

The activities of the Alps-Adriatic Alliance as a cooperation network are based on two pillars[32]: On one hand, the network offers low-threshold support to those (potentially) interested in new projects and actively supports their linkage and the development of projects. On the other hand, the network has a common budget, mainly for preparing project proposals to EU programmes, but to a certain extent also for the financial support of small cross-border projects.

As in the case of the ARGE ALP (see above) and the Internationale Bodenseekonferenz (see below), if a legal structure is needed like e.g. to fulfil the part as a lead partner in an Interreg project, the administration of one member takes this role. In general, contracts are signed by the Bundesland Carinthia that hosts the General Secretariat and covers all respective costs. Thus, the fact that the Alps-Adriatic-Alliance is a purely intergovernmental initiative without any particular legal status does not prevent the Alliance from signing contracts or from carrying out projects. Nevertheless, every now and then, there were discussions about establishing an entity with legal personality like a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC); thus, the members agreed that remaining a purely intergovernmental initiative was very practical and did not prove any disadvantages so far.[33]

The International Conference of Lake Constance (Internationale Bodenseekonferenz IBK)[34]

The IBK is an informal alliance for cooperation and its members are Bundesländer and Cantons from Germany, Switzerland, and Austria as well as the Principality of Liechtenstein. As the above mentioned examples ARGE ALP and Alps-Adriatic Alliance, the members agreed on a statute with common goals and "organs" to the alliance (Conference of heads of government, Permanent Committee,

[32] AAA-Factsheet on alps-adriatic-alliance.org/downloads
[33] Skype interview of May 25th with Thomas Pseiner, Secretary General of the Alps-Adriatic-Alliance.
[34] www.bodenseekonferenz.org

Presidency, Permanent Secretariat). Among other tasks, the alliance stands for political coordination and common projects[35]. The members regularly agree on common guiding principles (Leitbild) and a common strategy.

The financing model is relatively simple[36]: There is a clear formula for the contributions of the members to the common costs. This formula is applicable for the regular budged and all other costs as long as no other formula is decided on, e.g. for projects. This guarantees the flexibility to carry out and finance projects funded by one or a few, but not necessarily by all members. In addition, the IBK has the possibility to raise funds from third parties like foundations, companies, industry associations etc. This is used for the implementation of various competitions and prizes. In these cases, competences might be delegated, even to ad-hoc-bodies, e.g. for the allocation of small project grants from a common small project fund. The installation of such bodies and the procedural rules for the allocation of funds or prizes are commonly decided on by the members.

In the case of the IBK Prize for Health Promotion and Prevention, an international jury elects the winners, the jury's members – one per member state/land/canton – were appointed by the IBK members.

If a legal structure is needed, e.g. to fulfil the part as a lead partner in an Interreg project, IBK Permanent Secretariat legally acts as a part of the administration of the Bundesland Baden-Württemberg.

The Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning[37] (as a national example of an intergovernmental initiative)

In Austria, the task of spatial planning and coordination of EU-Regional Policy are performed by the federal government, the provinces, cities, and municipalities in accordance with their respective constitutionally defined responsibilities.

To improve the coordination of these tasks, the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (Österreichische Raumordnungskonferenz, ÖROK) was founded in 1971 as an intergovernmental body built by all governmental levels in Austria. It has a political representation that is composed of the members of the federal government (chancellor and ministers), the governors of the provinces ("Landeshauptleute"), the presidents of the association of cities and municipalities, and (in an advisory capacity) the presidents of the economic and social partners. The administrative representation is made up of civil servants from the chancellery, ministries, and the offices of the provincial governments as well as the offices of the Association of municipalities and the Association of cities. It is organised in subcommittees and working groups. The basis for the work is formed by rules of procedure. The budget is decided annually by the highest body on the basis of an annual and medium-term work programme (Budget breakdown: 48% federal government, 48% provinces according to a "Länder-key", 1% Association of municipalities and 1% Association of cities). For special projects, members can make extra budget contributions or cover extra costs (e.g. costs for studies etc.).

One of ÖROK´s most important tasks since its foundation is the preparation of the Austrian Spatial Development Concept (ÖREK). The ÖREK is revised about every ten years and is the joint steering instrument of all Austrian government levels for the spatial development of the country. Since 1995, however, ÖROK has gained more and more importance in the coordination of the EU Structural Funds

[35] Leitbild der IBK für den Bodenseeraum: www.bodenseekonferenz.org/leitbild
[36] Defined in the statute, additional information: Written interview with Klaus-Dieter Schnell, Managing Director IBK, and Andrea Beck-Ramsauer, PR Manager IBK.
[37] See: www.oerok.gv.at

(mainly ERDF but also including coordination with ESF and EAFRD). This also led to the establishment of the Managing Authority for the Investment in Growth and Jobs-ERDF-Programme Austria 2014-2020 within the ÖROK. Investment in Growth and Jobs-ERDF in Austria is therefore a jointly managed programme between the federal government and the provinces.

The EIF as a purely intergovernmental initiative would rather be a flexible ***instrument*** for collecting money and investing it in projects or initiatives and an innovation capital ***tool*** than a ***new legal structure***.

4.1.5. A word about taxes

In all countries, charitable institutions under some conditions are tax-exempt. They do not have to pay taxes for their income and additionally, under some circumstances and to a certain extent, who donates to a charitable institution can deduce this donation from the taxes to be paid in the state of this private person or legal entity.

Within the European Union including Liechtenstein as a member of the European Economic Area, due to the non-discrimination principle, a donation also is tax-deductible if made to a charitable institution abroad, under the condition that this institution not only fulfils all conditions for tax-deductibility of the country where it is seated, but also of the country where the donator is located and subject to tax. In reality, this can become very complicated, because the taxable person or company has to prove that the institution seated abroad that received the donation fulfils all conditions for tax-exemption of the country where the donator is located and subject to tax[38].

For an EIF, this might have the consequences that under some conditions donations to the EIF may be tax-deductible in the country where the donation is made. At the same time, a company that donates a certain amount to the EIF with the clear earmarking that the amount has to be used – to give an example – to conduct a study in the field of innovation, sustainability, climate mitigation etc., the company might give this amount in order to use the results of the study for its business activities later on. Thus, this donation might not be considered as to be made for a charitable purpose but as an expense for initiating the development of knowledge that might be of commercial interest to the company making the donation. In this case, it would not be a tax-deductible donation to a charitable institution, but an expense for research & development purposes and thus constitute a tax-deductible expense under a different title.

This would be different if a private person made a donation to an EIF. Here, the donation only would be tax-deductible if the EIF was considered charitable by the authorities in the country of the donator. At the same time, it has to be stated that receiving donations from private persons will not be the focus and purpose of an EIF.
This shows that the question of tax-deductibility in practice may not be of relevance, because under tax law aspects, it may not make a difference whether a company spends money to initiate research & development or donates the money to a charitable institution.

[38] See e.g. Judgement by the Finanzgericht Düsseldorf of 14.01.2013 (Az. 11 K 2439/10 E), that stated that a donation from a person in Germany to a charitable foundation in Spain was only tax-deductible if the person could prove that the Spanish foundation fulfills all legal conditions for tax-deduction in Germany, see https://www.fg-duesseldorf.nrw.de/behoerde/presse/pressemitteilungen/archiv/2013/13_03_061/index.php#:~:text=Spenden%20an%20im%20Ausland%20ans%C3%A4ssige,durch%20Vorlage%20geeigneter%20Belege%20nachweist.

4.1.6. Standardized evaluation matrix of the potential models or legal structures of the EUSALP Innovation Facility (EIF)

Criteria and explanation / potential structures	Non-Profit-Foundation under civil law	Non-Profit-Foundation under public law	Non-Profit-Association	European grouping of territorial cooperation	European Cooperative	Non-profit limited liability company	Intergovernmental initiative
Access and attractiveness for mobilizing public funds	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Less suitable	Less suitable	Well suited	Well suited
	Non-Profit, official status, reliable	Non-Profit, funded by pub. Admin., reliable	Non-Profit, official status, reliable	Limited scope unattractive: facilitation/ promot. of territ. cooperation	Limited scope unattractive: mainly satisfy needs of members	Non-Profit, official status, reliable	Non-Profit, funded by pub. Admin., reliable
Access and attractiveness for mobilizing private funds	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Less suitable	Less suitable	Well suited	Well suited
	Attractiveness for private funds depends on governance, flexibility, and diversity of possibilities for involvement, not on legal structure. Only a problem when scope does not allow being attractive.			Limited scope unattractive: facilitation/ promot. of territ. cooperation	Limited scope unattractive: mainly satisfy needs of members	Attractiveness for private funds depends on governance, flexibility, and diversity of possibilities for involvement.	
Flexibility in the governance of the EIF	Less suitable	Less suitable	Well suited	Less suitable	Suitable	Well suited	Suitable
	Additional members and changing scope almost impossible	Only members of one nation	Statutes can easily be changed, new members any time	EU-procedures. Companies cannot be members	Procedure for adapting statutes (EU)	Statutes can easily be changed, new members any time	Stat. can easily be changed, new members poss., but not companies
Flexibility & dynamic in contents *How flexible, fast, and dynamically can the legal structure react and make decisions?*	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited
	Rules are defined at the beginning. The founders can define flexible or inflexible structures and rules. About changes in the rules: see "flexibility in the governance of the body".						
Involvement of states and regions in project selection	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited
	Rules are defined at the beginning. The founders can define flexible or inflexible structures and rules. About changes in the rules: see "flexibility in the governance of the body".						
Effort to set up the EIF structure *How big are administrative barriers, inhibition level and effort for the stakeholders to setting up the EIF structure?*	Suitable	Well suited	Suitable	Suitable	Suitable	Suitable	Well suited
	Initial capital & proof of non-profit needed	Administrative act of one administration	No initial capital. Proof of non-profit needed.	EU rules and procedures	EU rules and procedures	Initial capital & proof of non-profit needed	Common decision by founding authorities
Conclusion - overall assessment of the structure	Suitable with limitations (governance)	Less suitable because only members of one state	1st alternative. Easy, but proof of non-profit needed.	Less suitable because of limited scope and flexibility	Less suitable because of limited scope	2nd alternative. Well suited, but initial capital need => for new members more complicated	Well suited. **First choice**, easiest solution, flexible in contents, trustworthy.

Scale for the overall assessment of the structure:

Well suited, recommended	Suitable	Less suitable	Not suited, not recommended

4.1.7. Potential legal structures - first conclusions

The following first conclusions can be drawn with regard to potential legal structures of an EIF:

Final recommendations for setting up the EIF will be presented under Objective 4 / Part IV as a result of the process for elaborating this report. In Objective 2 / Part II, for the reality check in form of a discussion with the EIF Advisory Group, the expertise of the members of the group will be needed.

In the light of the considerations concerning possible legal structures, the first question in the view of the authors of this report is not which legal structure is appropriate, but rather whether a legal structure is needed at all. The authors believe that the challenge is more to define all pre-requisites like funding-schemes, decision making governance and so on and to set up a mechanism that makes it interesting for external donators to financially support innovative projects along the EUSALP strategy. They would like to invite the members of the EUSALP Advisory Group to share their national and regional experiences before presenting this as THE prototype for an EIF.

Thus, the proposal for a "prototype" would be a purely intergovernmental initiative and the first varying proposal a public benefit association, while the second varying proposal, a non-profit limited liability company, would need clear rules for distributing the shares in order to allow all members an adequate right to vote, but this proposal might also fulfil the needs for an EIF as formulated by the EUSALP bodies.

4.2. Reality Check (Part II b)

The various scenarios and potential structures were clearly prepared and presented to the advisory group for discussion. See the following chapter for more information.

5. Addressing (potential) donators (Part III)

» **Objective 3** / **Part III (a):** Entering into dialogue with (potential) donators

» **Objective 3** / **Part III (b):** Collecting statements of intent

5.1. Introduction and summary of main working steps

The contractors worked out and submitted a set of potential models and legal structures suitable for an EIF until beginning of December 2021 (see Part IIa and b).

Besides the report, the proposals for potential models/legal structures were summarized in “Fact Sheets” to facilitate the discussion with the EUSALP Advisory Group. The contractors also suggested the model of a “Purely Intergovernmental Initiative” as a first proposal for a possible legal structure of an EIF.

In a meeting in December 2021, the contractors presented the proposals to the EUSALP Advisory Group. The group discussed the models and followed the contractors` proposal to select the form of a “Purely Intergovernmental Initiative” as a first proposal for a possible legal structure of an EIF.

After the meeting with the EUSALP Advisory Group, the contractors finalized Part IIa and the first Part IIb, the “reality check”. Some kind of “Reality check” rsp. “Practicability check” should also be included in the interviews with the potential donators.

As a next step, the Advisory Group members were asked to propose potential partners for interviews to prepare the dialogue-phase (Part III a). On the one hand, those interviews should support a “reality check” for the ideas regarding an EIF and its potential legal structures. On the other hand, the interviews should show the path and the steps that needed to be taken from a funding institution`s point of view to potentially support an EIF.

Between January and March 2022, the list of potential interview partners was elaborated and cross-checked with Advisory Group members. In parallel, the questions and the general outline and approach for the interviews were defined with the client.

5.2. Dialog with potential donators

5.2.1. Preparation and framework for the interviews

The interviews with possible donators were primarily aimed at "testing" the intentions and possible orientation of the EIF (Part IIIa – entering into dialogue with potential donators). In the original design of the project, it was considered to approach possible donators yet with the request to obtain "statements of intent" (cf. Part III b). During the project implementation however it was decided to first explore the possibilities of an EIF in discussions with different institutions to formulate policy recommendations, and then to present these to the Advisory Group and the EB for decision-making. On this basis, further steps should then be taken - if possible, with the support of the EUSALP partners. The list of possible contacts and institutions interviewed can be found in appendix 2.

Regarding the selection of the interview partners, care was taken to

- » conduct an interview in all EUSALP partner countries,
- » talk to different institutions (banks, foundations, companies, etc.),
- » but in general, to talk to institutions that correspond to the Alpine Space and the concerns of the EUSALP in terms of content/topic.

The interviews were conducted along the following guiding questions, whereby the deepening of the contents developed differently for each interview/interviewee:

- » Do you have questions of understanding?
- » In which thematic fields would you be most interested in?
- » Which approaches and methods would you consider attractive? Would cooperation with other donators be interesting?
- » Under what circumstances could you imagine supporting such projects or initiatives?
- » What should be avoided in any case?

In this project phase, the contractors conducted a total of seven interviews with institutions in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. The interviews lasted between 20 and 45 minutes, depending on the time availability of the interviewees. The summaries of the interviews are presented in appendix 2.

The list of interviewees can be found in appendix 3 (internal version).

5.2.2. Synthesis of the interviews

On the following pages, a synthesis of the interviews follows, which tries to **highlight the main points of the interviews**:

- » **What role does the purpose (in the case of foundations, the purpose of the foundation) or the goals of the institution play in the selection of possible donators?**
  - » According to their statutes, foundations can only financially support those areas that correspond to their purpose. Other areas cannot be supported.
  - » In the case of companies, there is no foundation purpose in this sense; the decisive question is whether the company sponsors at all.
  - » Conclusion: The most important basis for addressing possible donators is a clear and unambiguous presentation of the enquired support. Only if the content-related focus or the entire concern (subject area, type of support, framework conditions) is clearly defined can a requested institution decide whether participation is possible or not. This applies in particular to foundations (foundation purpose). The actual financial support is then usually decided by a foundation council, a jury or similar.
- » **What role does geography (country or the seat of the institution) play?**
  - » The country or the seat of the institution appears to be relevant if the purpose of the institution allows financial support only in its own country (e.g. Lebenswertes Liechtenstein) or in specific areas such as mountain regions (e.g. Schweizer Berghilfe, CARIPLO). In these

cases, projects can only be supported if they are spatially located in the regions covered by the foundation's purpose.

- Some of the institutions surveyed are active worldwide, while others use their funds geographically only in their own country and/or beyond that in a very spatially specific way (e.g. Lebenswertes Liechtenstein, Schweizer Berghilfe, CARIPLO).
- If the purpose of the institution allows this support, projects all over the world can be supported (e.g. Münchner Re); this is often done through local partner institutions.
- Conclusion: In this case, too, it depends primarily on the intended purpose whether financial support is possible or not. If the purpose corresponds to the goals of the institution, support can in principle be provided (in accordance with the institution's selection procedures). Support can then be either geographically limited, if this is the only purpose of the institution, or geographically unlimited according to the institution's thematic guidelines.

- **What is the role of the topics to be supported?**
  - Conclusion: Again, if the topics to be supported are in line with the institution's goals (or the foundation's purpose), they can be supported if the decision-making bodies confirm this in accordance with their internal processes.
  - According to some interviewees, "critical" or "sensitive" topics (eg. like publicly controversial issues such as the use or not of nuclear power or wind farms in Alpine regions,…) are generally not easy to cover.
- **What role does the structure of the EUSALP with public sponsors play?**
  - Concerning the "public ownership" of EUSALP, opinions differ:
    - Some interview partners see the participation of public institutions (states, regions) as a kind of positive guarantee. Participation not only of an institutional nature but also of a financial nature by the public partners would be perceived as positive.
    - Other interviewees see the participation of public institutions rather critically, especially regarding compliance.
    - Still others think that this would not matter, but that the rules should be clearly defined, transparency maintained and a level playing field guaranteed for all donators.
  - The level of awareness of the EUSALP is partly given ("have heard about it"), but rather low in depth.
- **What role does the legal framework play?**
  - Again, the most important thing is the purpose. If this corresponds, support - according to the decision-making in the institutions – might be possible. The actual legal structure of an EIF plays a rather subordinate role.
  - The conditions for participation should not be too high or administratively complex, clear, and comprehensible.
  - Lobbying and bribery must be clearly excluded, and all procedures must be transparent.
  - The possible structure of an EIF plays a rather subordinate role - the purpose of the support, topics, clarity and transparency of the processes appear to be more important.
  - Legal framework conditions concerning competition law and state aid law are of significant importance, especially for companies.

- Furthermore, in the case of funded projects (results), attention must be paid in advance to the correct formulation of the rights of use, exploitation, and utilisation.
- Conclusion: In the legal field, the participation of companies and firms appears somewhat more complex than for other possible funders (e.g. foundations). Especially the early clarification of rights of use, exploitation and utilisation for possible projects supported by an EIF is highly relevant.
- The possible structure of an EIF plays a rather subordinate role - the purpose and thematic orientation of the possible EIF; clarity and transparency of the processes as well as compliance seem to be more important.

The summaries of the interviews with references to further specifics can be found in appendix 3.

6. Decision Support & recommendations on further requirements for EIF (Part IV)

6.1. Synthesis of the previous work steps

The core task of this feasibility study is to explore the possibilities and framework conditions for a new type of financing instrument within the EUSALP – a possible EIF.

In this context, the most practicable type of financing as well as the potentially best fitting legal structure should be designed and discussed. To this end, the following work steps were implemented:

- **Needs analysis**: In a first step, existing funding possibilities, a gap analysis as well as a needs analysis were carried out, in which the need for such a form of support was identified and confirmed.
- **Proposal of an EIF:** Afterwards, potential legal structures and procedures were derived and discussed based on the targeted characteristics of the EIF. The form of a "Purely Inter-governmental Initiative" was distilled as the "main proposal" resp. the most suitable possible structure.
- **Addressing potential donators:** The aim of this step was to discuss the envisaged cornerstones of an EIF with institutions that could act as potential donators and to obtain further advice on the orientation of an EIF.
- **Decision support and recommendations:** The final step of the feasibility study is now to synthesise and make recommendations.

In the synthesis of the interviews and the previous work steps we can summarise that the opinions of the interviewed institutions are very different. We can highlight the following aspects and different perspectives:

- **Geographical/spatial aspects**
  - On the one hand, there are geographical/spatial aspects: Some of the institutions have a very specific geographical/spatial focus and the use of their funds is only possible in precisely defined specific territories (e.g., mountain areas or certain regions). When asking these institutions for possible EIF support, the spatial focus of the funding would have to be very clearly defined in order to make funding by these institutions possible.
  - For other institutions, geographical/spatial aspects do not play a role and support would be geographically unlimited.
- **Thematic aspects**
  - Especially for foundations, the very clear picture emerges that foundations can only financially support those topics or approaches that clearly correspond to the purpose of the foundation (in terms of content, possibly also geographically/spatially aspects, see above). For a possible request for financial support, the thematic focus therefore would have to be clearly defined.
  - In the case of companies, thematic aspects appear to be somewhat more flexible or more broadly interpretable; here there is basically the question of whether sponsorship is being pursued and moreover rather institutional questions arise here (see below).

- **Institutional aspects**
  - Here the focus is on the question of which institutions could support an EIF, which in the case of the EUSALP would also involve states and regions (participation of public bodies).
  - Here, too, there are two approaches of possible donators: On the one hand, there are those institutions for which public participation would be positive (private funds are increased by public funds, leverage effect) and would represent a kind of "guarantee". On the other hand, there are those institutions which - for various reasons - are rather distanced from a joint financial participation of public and private donators (e.g. questions of compliance, transparency, or questions of competition, state aid law or other legal aspects).
  - Cooperation with other institutions or actors (of whatever kind) is usually described as interesting.
- **Legal/structural aspects**
  - In the area of the structure and legal status of an EIF, the opinions were unanimous: legal and administrative structures should be clear, not too complex and easy to understand and work with.
- **Temporal aspects**
  - Here, too, the picture is very heterogeneous: some of the institutions surveyed deliberately aim for long-term cooperation with proven partners, while others provide short-term support and tend to be more needs-oriented or also provide support on an ad hoc basis.
- **To sum up**, an EIF was originally intended to have the following orientation:
  - mobilize funding sources to finance innovative, cross-sectoral, and experimental ideas
  - be flexible, enable short-term and low-threshold support
  - serve a wide range of potential and varied beneficiaries
  - consider private and public financial support.

The interviews revealed a wide spectrum of opinions, many distinct aspects, and specifics. But finally, the original intention of an EIF should always be kept in mind: to develop a funding tool that is as flexible as possible and that should enable short-term and low-threshold support. However, the synthesis shows that the originally envisaged orientation of an EIF is not easy to reconcile with the different views gathered: To be able to address different donators, either a structure would have to be created that meets all the different requirements and could thus become quite large and cumbersome (and thus does not meet the originally envisaged requirements), or a "very light", easily manageable structure is created that can pick up and implement the different concerns well.

The core task of this feasibility study is to propose the most practicable type of financing as well as the potentially best fitting legal structure. Such a "very light, easy-to-handle structure" could be, in our eyes, an **"EUSALP Innovation Award"**, whose cornerstones we describe on the following pages.

6.2. Possible key points of an "EUSALP Innovation Award", advantages and disadvantages

An **EUSALP Innovation Award** could cover the following aspects very well as an easy to set up, light structure:

- **EUSALP Innovation Award key points:**
  - EUSALP establishes a low-threshold EUSALP Innovation Award to be offered and awarded at certain intervals (e.g. every two years).
  - Existing awards (e.g. GI goes business, Youth Shaping EUSALP, EUSALP Energy Award) could be brought together under the umbrella of the "EUSALP Innovation Award", funds could be consolidated and positive leverage effects achieved, but also new initiatives could be launched (“Search for the Stars”) or synergies strengthened (e.g. with EUSALP Presidencies).
  - The EUSALP Innovation Award should be awarded in the framework of EUSALP events or coupled.
  - The EUSALP Award should use existing structures and thus be quick and easy to implement.
- **EUSALP Innovation Award in more detail:**
  - The » EUSALP Innovation Award could be awarded in different categories, taking into account existing EUSALP awards;
  - The different categories might consider key topics of the presidencies, there might be a mix of regular topics and specific topics (e.g. the specific topics referring to the EUSALP presidencies);
  - The » EUSALP Innovation Award could further cover different thematic areas,
  - address different target groups (e.g. young entrepreneurs, students, researchers, networks, etc.) as well as possibly
  - address different territories or types of areas (e.g., rural areas, mountain regions, networks of different territories...),
  - take the form of a prize for something that already exists and is awarded, or a competition for which innovative ideas are submitted and the best ones are awarded.
- **EUSALP Innovation Award finances:**
  - A certain basic amount could be contributed by the partner states (either the same amount by all or contributions graded according to various criteria) and
  - further contributions could be acquired from different donators (foundations, institutions, businesses, …). Donators could support the Award in the categories that best suit their purposes/concerns.
  - The option of co-funding activities should be considered as a possible additional element.

» **Benefits of an EUSALP Innovation Award:**

  » The EUSALP Award would increase the visibility and awareness of EUSALP: Awards can be well marketed and publicised.

  » Good, innovative, and inspiring current ideas (competition format) or already implemented novel ideas (award format) can be rewarded, honored, and made visible. This supports both the concerns of EUSALP and of course the concerns of the winners (and their community).

  » The EUSALP Innovation Award would consolidate and strengthen existing awards, and synergies could provide good leverage effects.

  » The amount of the prize can be adjusted according to the possibilities; even small prizes can have a high impact. In any case, the financing of a certain basic structure for the administration of the prize must always be considered.

  » The amount of the prize can be increased gradually and according to experience, from small contributions from the circle of EUSALP partners to additional, external donators.

  » By establishing different categories, it is possible to respond to the different needs of EUSALP partners and possible external donators, as well as to changing thematic concerns (e.g., responding to burning issues of the day, open category, etc.).

  » The administrative and financial handling is manageable and does not require an elaborate construction (cf. see checklist for a possible "Agreement of Cooperation").

  » Concerns of competition or subsidy law as well as possible rights of use or exploitation would not be affected or only to a comparatively small extent (e.g., copyright, media rights for the award and publications etc.).

» **Possible disadvantages of an EUSALP Innovation Award:**

  » The EUSALP Award should not duplicate existing initiatives but support innovative, new, experimental concerns. A sharpening of the profile would therefore have to take place in any case.

  » A coordination with the topics and the orientation with already existing awards would have to be carried out to exclude or minimise competitions.

  » Every award need resources to enable a good and solid implementation. Since this also applies to small prize money, a minimum endowment should be considered.

  » In any case, a solid financial and personnel management must be undertaken and guaranteed.

  » With the approach of creating an award, no co-financing of EU-funded projects would be possible.

The following page contains the evaluation matrix created in work step Part II, in which the "EUSALP innovation Award" has been included as a variant.

Standardized evaluation matrix of the potential models or legal structures of the EUSALP Innovation Facility (EIF)

Criteria and explanation / potential structures	Non-Profit-Foundation under civil law	Non-Profit-Foundation under public law	Non-Profit-Association	European grouping of territorial cooperation	European Cooperative	Non-profit limited liability company	Intergovernmental initiative	Variant Award
Access and attractiveness for mobilizing public funds	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Less suitable	Less suitable	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited
	Non-Profit, official status, reliable	Non-Profit, funded by pub. Admin., reliable	Non-Profit, official status, reliable	Limited scope unattractive: facilitation/ promot. of territ. cooperation	Limited scope unattractive: mainly satisfy needs of members	Non-Profit, official status, reliable	Non-Profit, funded by pub. Admin., reliable	Non-Profit, funded by pub. Admin., reliable
Access and attractiveness for mobilizing private funds	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Less suitable	Less suitable	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited
	Attractiveness for private funds depends on governance, flexibility and diversity of possibilities for involvement, not on legal structure. Only a problem, when scope does not allow being attractive.			Limited scope unattractive: facilitation/ promot. of territ. cooperation	Limited scope unattractive: mainly satisfy needs of members	Attractiveness for private funds depends on governance, flexibility and diversity of possibilities for involvement.		Flexible, low-threshold, different possibilities provided
Flexibility in the governance of the EIF	Less suitable	Less suitable	Well suited	Less suitable	Suitable	Well suited	Suitable	Well suited
	Additional members and changing scope almost impossible	Only members of one nation	Statutes can easily be changed, new members any time	EU-procedures. Companies cannot be members	Procedure for adapting statutes (EU)	Statutes can easily be changed, new members any time	Stat. can easily be changed, new members poss., but not companies	See Checklist for "agreement"
Flexibility & dynamic in contents *How flexible, fast and dynamically can the legal structure react and make decisions?*	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited
	Rules are defined at the beginning. The founders can define flexible or inflexible structures and rules. About changes in the rules: see "flexibility in the governance of the body".							See left and above
Involvement of states and regions in project selection	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited	Well suited
	Rules are defined at the beginning. The founders can define flexible or inflexible structures and rules. About changes in the rules: see "flexibility in the governance of the body".							See left and above
Effort to set up the EIF structure *How big are administrative barriers, inhibition level and effort for the stakeholders to setting up the EIF structure?*	Suitable	Well suited	Suitable	Suitable	Suitable	Suitable	Well suited	Well suited
	Initial capital & proof of non-profit needed	Administrative act of one administration	No initial capital. Proof of non-profit needed.	EU rules and procedures	EU rules and procedures	Initial capital & proof of non-profit needed	Common decision by founding authorities	Proposed in "agreement of cooperation"
Conclusion - overall assessment of the structure	Suitable with limitations (governance)	Less suitable because only members of one state	1st alternative. Easy, but proof of non-profit needed.	Less suitable because of limited scope and flexibility	Less suitable because of limited scope	2nd alternative. Well suited, but initial capital need => for new members more complicated	Well suited. **First choice**, easiest solution, flexible in contents, trustworthy.	**Well suited, final proposal**

6.3. Possible organisation and framework conditions

An EUSALP Award could offer a low-threshold, easy-to-handle possibility to support innovative and experimental concerns in the Alpine Space.

The following steps would have to be taken for the establishment of the Award:

- Decision-making in the EUSALP bodies
- Design of the key points of an EUSALP Award:
  - Definition of the categories of the award as well as the general orientation (prize or competition; fixed or variable categories, etc.) and the benefits/ prizes for the winners
  - Definition of the evaluation criteria for the award (and the methodology)
  - Clarification of the annuality and the financial endowment
  - Clarification of the organisational, administrative and financial framework (who does what, procedures, financial flows, setting up of an account, etc.),...
  - Determine the staffing for the implementation (administration, jury, external awarding if necessary).
  - Definition of decision-making structures within the EUSALP as well as regarding a jury or a corresponding selection committee (within the EUSALP, build on existing structures - EB, Advisory Group, etc.).
  - Clarification of the procedure about public relations work, awarding of prizes and awarding of prizes with publicity effect.

The following implementation steps are required for the implementation of an awarding-cycle

- Setting the timetable for the cycle.
- Clarification of the categories and the award (evaluation) criteria and prices for winners
- Determination of the basic funding as well as the search for further donators incl. contract management, setting the size of the Award
- Selection of the jury and definition of the working methods (scope of the work to be done, number of meetings, remunerations,)
- Preparation of the tender documents as well as the evaluation guidelines for the jury
- Publication of the call
- Promotion of the call on various channels and networks
- Collection and processing of the incoming applications
- Preparation of the award ceremony
- Assessment of the applications with the jury (e.g.: an online jury meeting to kick off and agreement on the interpretation of the evaluation criteria, review of the documents, structured collection of the evaluations and decision-making)
- Public relations work

» Awarding the prize with a high impact as an important date for the prize-winner, the awarding institution, sponsors, jury, ...

6.4. Additional remarks

From the contractors` point of view an award would be an effective way to raise the visibility and intentions of the EUSALP without having to establish complex structures. The establishment of an award does not require elaborated legal constructions and the signing of an agreement of cooperation by the contributing partners should be sufficient for getting started (cf. proposal of a checklist for an "Agreement of Cooperation").

With regard to the time frame an award at least every two years seems reasonable and feasible, one year would be a truly short cycle. The solid set-up, and implementation of an award needs sufficient human and financial resources. For the administration of a prize cycle, a half-time job would have to be provided (of course always depending on the procedures).

These basic costs for organising the award (1 half-day job) might be covered by the EUSALP states and regions or by the Technical Support Structure. The “top up” financial resources like price money etc. might then be covered by additional funding via various donators.

This set-up should help to avoid an imbalance between the award amount and administrative costs and should be an attractive sign towards the donators (support of the award will be in the focus).

However, if several partners participate, such an initiative should be quite feasible. Operational tasks might also be taken over by the TSS in this context.

The degree of innovation, the type of target groups addressed, and the topics supported however, can be well steered by the criteria and categories of the award (e.g., target groups – young entrepreneurs, out of the box partners or combinations, etc.). Here, priorities can also be set according to the EUSALP presidencies or categories can be set up for current topics.

Regarding donators, consideration can be given on the one hand to approaching donators for a broader portfolio of topics who contribute over a longer period of time, or on the other hand to trying to find new donators for each award round who contribute to specific topics in the short term.

This would allow for continuity and flexibility in the same way and would also reflect the various concerns of the donators well.

An evaluation of the EUSALP Innovation Award could best be done after several cycles of implementation.

7. EUSALP Innovation Award – Why can`t we do without?

Background: EUSALP partners set up a feasibility study to explore the possibilities and framework conditions for a new type of financing instrument within the EUSALP – the **EUSALP Innovation Facility (EIF)**. Within this study, the best possible legal model and the most practicable type of financing should be sought. The EIF should

- mobilize funding sources to finance innovative, cross-sectoral, and experimental ideas
- be flexible, enable short-term and low-threshold support
- serve a wide range of potential and varied beneficiaries
- consider private and public financial support.

To this end, EUSALP partners and contractors implemented the following **work steps:**

- **Conducting a Needs analysis**: Contractors carried out a gap analysis and a needs analysis, in which the need for such a form of support was identified and confirmed.
- **Proposing an EIF structure:** In this step, potential legal structures and procedures were derived and discussed. EUSALP partners distilled the form of a "Purely Inter-governmental Initiative" as the most suitable possible structure.
- **Addressing potential donators:** The aim of this step was to discuss the envisaged cornerstones of an EIF with institutions that could act as potential donators.
- **Deriving Recommendations:** These steps revealed a wide spectrum of opinions, many distinct aspects, and specifics. The final proposal is to establish an **"EUSALP Innovation Award"**. **This would be a perfectly fitting and easy-to-use structure that can best meet the needs of EUSALP.**

- **The "EUSALP Innovation Award" aims to**
  - support innovative, cross-sectoral, and experimental ideas,
  - enable short-term and low-threshold support,
  - link a range of diverse actors,
  - mobilize funding from public and private partners,
  - send a clear signal for innovation in the Alpine region.

- **Why can`t we do without?**
  - In the current times, young, positive, lively ideas strongly need to be supported.
  - The EUSALP Innovation Award bundles and consolidates existing initiatives and generates positive leverage effects.
  - Additionally, it opens to new opportunities for the Alpine actors: lifting onto the tablet current topics and bringing together public and private partners to promote innovation.
  - The EUSALP Innovation Award fills a gap and supports where existing funds are not the means of choice – flexible, short-term and low-threshold.
  - The EUSALP Innovation Award will be characterised by its clear, simple, and easy-to-handle structures and procedures.

- The EUSALP Innovation Award increases the visibility, awareness and understanding of EUSALP and its ambitions for the Alpine region.

- **What are EUSALP Innovation Award key points?**
  - EUSALP establishes a low-threshold Innovation Award to be awarded at clearly defined intervals (e.g. every two years).
  - The EUSALP Award will use existing structures and thus be quick and easy to implement.
  - The EUSALP Innovation Award will be awarded in different categories, cover different thematic areas and should address different target groups (e.g. young entrepreneurs, students, researchers, networks, etc.). As well various territories or types of areas (e.g., rural areas, mountain regions, networks of different territories...) might be in the focus.
  - It can take the form of a prize for something that already exists and is awarded, or a competition for which innovative ideas are submitted and the best ones are awarded.

- **What are the benefits of the EUSALP Innovation Award?**
  - Innovative, and inspiring current ideas (competition format) or already implemented novel ideas (award format) can be rewarded, honored, and made visible. This supports both the concerns of EUSALP and of course the concerns of the winners and their community.
  - The EUSALP Innovation Award would consolidate and strengthen existing awards, and synergies could provide good leverage effects.
  - The amount of the prize can be adjusted according to the possibilities; even small prizes can have a high impact.
  - By establishing different categories, it is possible to respond to the different needs of EUSALP partners and possible external donators, as well as to changing thematic concerns (e.g., responding to burning issues of the day, open category, etc.).

We would be pleased if you supported this proposal, and we could start the implementation together!

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9. Abbreviations

AC	Alpine Convention
AG	(EUSALP) Action Group
ARPAF	Alpine Region Preparatory Action Fund
ASP	(Interreg) Alpine Space Program
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union
CEF	Connecting Europe Facility
CF	Cohesion Fund
CLLD	Community Led Local Development
COSME	Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EAGF	European Agricultural Guarantee Fund
EARDF	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EB	(EUSALP) Executive Board
EC	European Commission
EIF	EUSALP Innovation Facility
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESI	European Structural and Investement Funds
ESPON	European Spatial Obersvatory Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion
ETC	European Transnational Cooperation
EU	European Union
EUSAIR	EU-Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region
EUSALP	EU-Strategy for the Alpine Region
EUSALP-EB	EU-Strategy for the Alpine Region – Executive Board
EUSDR	EU-Strategy for the Danube Region
Fig.	Figure
INTERREG	Collective term for interregional, transnational and bilateral cooperation programmes of the European Union
MRS	Macro-regional strategy
MS	Member State

PA	Policy Area (EUSALP)
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats
TSS	Technical Support Structure (planned for EUSALP within the “Interreg specific objective” of the Alpine Space programme 2021-2027)

10. Appendix

10.1. Appendix 1: Partner states and regions of EUSALP

Seven countries, of which five are EU Member States (Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia), and two non-EU countries (Liechtenstein and Switzerland) as well as 48 Regions together build EUSALP. See a list of these countries, the responsible institutions at federal level (line ministries) and regions in alphabetical order below[39].

Austria:

- Federal Chancellery
  Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs
- Regions:
  - Burgenland
  - Kärnten
  - Niederösterreich
  - Oberösterreich
  - Salzburg
  - Steiermark
  - Tirol
  - Vorarlberg
  - Wien

France

- Ministry for Territorial Cohesion – National Agency for Territorial Cohesion
  - Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes
  - Bourgogne-Franche-Comté
  - Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur

Germany

- Auswärtiges Amt (Department for Middle and Eastern Europa - Federal Foreign Office)
- Regions:
  - Baden-Württemberg
  - Bavaria

Italy

- Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale Direzione Generale per l'Unione Europea
- Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri
- Regions:
  - Bozen (Autonomous Province)
  - Friuli Venezia Giulia
  - Liguria

[39] https://www.alpine-region.eu/7-countries-and-48-regions (2021-06-02)

- Lombardy
- Piedmont
- Trento (Autonomous Province)
- Valle d'Aosta
- Veneto

Liechtenstein

- Unit for Environment and Sustainable Development Office for Foreign Affairs - Principality of Liechtenstein

Slovenia

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Republic of Slovenia

Switzerland

- UVEK Eidgenössisches Departement für Umwelt, Verkehr, Energie und Kommunikation ARE Bundesamt für Raumentwicklung
- Regions
  - Aargau
  - Appenzell Ausserrhoden
  - Appenzell Innerrhoden
  - Bern
  - Basel-Landschaft
  - Basel-Stadt
  - Fribourg
  - Geneva
  - Glarus
  - Graubünden
  - Jura
  - Lucerne
  - Neuchatel
  - Nidwalden
  - Obwalden
  - Schaffhausen
  - Schwyz
  - Solothurn
  - St. Gallen
  - Thurgau
  - Ticino
  - Uri
  - Valais
  - Vaud
  - Zug
  - Zürich

10.2. Appendix 2: List of potential interview partners

State	Name of institution / organization	Contact	Contacted / Interview on
AT	Infineon Technologies Austria AG Company - Alternative	communications.austria@infineon.com	Contacted Interview on 17 March 2022
AT	Doppelmayr Garaventa Company - Alternative	Doppelmayr Seilbahnen GmbH	Contacted Interview on 28 March 2022
CH	Stefan Schmidheiny Foundation / Philanthropy - 1st Choice	https://www.stephanschmidheiny.com/de/philanthropie	Contacted No interview as no longer active
CH	Schweizer Berghilfe Foundation – Alternative	https://www.berghilfe.ch	Contacted Interview on 16 March 2022
FR	France Active «Les entrepreneurs engagés» 1st Choice	https://franceactive-savoiemont-blanc.org	Contacted several times, no response
FR	La NEF, coopérative bancaire Bank - Alternative	https://www.lanef.com	Contacted several times, no response
FR	Kilian Jornet Foundation Foundation	info@kilianjornetfoundation.org https://www.kilianjornetfoundation.org/	Contacted several times, no concrete response
FR	Fonds de dotation enfance & montagne Foundation	https://www.enfanceetmontagne.fr/ contact@enfanceetmontagne.fr	Contacted several times, no response
FR	Petzl Foundation Private company foundation	info@fondation-petzl.org	Contacted several times, no response
FR	Fondation Université Grenoble – Alpes University foundation	https://fondation.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/ fondation@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr	Contacted, no response
FR	Fondation Montagne en Scène Foundation	donateurs@fdf.org, cyril@montagne-en-scene.com	Contacted, no response
FR	CIPRA France	https://www.cipra.org/fr/cipra/france?set_language=fr	Contacted as alternative and interview on 17 May 2022
GER	Allianz Umweltstiftung Foundation	info@allianz-umweltstiftung.de	Contacted No interview due to internal evaluation

GER	Münchner Rück Stiftung Foundation - Alternative 1	info@munichre-foundation.org	Contacted Interview on 17 March 2022
IT	Fondazione CARIPLO Foundation	www.fondazionecariplo.it	Contacted Interview on 11 March 2022
LI	Prinz Max bzw. Stiftung Lebenswertes Liechtenstein Foundation – 1st Choice	https://www.lebenswertesliechtenstein.li S.D. Prinz Max von und zu Liechtenstein	Contacted Interview on 29 April 2022
Further possible institutions – long list & alternatives			
GER	UmweltBank Bank	service@umweltbank.de	
GER	GLS Bank Bank - Alternative 1	kundendialog@gls.de	
GER	Avantis Company	hello@arvantis.group	
GER	Polarstern Company - Alternative 1	hallo@polarstern-energie.de	
GER	Weleda Company - Alternative 2	dialog@weleda.de	
IT	Finlombarda S.p.A.	www.finlombarda.it https://www.linkedin.com/company/finlombarda-s.p.a./	
LI	LIFE Klimastiftung Foundation - Alternative	https://www.klimastiftung.li/	
LI	Toni Hilti Stiftung Foundation - Alternative	Caroline Hilti, carolinehilti@hotmail.com	
FR	Essentiema – Fonds de dotation pour un tourisme bienveillant	https://www.essentiem.org/	
FR	The Louis Vicat foundation Private company foundation	https://www.vicat.com/about-us/vision/missions-of-the-foundationhttps://www.vicat.com/form/contact	
FR	Schneider Electric Foundation Private company foundation	https://www.se.com/ww/en/about-us/sustainability/foundation/	
FR	Poma Foundation Private company foundation	https://www.poma.net/en/poma-group/foundation-poma/ https://www.poma.net/en/contact-us/	

FR	French Tech in the Alps	https://www.ftalps.com/en/ https://www.ftalps.com/contactez-nous/	
FR	Fondation Facim	https://fondation-facim.fr/ info@fondation-facim.fr	
FR	Fondation Université Savoie Mont-Blanc	https://www.fondation-usmb.fr/	

10.3. Appendix 3: Summaries of the interviews

10.3.1. Interview 1

Background: Fondazione CARIPLO

What is Fondazione CARIPLO?

The CARIPLO Foundation was formed in December 1991 as part of the rationalization and privatization of the Italian banking system under the Amato-Carli Act because of which the philanthropic activities previously carried out by savings banks were entrusted to newly formed foundations.

Since then, Fondazione Cariplo has been serving communities through support to local organizations that for their proximity are best suited to intercept and respond to people's needs. Widening social gaps though have made our communities more fragmented and vulnerable. Now more than ever closing those gaps is urgent to reweave strong and inclusive communities, help people through their lives and build robust institutions that can reconcile different demands for a better future for everyone. That's why Fondazione Cariplo supports communities and local organizations in Lombardia.

Legal status

In its judgement 300 of 2003, Italy's Constitutional Court clarified, reinforced, and confirmed the legal status of Italian banking foundations as private entities, affirming they are "entities that organize social freedoms", thus clearly positioning them in-between public institutions and the community of citizens.

Further information: https://www.fondazionecariplo.it/en/index.html

Summary of the interview:

- Under what circumstances could you imagine supporting such projects or initiatives? What would be important? What is special about your institution?
  - » It would be very important at least for institutions like CARIPLO foundation that there will be a **bottom or basis-fund, financed by public authorities**. E.g., a fixed basis funded by partner states, the regions or so. For us as a foundation that might be some kind of important guarantee and important sign of commitment. That will give **credibility to the initiative** for other partners.
  - » CARIPLO contains of several regional banks that can only **fund projects in a certain territory** – e.g., in Lombardia and parts of Piemonte. So, if CARIPLO supported the EIF it must be secured, that the money is only used in the territory, where the supporting CARIPLO-bank branch is allowed to fund. This is a constraint in a trans European context; but on the other hand, CARIPLO knows the region it works with and the stakeholders very well and can provide quite **targeted support.**
  - » The main objective of CARIPLO is to **support small municipalities and NGOs (small entities)** in rural areas **to deal with and to implement EU- or other funding projects**. Some amount of co-financing (own resources) is always needed as a kind of commitment. But the important thing is that CARIPLO supports entities with few knowledge and resources to implement complex funding projects.
  - » There are also projects just funded by CARIPLO, but the main aim is to support small entities to use other funding correctly. Co-funding is always needed as a kind of commitment.

- In which thematic fields would you be most interested in?
  - » CARIPLO provides rather **systemic support** than thematic support, see above.
- What should be avoided in any case?
  - » In any case it should be avoided to **duplicate existing initiatives** and approaches!
  - » It might be of great interest to limit the **support to what is really needed,** e.g., to support small entities with resources that are not financed via other funds or to **support them to use existing funds!**
- Which approaches and methods would you consider attractive? Would cooperation with other donators be interesting? What would be most attractive or important?
  - » Interesting would be to have a kind of match with other territories doing and performing similar projects to reach a greater impact, e.g., support mountainous areas and entities in the same way.
  - » It would also be interesting to make some kind of advocacy to certain themes, e.g., reusing abandoned buildings and renovation and revive small towns and villages or supporting the design of local development plans and implementation projects.
  - » Funding should always start from involving regional or other public actors to have public support and having this insurance or guarantee as a basis.

10.3.2. Interview 2

Background: Schweizer Berghilfe?

What is Schweizer Berghilfe / Swiss Mountain Aid?

Swiss Mountain Aid is organised as a non-profit, politically, and denominationally independent foundation based in Adliswil in the Canton of Zurich. It is ZEWO-certified since 1953. It exists since 1943 and supports projects that create jobs and added value in the mountain region.

Areas supported are Agriculture, tourism, trade, forest and wood, energy, education, health, emergency aid.

The foundation bodies of Swiss Mountain Aid are the Swiss Mountain Aid Council (sponsoring and electoral body) and the Foundation Council (supreme management body). The operational work is carried out by the Secretariat and experts.

The members of the Foundation Council and the Mountain Aid Council as well as the experts all work on an honorary/volunteer basis.

Further information: https://www.berghilfe.ch/

Summary of the interview:

- What is special about your institution?

Swiss Mountain Aid **ONLY receives private donations**, no public money. This requires appropriate "storytelling" and clarity about what Swiss Mountain Aid stands for and what it does. This limits the risk capacity; the supported projects **cannot be too risky**.

However, Swiss Mountain Aid does not only support where there is a perfect "business case", because these applicants are mostly also "fit enough" to access other funding.

It is therefore important for Swiss Mountain Aid to find a good middle ground, to support projects that produce results, but also to give a helping hand to those who are unable to do so on their own. Swiss Mountain Aid therefore deliberately enters the area where **the public sector does not provide support**. Swiss Mountain Aid therefore supports in the competitive field because the state is not allowed to support this (distortion of competition, subsidy law, etc.). The classic area of support is investment support for actors in the mountain region.

Swiss Mountain Aid therefore provides support on the **competitive side** where the state does not provide support, but also has **cooperative ventures** where there is cooperation in the precompetitive area. Here, for example, there are special programmes with SECO (including cooperation with external experts commissioned by SECO or the cantons for projects in mountain regions).

Another area is **knowledge transfer and support**. The volunteer experts of Swiss Mountain Aid, all of whom have management or leadership experience, are available to applicants, review business plans and provide support, especially to micro-enterprises, in the preparation of applications or business plans.

- What should be avoided in any case?

The duplication of existing funding schemes!

- What is special about Swiss Mountain Aid?

Swiss Mountain Aid completes state approaches, supports what the state does not do and has a spatial focus on mountain areas; it supports from the point of view of risk minimisation.

10.3.3. Interview 3

Background: Infineon Technologies

What is Infineon Technologies Austria AG?

Infineon is a worldwide company and world leader in the development and production of semiconductor solutions. In the 2021 fiscal year (ending 30 September), Infineon reported revenue of more than €11 billion with a workforce of some 50,280 people worldwide. Infineon is listed on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange (ticker symbol: IFX) and in the USA on the over-the-counter market OTCQX International Premier (ticker symbol: IFNNY). Infineon`s business segments: Automotive, Industrial Power Control, Power and Sensor System, Connected Secure Systems.

Infineon Technologies Austria is specialized in the field of semiconductor solutions and stands for an effective combination of innovative research and high-quality production.

With 4,820 employees - 2,100 of them in research & development - from 73 nations, the company achieved sales of around Euro 3.9 billion in the 2021 financial year. A research expenditure of Euro 516 million makes Infineon Austria one of the strongest research companies in Austria.

The interview took place with the leader of the “innovation & Funding Management”-division.
Further information:
https://www.infineon.com/
https://www.infineon.com/cms/austria/de/ueber-infineon-austria/

Summary of the interview:

- Under what circumstances could you imagine supporting such projects or initiatives? What would be important? What is special about your institution?

From a company's point of view, two perspectives can be taken on these issues:

- **As a potential beneficiary:**
  - Simplicity is most important here; it should be clear what the company can expect from support, it should be quick (especially for start-ups): smart & simple.
  - It would be interesting to be able to present the ideas and concepts in person; funding applicants should have the personal opportunity to present their project ideas to a committee and not just submit forms in order to receive funding.
- **As a possible co-decision maker or funder:**
  - This includes the option of the company contributing financial or other resources to the project. The following forms of support could be considered here:
    - **Cooperation projects:** There are concrete projects that are co-financed and for which joint use or joint exploitation is agreed. The exciting thing here would be that something is created together.
      - An important question in this case, however, is the question of ownership, use and exploitation rights: Who has what rights to the results in a cooperation project, how can they be exploited! This is a particularly important question where all participants need clarity and legal certainty in advance.
      - In general, when a company participates financially, it is an important question how the money is used and what benefit the company can derive from it. Compliance plays an important role, as does clarity in the legal area (rules, legal basis, contracts, etc.).
      - Infineon Austria has various cooperation projects, especially with start-ups, universities, research networks, etc., primarily in the context of participation in EU and other funding programmes.
    - **Classic sponsoring:**
      - Generally, the resources for sponsoring in the company are limited.
      - Compliance issues are particularly relevant here. It could certainly be seen critically here if large companies and public institutions jointly paid into a fund, certainly also from sponsorship recipients. The decision-making and coordination processes, especially within the group, would be rather complicated here; in this case it would be easier to work together with foundations or the like.
      - If necessary, the possibility of a PPP would be a solution for the cooperation of public and private donators.

- Which approaches and methods would you consider attractive? Would cooperation with other donators be interesting? What would be most attractive or important?
  - » Companies often have good committed female employees. It would be more interesting from a company's point of view to enable motivated employees to participate in transnational projects.
  - » The model could be that the company allows a contingent of people to participate in projects of the fund (training, private) and the employees then bring these networks and knowledge back to the company.
  - » Also, technical expertise of the employees could be used, people could get involved where they have knowledge or interest.
    - » Networking, new contacts, staff could try something out
    - » Lend" employees or enable them to participate
    - » Generate benefits for companies

10.3.4. Interview 4

Background: Munich Re Foundation

What is Munich Re Foundation?

Preamble to the Articles of Association of the Munich Re Foundation

Munich Reinsurance Company is concerned with the major challenges facing the world - population growth, globalisation, scarcity of resources, environmental pollution, climate change.

From its knowledge of the resulting tasks and challenges for societies and economies, the founder derives its competence to take a stand on the future issues facing society and to assume social responsibility in solving the tasks at hand.

The primary concern of the founder is to contribute to innovative solutions in the context of international population development and globalisation as well as their effects on the future of humanity in countries at different stages of development. In this context, the Foundation will focus in particular on the interaction between population development and the medium of water as an elixir of life and a resource, but also as a risk factor.

Against this background, the foundation has a wide range of activities. In addition to the areas of education, science, and research, it can also be active in the fields of disaster prevention and environmental protection as well as public health care.

Further information: https://www.munichre-foundation.org

Summary of the interview

- What is special about your institution? Where do the financial resources for the foundation come from?
  - » The foundation capital was received from Munich Re.
  - » The foundation's activities are financed from the income of this endowment capital.
  - » This supports the ongoing operations as well as the projects.
  - » Anyone receiving funds from us must have **non-profit status** (research institutions would be possible, but start-ups or companies would not).

- How do the projects come about?
  - » Münchner Re has thematic **focal points (cf. purpose of the foundation above)** and the projects are implemented within the framework of these focal points. In doing so, Münchner Re primarily relies on **long-term cooperation** with partners.
  - » The projects themselves are limited in time and are subject to success assessment/evaluation. Nevertheless, the primary objective is to enter into long-term partnerships with project partners and to implement various projects with them.
  - » Munich Re therefore hardly focuses on pure funding projects (e.g., one project for two years), but on longer-term cooperation, capacity building and longer-term project partnerships.
  - » The individual projects therefore arise primarily from the project network; tenders or similar are not common.
  - » One exception is the **"Risk Award".** Here, a global prize is offered that financially supports the winners for two years. The five to six best applicants are published in a brochure with the winner (mostly: local NGOs, universities, etc.) and thus receive publicity.

- How is the evaluation of the projects done?
  - » The actual team of Müncher Re is small (6 people, mostly project managers). Above that, Müncher Re has a classic foundation structure according to German foundation law. The foundation council is responsible for the strategic direction, although the foundation's orientation is clearly outlined by the foundation's purpose. In future, evaluation of the strategic orientation is to take place approximately every five years.
  - » The impact measurement and quality management of the projects is carried out according to the usual methods, and the Foundation Council is regularly informed about this.

- What would be particularly important for an EIF?
  - » **Topics:** Everything that has to do with **climate change** seems particularly relevant - climate change and climate protection, especially in the Alpine region!
  - » **Systemic: Attracting new innovative ideas** - this could possibly be achieved through "Innovation competitions or tenders, idea **competitions or prizes**: as Munich Re has seen, the Risk Award has established itself very well for this purpose, see https://www.munichre-foundation.org/de.html.

10.3.5. Interview 5

Background: Doppelmayr Garventa Group

What is Doppelmayr Garventa Group?

As quality, technology, and market leader in ropeway engineering, Doppelmayr/Garaventa operates production plants as well as sales and service centers in fifty countries worldwide. To date, the Group has built more than 15,100 installations for customers in ninety-six nations. Flexibility, knowledge, and pioneering spirit make the Group ideally equipped to meet all the challenges of traditional and new markets.

Innovative transport systems from Doppelmayr/Garaventa continually set new standards. Top comfort and safety define our installations – in summer and winter tourism regions as well as in the urban transit sector. Our material transport systems and ropeways for preventive avalanche blasting offer impressive efficiency and performance. All-year-round experience concepts round off our extensive portfolio. With Doppelmayr/Garaventa, customers get top quality in modern design, user-friendly solutions and optimum service. From the initial idea to the completed project and beyond.

The Doppelmayr headquarter is in Wolfurt, Vorarlberg, Austria.

Further information: https://www.doppelmayr.com/

Summary of the interview:

- Do you have questions of understanding?
  - » No specific questions.
- In which thematic fields would you be most interested in?
  - » Innovative urban transport solutions. The business with tourism transport solutions in the Alps is stagnating, it is a cablecar replacement business. Furth growth of ski areas is not realistic. There are around 5-600 relevant actors, they know them all personally. Tourism business in Eastern Europe and Asia has been much stronger than in the Alps in the last years.
  - » Urban transport solutions (e.g., cable cars) are a contribution to sustainable transport in many urban areas of the world, also in mountainous regions. This topic could also be interesting in Alpine cities. In addition, they are investigating and assessing specific transport solutions e.g., for the Ski world championship in Saalbach Hinterglemm in 2023.
  - » Some years ago, they co-founded Vitalpin, an association that promotes integrated views to alpine tourism: https://www.vitalpin.org/. Vitalpin has about 1.000 members.
- Which approaches and methods would you consider attractive? Would cooperation with other donators be interesting?
  - » A competition of ideas / a kind of innovation price could be interesting … if interesting ideas are emerging, they would be interested to take them up and jointy develop them further, e.g., developing prototypes, that might become relevant on the market.

- Under what circumstances could you imagine supporting such projects or initiatives?
  - » They would support initiatives that are relevant for their own fields of activity, e.g., innovative urban transport solution. In addition, they would support initiatives that lead to market-relevant solutions.
  - » They would appreciate if also other relevant players from the tourism or transport sector would be involved, it should not be an « exclusively Doppelmayr » engagement.
  - » They are well experienced in co-operating with public bodies at all levels. It would not be a problem to be part of a public-private co-operation mechanism.

- What should be avoided in any case?
  - » One would have to be careful with conflicts of interest, competition law and intellectual property rights. There are several open questions, that must be clarified before starting activities like an alpine wide competition of innovation price.

10.3.6. Interview 6

Background: Lebenswertes Liechtenstein Foundation

What is Lebenswertes Liechtenstein Foundation?

The non-profit Foundation Lebenswertes Liechtenstein is the result of an initiative by private individuals, companies, and institutions who, on the one hand, are closely rooted and connected to Liechtenstein, and on the other hand, want to provide valuable impulses for a future worth living beyond the country's borders.

Over the past one hundred years, Liechtenstein has developed from a simple agricultural country into a globally interconnected service and industrial location. It is a modern state that offers its inhabitants security, a high standard of living and an intact environment. Especially in today's times, such framework conditions cannot be taken for granted.

The Lebenswertes Liechtenstein Foundation wants to contribute to ensuring that this remains the case for future generations. Its goal is to launch or support projects and initiatives that advance Liechtenstein socially, ecologically, and economically and that are supported by a close collaboration between civil society, the economy and state bodies. For a comprehensive safeguarding of Liechtenstein's future, which not only benefits the country itself, but should also have an impact beyond the state's borders.

Further information: https://www.lebenswertesliechtenstein.li/

Summary of the interview:

Introduction

The contractors informed in brief about the project and the possible implementation of a EUSALP Award. The possible orientation, criteria and framework conditions were discussed.

Summary of the interview:

- From your point of view, what would be the most important thing for the conception of such an award?
  - → The purpose should be communicated as clearly and to the point as possible: Who can submit entries, what achievements will be rewarded? What is the purpose of the award? How does the application and selection process work?
  - → The conditions attached to the award should not be too complex - both for the applicants and for potential donators - this is a particularly important framework condition!
    - Too complex requirements for donators/sponsors are a deterrent.
    - Whether funds from public and private donators flow into a common pot for an award is of secondary importance.
    - It is important that the requirements and administration for giving donations are not too complex or tied to too extreme conditions.
    - Transparency is essential: it must be clear that everyone contributes under the same conditions and that the rules are the same for everyone.
    - Lobbying, bribery, and corruption must be clearly and unambiguously excluded.
  - → In the criteria for the award, it is important to choose the best possible mix between breadth and depth. If the criteria are formulated too broadly, this could cause unease among sponsors

(fear of what one is co-financing, purpose too unclear). On the other hand, the criteria should not be too narrow to exclude too many applicants or sponsors.

→ In general, when recruiting sponsors, it should be kept in mind that foundations can only support approaches/activities that are in line with their purpose. This framework condition could, however, be met by offering awards in different thematic areas.

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of awards from your point of view?

→ Awards can be marketed well, or the awarding bodies can use awards to make their concerns and their thematic position visible. In this way, a good impact can be achieved in the communities addressed and the concerns of the awarding institution can be made known to a broader audience.

→ However, awards require resources that need to be considered in addition to the prize money:

- Definition of the categories in which the prize is to be awarded, the criteria as well as the time schedule
- Search for donators, contractual handling with donators
- Selection of the jury and definition of its working methods
- Release of the terms of reference
- Public relations work
- Judging the entries received
- Awarding the prize with a high impact as an important date for the prize-winner, the awarding institution, sponsors, jury, ...

→ Conflictual issues are difficult; for sensitive issues, one would have to look very carefully at whom to approach for sponsorship and how to deal with it.

10.3.7. Interview 7

Background: CIPRA France

What is CIPRA France?

CIPRA as an Alpine wide organisation, has initiated and continues to shape and monitor an international treaty like the Alpine Convention, on the other it supports local authority networks and stimulates the participation of civil society – a tried and tested two-pronged strategy for the protection of the Alps. The French delegation of CIPRA, based in Grenoble, acts together with its partners – various groups, universities, organisations and private individuals – in the French Alps.

General topics of interest of CIPRA France are sustainable development and the protection of the cultural and natural heritage of the Alps while improving the quality of life there. A particular focus is given to questions relating to mobility and transnational traffic.

CIPRA France works towards the upholding and protecting of nature and the environment, and the encouragement of sustainable development. CIPRA France wishes to aid those seeking new directions and thus support the preservation of all our cultural and natural resources.

Further information: https://www.cipra.org/en/cipra/france?set_language=en

Summary of the interview:

Introduction

In a first step, the interviewer informed about the ideas and intentions of a possible EIF, as well as the current proposal to maybe establish an “EUSALP Award”. The interviewee has good knowledge of the French Alpine network as well as of the funding scene.

Summary of the interview

- What experience do you have with French donors?

We also have contact with various funding partners, but currently not with foundations. Our experience is that with foundations you have to know exactly what you want; you have to approach the foundation with very specific requests. In France, it is also very common for foundations to issue calls for proposals for which you can/must apply in order to receive support. Requests for information are most likely to be answered if they are made directly through French contacts.

In general, it is important to check whether the values of the inquirer and the potential supporter match; this must also be checked in advance.

- When would a EUSALP Award be an asset in your view? What would be an added value of such an award?

With the criteria to which such an award is linked, the degree of innovation or what is understood by innovation can be controlled quite well or steered in the desired direction. The awarding institution has very good possibilities here.

It would be an added value or gain if, for example, young people in mountain areas who want to build something locally and on site are supported. For example, young people who have left for educational purposes and now want to establish themselves in their home region or in a mountain region of their choice and establish or promote a business, an initiative, etc. Small support would often be very useful for this.

It would also be an added value if target groups could be addressed that would otherwise not be able to access funding pots or innovation funding (knowledge, resources, etc.).

A reduced, easily manageable administration and adapted criteria or terms of reference would be very helpful. Administrative procedures in France are often very complex and pose a great challenge to local actors in mountain regions.

For actors in France, it would also be supportive to be able to submit French documents or to receive help with the preparation of an English language version. For many local actors, it would be an obstacle if the quality of the English language version were an important criterion.

A high added value would also be to support local or mountain actors in taking a sustainable step, or to provide support that has an impact in the region or locally.