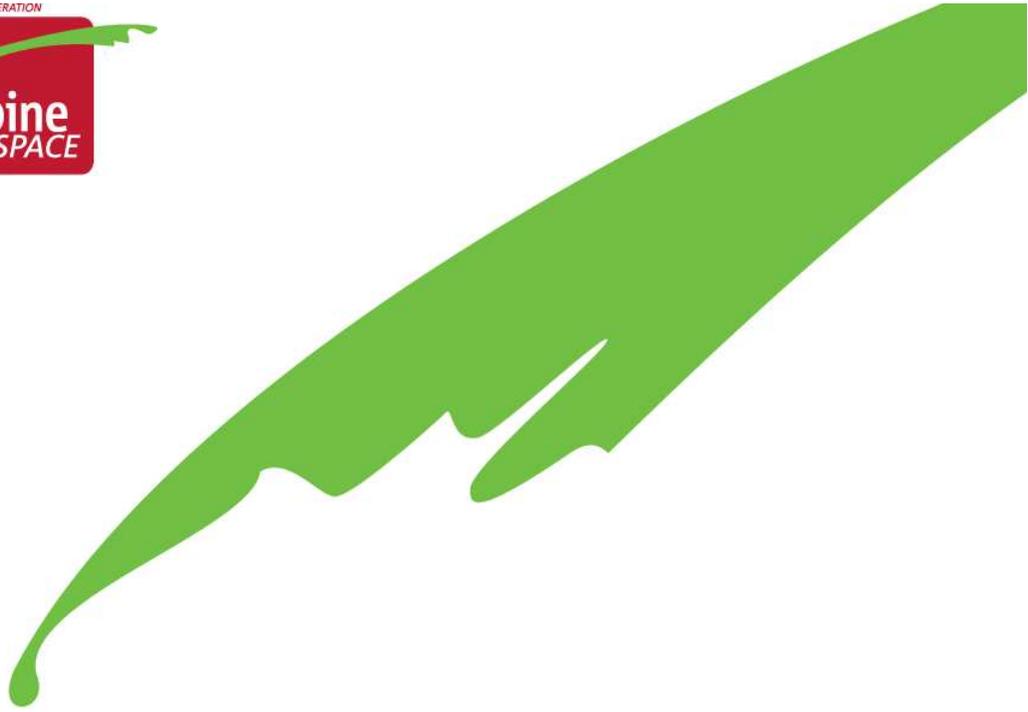


EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION



European Territorial Cooperation 2007 – 2013

# Operational Programme Alpine Space

investing in your future



## Partner States:

Austria  
France  
Germany  
Italy  
Liechtenstein  
Slovenia  
Switzerland



The programme is co-funded  
by the European Regional  
Development Fund

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## **INTRODUCTION: PROGRAMME SUMMARY AND DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMMING PROCESS**

### **Programme summary**

The present document sets out the objectives and strategies that have been defined by the partner states of the cooperation area "Alpine Space" with regard to the objective "European Territorial Cooperation" for the programming period 2007-2013. The Programme forms the basis for projects to be co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund. It is to be seen as a strategic document that shall provide for an active contribution to the achievement of the Lisbon objectives, the Gothenburg priorities and the EU cohesion policy. The programme shall give impulses with regard to the objectives of growth, employment, competitiveness, equality and sustainability.

Increasing competitiveness and attractiveness of the cooperation area by developing joint action fields where transnational cooperation is required for sustainable solutions, will be the main concern of the new programme. This overall programme goal shall be achieved by developing strategies and instruments in areas where transnational cooperation is required for sustainable solutions. The Programme partners herewith confirm their commitment to achieve this common goal and will put high effort to further intensify the cooperation initiated in the INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space Programme for that purpose. This will be laid down in a multilateral agreement between the partner states and the Managing Authority as it was done in the programming period 2000-2006.

The above-mentioned overall goal of the programme and the specific programme objectives and priorities shall contribute to foster the specific strengths and to make use of the opportunities of the Alpine Space as a transnational territorial cooperation area as well as to reduce the identified weaknesses and threats. Based on the analysis (cf. chapter 1) of the cooperation area and the framework conditions as set out by the European Union the present programme concentrates on three selected topics for transnational cooperation in the period 2007-2013: "Competitiveness and Attractiveness of the Alpine Space", "Accessibility and Connectivity", "Environment and Risk Prevention". These priorities tackle the key issues set out in the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion and the National Strategic Reference Frameworks of the Member States involved in the programme and reflect the special role of transnational cooperation for territorial cohesion.

The present document takes into consideration the experience from the previous programme, particularly the results of projects, the Mid-term Evaluation<sup>1</sup> and the "Prospective Study"<sup>2</sup>. Of particular importance for the programme is the selection and implementation of projects that have high quality with regard to content, output-orientation and management. Thus, partner states attach great importance to a more proactive approach in this next programming period to ensure that projects contribute to the

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<sup>1</sup> As laid down in the council regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 on the Structural a Mid-term Evaluation was conducted in 2003 in order to gauge the effectiveness of programme implementation.

<sup>2</sup> In 2005 the INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space Programme commissioned a study in which the prospective development opportunities of the Alpine Space were analysed ("Prospective Study").

realisation of the programme objectives and to achieve stronger involvement of the different key actors, especially the Alpine Convention.

### **Description of programming process**

A Task Force composed of representatives of national and regional authorities of the seven participating partner states, the MA and the JTS<sup>3</sup> has been set up to steer the programming process. It was supported by three work groups (the first dealt with the analysis of the cooperation area and the definition of programme objectives, strategies and priorities, the second with financial issues and the third with structures and procedures), composed by representatives of all partner states, the MA and the JTS. The drafting of the programme objectives and strategies which are based on a solid analysis of the cooperation area was supported by external experts. Experts were also engaged to carry out the Ex-ante-Evaluation of the present programme as well as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA-report) and to facilitate the programming process. Between February 2006 and November 2006 several meetings of the Task Force and work groups took place. Representatives of the Alpine Convention and of the European Commission participated to some of the meetings. An outline of the programme's priorities was presented to project holders and other key players at the occasion of the Alpine Space summit held in June 2006 in Stresa (Italy) which provided for first a feedback. Mid July 2006, a meeting between the Task Force and the European Commission took place in which the selected priorities were reflected on. Based on these feedbacks, the draft Operational Programme was further elaborated. Between August and September 2006 a transnational public consultation on the draft Operational Programme as well as on the draft of the SEA-report was carried out via the programme's website. In addition, all partner states performed consultations on national and regional level, respecting the partnership principle as set out in article 11 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund. Special attention was given to the perspectives of equal opportunities, gender mainstreaming and sustainable development. Furthermore, a transnational seminar for Lead Partners of INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space projects was the occasion to present and discuss the draft of the new programme. The outcomes of these consultations were carefully analysed and integrated into the programme document. Mid November 2006 a second meeting between the Task Force and the European Commission took place in which the programme draft was discussed. This present document is therefore based on a broad common view and is expected to be a good frame to address the needs and specifics of the Alpine Space cooperation area. An overview on the programming process is set out in chapter 6 of the present document.

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<sup>3</sup> MA- Managing Authority; JTS- Joint Technical Secretariat, cf. section 4.1- Programme Bodies.

# 1 ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAMME AREA AND FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

## 1.1 GENERAL PRESENTATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE COOPERATION AREA / GEOGRAPHICAL ELIGIBILITY

The Alpine Space comprises the mountainous area in the geographical sense as well as the surrounding foothills and lowlands, a small part of the Mediterranean coastal zone including the Adriatic, parts of the great river valleys of Donau, Po, Adige, Rhône and Rhein. The mountainous “core area” is spatially inseparably linked with the surrounding “peri-alpine belt”, containing some of the most attractive and competitive European metropolitan areas.

The Alpine Space represents one of the manifold regions in the heart of Europe and is the meeting point of German, Latin and Slavic cultures and languages. Its unique diversity of natural and cultural landscapes provides an attractive and powerful space for living and for economic growth.

Considered in its entirety and reflecting to actual European and global development challenges, the Alpine Space is more than the “heart” and the Alps more than the “roof” of Europe. In fact, the territory emerges as a strategic area situated in the geographic centre of Europe, able to take on, for many aspects, the hinging role between the territories of urban and industrial development of Northern and Southern Europe, between Latin Europe in the West and Balkan Europe in the East, capable of assuming a series of specific and irreplaceable functions towards them. The Alpine Space therefore is:

- + an attractive space for working and living for 70 million of people settling a surface of 450.000 km<sup>2</sup>;
- + the largest coherent mountainous landscape in Europe that serves as one of the most important tourism destination of the world;
- + a focal point of prosperity, modernity and innovation with strong development potential, but also with strong territorial discrepancies;
- + an area which is crossed or touched by axes for transit and trade of strategic importance for the further development of Europe and where the concentration of local and regional as well as transalpine transit causes a high traffic volume and environmental loads in the main valleys and passes;
- + an area where different political backgrounds meet and nevertheless where long tradition in political cooperation exists;
- + an area which hosts a great cultural variety as a result of the manifold topography, historical backgrounds, traditions, languages and linkages to the neighboring areas;
- + an area with a unique environment which offers both natural assets (air, water, landscape, biodiversity) and potential for economic development and welfare, but threatened by urbanisation, abandonment and climate change effects.

The differences between the Alpine core area and the surrounding foothills and lowlands as well as the numerous and often strong influences, interdependencies and different interests of use require an integrated view of the Alpine Space. When defining strategies for cooperation it must be considered

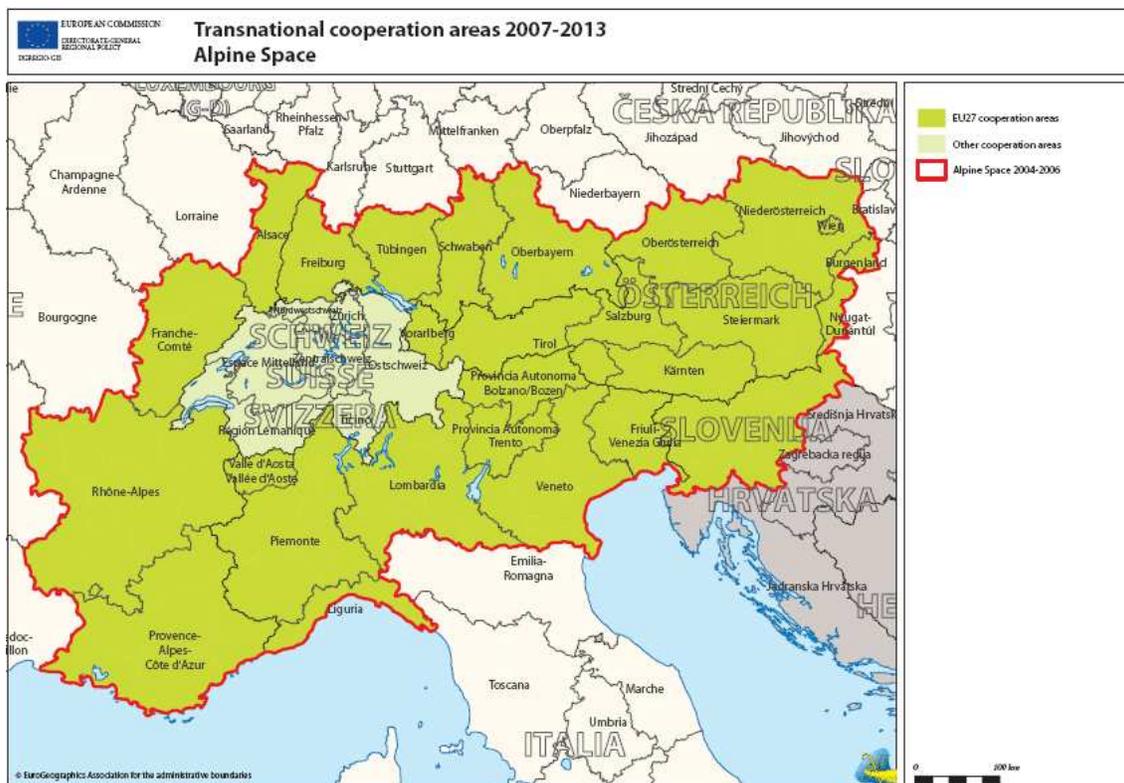
that the mountains in the centre of the Alpine Space have a major role concerning the structure of territorial development of the cooperation area.

Within the territorial Cooperation Objective Alpine Space Programme, the cooperation area remains the same as for the INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space Programme (2000 - 2006). The participating member states and regions (figure 1) on the basis of NUTS II classification are:

- + **Austria:** whole country;
- + **France:** Rhône-Alpes, Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur, Franche-Comté, Alsace;
- + **Germany:** districts of Oberbayern and Schwaben (in Bayern), Tübingen and Freiburg (in Baden-Württemberg);
- + **Italy:** Lombardia, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Trentino-Alto Adige, Valle d’Aosta, Piemonte, Liguria;
- + **Slovenia:** whole country.

The Member States cooperate with the following non-EU Member States, as full partners:

- + **Liechtenstein** (whole country);
- + **Switzerland** (whole country).



**Figure 1: the Alpine Space eligible area**

Issues such as transport or climate change that shall be tackled with the present programme demonstrate that problems do not end at the borders of the co-operation area or European Union. The partner states of the programme are convinced that it will provide for added value for certain topics if they are picked up in a wider scale. They have agreed that in exceptional cases also expenditure incurred

by **partners** located **outside the cooperation area** participating in projects up to the limit of 20 % as indicated in article 21 (2) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and **expenditure** incurred in implementing projects on the territory of countries **outside the European Community** up to the limit of 10 % as indicated in article 21 (3) of the same regulation shall be eligible under the Alpine Space Programme. Thereby, the benefit for the cooperation area has to be clearly demonstrated. Specific project selection criteria will be established to assess this aspect.

## 1.2 EU AND NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

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### Community Strategic Guidelines, 2007-2013

At EU level the Council has adopted the Community Strategic Guidelines, 2007-2013 as a “*single indicative framework, which Member States and regions are invited to use when developing national and regional programmes*”<sup>4</sup>. The Guidelines introduce three priorities, which are in line with the integrated guidelines for growth and jobs of the renewed Lisbon agenda:

- + improving the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities;
- + encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and growth of the knowledge economy;
- + creating more and better jobs.

On this basis, the Guidelines give more concrete recommendations for action. Special consideration is given to the territorial dimension of cohesion policy. It is expected that programmes shall promote territorial cohesion with the aim of improving the territories’ capacity to contribute to the achievement of the growth and jobs agenda.

As to transnational cooperation the three basic priorities of the Guidelines should be implemented, while working towards economic increase and social integration and cohesion of the cooperation area. Emphasis should be placed on matters of strategic importance in the frame of the four priority themes laid down in article 6 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006: innovation, environment, accessibility and sustainable urban development.

### General orientations and priorities of National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRF)

The National Strategic Reference Frameworks of the Member States participating in the programme deal with the issue of transnational cooperation in rather diverse ways.<sup>5</sup> In the following, some main orientations and priority themes are summarised.

In the **Austrian** document the need for high-quality projects is highlighted. Sharing of experience among public bodies, the need for cross-sectoral projects and continued cooperation networks are further emphasized. Transnational cooperation should be characterised by spatial flexibility and the-

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<sup>4</sup> Council Decision of October 2006 on Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion (2006/ 702/ EC).

<sup>5</sup> No NSRF are available for Switzerland and Liechtenstein, but equivalent documents have been produced: Environmental Report 2004 (Umweltbericht 2004, Regierung des Fürstentums Liechtenstein) for Liechtenstein and Spatial Development Report 2005 (Federal Office for Spatial Development) for Switzerland.

matically defined contexts. With reference to contents, continuity and deepening of subjects pursued in previous programming periods as well as a broad thematic orientation are desirable.

One of the concerns of **France** is to integrate local management plans into programme implementation with a view of assuring strong local impact and high added value at European level. Best conjunction of cross-border and transnational cooperation should be sought. Aspects of communication and evaluation of intervention strategies as well as actions related to capitalisation should be given strengthened attention.

For **Germany** potentials of transnational cooperation are seen in positive economic effects of joint use and development of regional territorial assets, exchange of experience in the frame of projects and know-how transfer, as well as in enhanced competency of German partners. A broad range of funding possibilities is expected to be needed in order to support projects, which contribute to integrated territorial development.

The starting point for transnational cooperation of **Italy** is the identification of domestic sectors offering high level of skills and knowledge in the transnational context, as well as of domains in which cooperation generates considerable impacts for development of regions. The NSRF of Italy underlines the importance of territorial capital and endogenous resources, of an integrated approach and of coordination between policies/programmes.

**Slovenia** intends in the context of transnational cooperation, to follow the aims to improve its attractiveness and quality of life.

The documents provided by **Liechtenstein** and **Switzerland** do not contain specific references to transnational cooperation under the territorial cooperation objective of the EU. The Environmental Report 2004 of Liechtenstein stresses, on the other hand, the need for international cooperation, partnerships and information exchange with a view of working towards sustainable development.

As regards the priority themes of the National Strategic Reference Frameworks and documents of Liechtenstein and Switzerland, natural hazards and climate change impacts are the most widely mentioned fields, followed by competitiveness concerns. Strongly represented are also topics of innovation, accessibility, environment, sustainable settlement system or urban development. Knowledge based economy, territorial cooperation, natural resource management, cultural resources, and quality of life are furthermore highlighted.

The NSRF of the Member States, the above mentioned documents of Liechtenstein and Switzerland and the framework conditions as defined by the EU were taken into consideration when defining the programme objectives.

## 1.3 TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE ALPINE SPACE

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### Experience with transnational cooperation in the Alpine Space

The Alpine Space offers a tradition in transnational cooperation over several decades, starting from political and administrative cooperation on national or regional level to cooperation on smaller scale between local authorities and private institutions, partly within the frame of European Community Initiatives and Programmes (CIP).

Between 1972 and 1981, three working communities (ARGE ALP, Alps-Adriatic and COTRAO)<sup>6</sup> were established serving as international platforms for cooperation in different fields of spatial development of Alpine regions. Their common objectives are to promote an exchange of information, to realise joint actions across borders and to contribute to the European integration process.

Further initiatives and networks of relevant actors were established such as "ARGE Alpenstädte" (network of small and medium-sized Alpine towns), "Alliance in the Alps" (network of communities aiming at implementing the Alpine Convention locally), "Alpine Network of Protected Areas", the "REGION-ALP" platform of the Pilot Action Programme "Eastern Alps" and numerous cooperations between private, public bodies and NGOs. Based on these experiences some border regions have recently started a political dialogue aimed at commonly setting up "Euroregions" in order to share development strategies, perspectives and policies and to set up a long-term and institutional cooperation.

The Alpine Convention plays a major role and gives a framework for sustainable development in the Alps; its history goes back to the 1950s. The basic instruments of the Alpine Convention were already laid down in the late 1980s but were only set into force in 1995. The Alpine states together with the European Union committed to co-operate at transnational level in all thematic fields of the Alpine Convention's protocols. The core area of the Alps is seen as one common space, regardless of all national borders and administrative barriers, in order to develop common strategies for sustainable development of the Alps. During the INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space Programme, close cooperation and synergy effects with the Alpine Convention were sought and the basis for a sound and effective cooperation in 2007-2013 was set to ensure that existing networks and funding possibilities of the programme are better used.

### **Experience with transnational cooperation in the framework of the European regional policy**

With growing economic and social integration within Europe, borders are increasingly losing their separating character and more intensive relationships and interdependencies are emerging between cities and regions. A stronger awareness regarding the challenges of and the need for transnational cooperation in the field of spatial development policies emerged in the 1990s. This process reached a first climax with the adoption of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) in 1999. Based on the ESDP, the European Commission set into force an innovative approach for integrated spatial development policies at transnational level (Community Initiative INTERREG IIC and the Pilot Action Programme under article 10 ERDF<sup>7</sup>).

In the previous EU programming periods the Alpine Space was involved in various EU programmes financed by the Structural Funds (1994-1999: Objectives 1, 2, 5a and 5b and LEADER II; 2000-2006: Objectives 1 and 2, LEADER+ and in several initiatives for cross-border cooperation INTERREG IIIA and interregional cooperation INTERREG IIIC).

Based on the experiences made during the Pilot Action Programme "Alpine Space – Eastern Alps" (1994-1999) under article 10 ERDF the first transnational EU cooperation programme was set for the Alps in the period 2000-2006. The INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space Programme represented an inte-

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<sup>6</sup> ARGE ALP - Die Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Alpenländer; Alps Adriatic WC - The Alps Adriatic; COTRAO – Communauté de Travail des Alpes Occidentales.

<sup>7</sup> ERDF – European Regional Development Funds

grated strategic approach aiming to encourage a stronger cohesion between sectoral and horizontal policies of the area.

### **Main lessons learnt from the INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space Programme**

During the INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space programming period 2000-2006 the partner states and regions involved have been closely working together and jointly strengthened knowledge transfer and cooperation to promote the Alpine Space as an attractive living and working area, while improving the quality of life for its inhabitants. The benefits gained through transnational cooperation are manifold, reflected in the results of a high number of successfully implemented projects and proved the prosperous implementation of the first joint cooperation process.

The programme managed to steer towards a real transnational approach on territorial development by elaborating common views, perspectives and finding solutions on common problems in the cooperation area. Several projects built up strategic partnerships including relevant stakeholders for addressing the main challenges of territorial development in the Alps. The link and interaction between European, national and regional policies was supported by many projects under INTERREG IIIB that implemented EU directives and priorities (e.g. Natura 2000, the Water Framework Directive or the TEN).

The stimulation of economic growth and innovation was a major intervention aspect under the INTERREG IIIB Programme. A core field of activities could be identified in strengthening the competitiveness within the cooperation area by boosting employment activities. Therefore ICT applications were often used as a common tool to facilitate knowledge exchange and setting up pilot activities. The number of SMEs involved in project activities like networking and know-how exchange grew steadily, proving the solid interest of this group of actors in the programme. Despite these first encouraging results, further activities in this field shall be supported to ensure sustainable and long lasting cooperation.

The aspects of accessibility, transport and mobility were dealt with particular care during the previous programming period. The projects tried to find solutions considering the specific territorial setting of the Alpine Space with its highly frequented transit routes, connecting densely populated metropolitan areas around the fringes of the Alpine core with each other as well as with the central Alpine regions and their frequented tourist resorts. Also remote and sparsely populated mountain areas of the Alps were the target of several partnerships, to find sustainable and innovative strategies to maintain and improve the quality of public services. Even though the importance of developing and promoting innovative solutions in the field of accessibility was addressed the programme did initiate satisfactorily interventions answering these challenges as also stressed by the Mid-term Evaluation. Further cooperation and initiatives are required in this field as the issues of transport and communication are of crucial importance for sustainable development in the Alps.

Operations on environment and risk prevention were another main target of interest under INTERREG IIIB. Many projects led to solid initial results on the common management of nature, landscape and cultural heritage. Nevertheless, the Alpine Space is affected significantly and increasingly by the impacts of climate change and side effects of traffic and settlement expansions. Therefore there is a clear need for joint activities for the upcoming years.

The programme and project partners developed stable networks, witnessing the strong commitment to fulfil the programme's major target of a common development strategy. The exchange on different points of view, project results and ideas for future projects was supported by the programme through

the organisation of transnational events and seminars to set up a solid basis for further joint actions and strategies. In the new programming period these existing networks should be strengthened and widened and new networks should be built up to foster exchanges of experience and best practise examples.

The main findings of the "Prospective Study" provided the basis for targeted calls for project proposals, where a clear reference to the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas was already made. This study also identified future development trends and main upcoming cooperation challenges for the cooperation area.

Certainly not all problems and regional disparities have significantly diminished nor disappeared. The cooperation during the INTERREG IIIB programming period can however be seen as a starting point for further joint actions to overcome territorial imbalances. Whereas the scope of operations was rather wide and mainly referring to overall objectives derived from the ESDP and general INTERREG guidelines in the programming period 2000-2006, the Alpine Space Programme running in 2007-2013 shall be more focused and narrower in content and seek to better correspond to specific requirements of the Alpine territory. By this means, it is also expected to raise more awareness on the political level. The SWOT analysis for the present territorial Cooperation Objective Programme revealed further needs for cooperation and new trends of territorial development. The importance to increase cooperation initiatives involving public institutions was underlined.

Experience also showed the necessity to further improve structures and procedures of the programme to provide for more "user-friendly" solutions especially for project holders. To ensure a high quality of the selected projects in terms of thematic outcomes and administrative implementation, technical support by the programme bodies shall be strengthened. Especially a pro-active approach shall be followed during the generation phase of project proposals.

## 1.4 KEY TOPICS AND AREAS OF THE ALPINE SPACE

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### 1.4.1 Economy and territorial structure and territorial structure

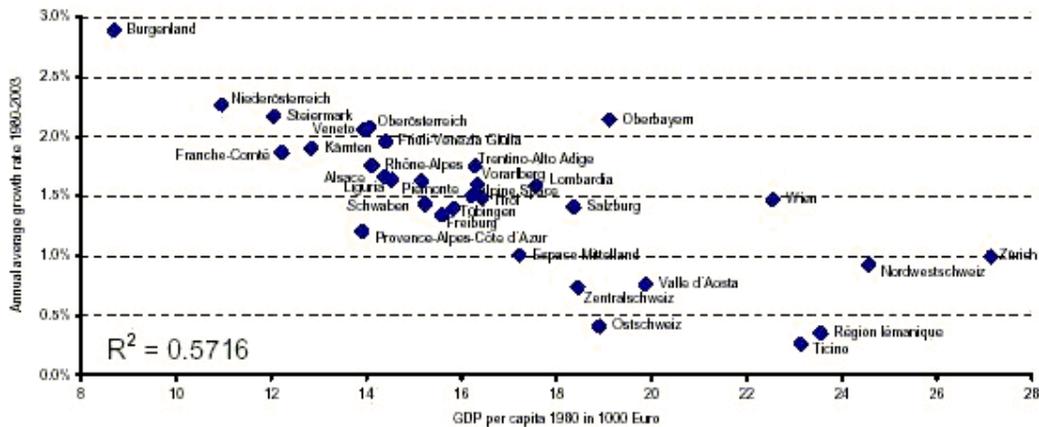
#### A Competitiveness

##### *A competitive area within Europe*

The Alpine Space is **one of the most competitive areas in Europe** and generally combines different indicators of wealth such as high GDP and productivity (figure 2), high level of R&TD investment as well as low unemployment (Map 1 *Economic setting and Lisbon orientation* and Map 2 *Importance of Research and Development in NUTS III regions* in the Annex). Growth is not among the highest levels in Europe but is steady and is based on an important existing wealth. Territorial differences exist, even though they appear to be more limited than in Europe as a whole. Some areas in the eastern part of the Alpine Space are lagging behind but have important growth rates and are catching up.

The above statements may be complemented by the assessment and placement of the Alpine Space NUTS II regions in classification of 280 European regions according to the following criteria: economy,

labour market, demography, environment, hazard, accessibility and spatial structure<sup>8</sup>. Half of the Alpine Space regions are placed in the upper quarter, and another eight in the upper half of the classification. The former include all Swiss regions, the Austrian regions Wien, Vorarlberg, Salzburg and Steiermark, the French regions Alsace and France-Comté, and the German regions Freiburg, Oberbayern and Tübingen. Their placement is due to varied combinations of strengths in the fields of economy, labour market, environment and accessibility, as well as to absence of distinct weaknesses in any of the observed fields. The regions classified in the lower half either show average performance in most of the fields (e.g. Oberösterreich, Kärnten or Slovenia), or are characterised by distinct weaknesses related to labour market, population, hazards and/or accessibility.



Note: based on 1997 PPP and 1995 prices  
Source: BAK, MARS Database 2005

**Figure 2: Convergence in real GDP per capita among Alpine Space regions from 1980 to 2003**

At smaller scales, **noticeable territorial discrepancies** however exist within the Alpine Space. Economic development is increasingly focused on metropolitan cities, which are considered as European engines (Milano, Zürich, München and Wien) but also on a string of prosperous medium sized cities. Alpine core areas face a more unequally shared growth as some competitive areas are connected to metropolitan dynamics or living on tourism and others are left behind. Geographical constraints such as valley structures can partition economic development and make rather different situations to coexist at short distance.

### **A diverse and successful economy**

The global competitiveness of the Alpine Space is based on diverse and successful economic sectors, on its location at the heart of European markets served by efficient infrastructures and its good level of education, research and development.

The economy is driven by a wide range of services, but also by competitive, innovative and restructured industries. Industrial basis is wide and diversified and some transnational clusters can be found in different sectors, such as biochemical, agro-food etc. It is well inserted within the world economy and hosts multinational headquarters, e.g. in the agro-food sector or biotechnologies. Leading industrial regions are found in southern Germany and northern Italy. Most of the Alpine Space has a good re-

<sup>8</sup> ESPON Project 3.1 Integrated Tools for European Spatial Development, Final Report, 2004.

structuring potential to compete in a more open economy and more competitive as well as wider markets. The productive sector is based on a dense pattern of SMEs and specific productive cultures; organisations exist in the area in terms of funding and market networks or excellence in specific sectors (northern Italy clusters, valley productive systems etc.).

However, the Alpine Space faces global issues related to changing European economic paradigms in the world economy, which could redistribute part of its production factors. Sectoral weaknesses also exist, noticeably in some Alpine core areas, which rely too much on sectors of industry, tourism and agriculture. Agriculture is prosperous in the Alpine Space belt, but is still shrinking in the Alpine core, even if specific Alpine products have a strong identity and “quality image”.

The opportunities for further development of the Alpine Space have a good basis for reinforcement of industrial innovation and competitive industry and rest on Alpine productive cultures and networks as factors of adaptability.

Tourism is an important aspect of the Alpine Space service economy as the cooperation area is one of the major leisure destinations in Europe. It is based on a wide range of assets (cities, natural and cultural heritage, regional identity, agro-products etc.) and pulls especially the growth of some Alpine core areas. Tourism can be, on the other hand, too focused both in time and space. The activity also relies on external factors such as global economic prosperity and climate change, which could provoke downturns in the sector. Moreover, conflicts can appear in land use with agriculture or environmental protection.

Environment is a productive factor of the Alpine Space development whether for energy production (water capacities are well exploited), for industry (water) or tourism. Decline of traditional Alpine economic systems and ways of living threatens the maintenance of the admired cultural landscape. New economic patterns and new forms of living adapted to the specific Alpine conditions need to be developed in order to maintain this heritage. The issue touches upon more general issues of rural development, rural-urban relations and cultural development.

### ***Equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities***

The issue of equality between men and women is given much attention in the states of the Alpine Space cooperation area, as in the National Strategic Reference Frameworks. With regard to labour market, the following topics are especially highlighted: gender related employment rates; female entrepreneurship; gender issues in education, research and innovation.

Employment and unemployment (regionalised data)<sup>9</sup>

In the resident population of most of the Alpine Space regions, women account to a little more than 50%, but their participation in employment is considerably lower. For the Alpine Space, the average employment of women as percentage of persons in employment was 44% in 2003, ranging from 38.4% in Liechtenstein to 47.8% in Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur. In the period 1999-2003, the share has risen by 0.7% at the Alpine Space level and has, moreover, been positive in the majority of the regions.

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<sup>9</sup> Data from the INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space project MARS (Final Report, 2005) have been used.

The share of active population without employment points at a less favourable situation for women: at the Alpine Space level, the share of unemployed male population amounted to 4.4% in 2003 and to 6.0% for women.

Considerable differences existed between the regions: five regions had lower female than male unemployment rates, namely Wien, Steiermark, Oberbayern, Région Lémanique and Salzburg, whereas the highest ratio was almost one and a half unemployed women to one unemployed man in the Veneto region.

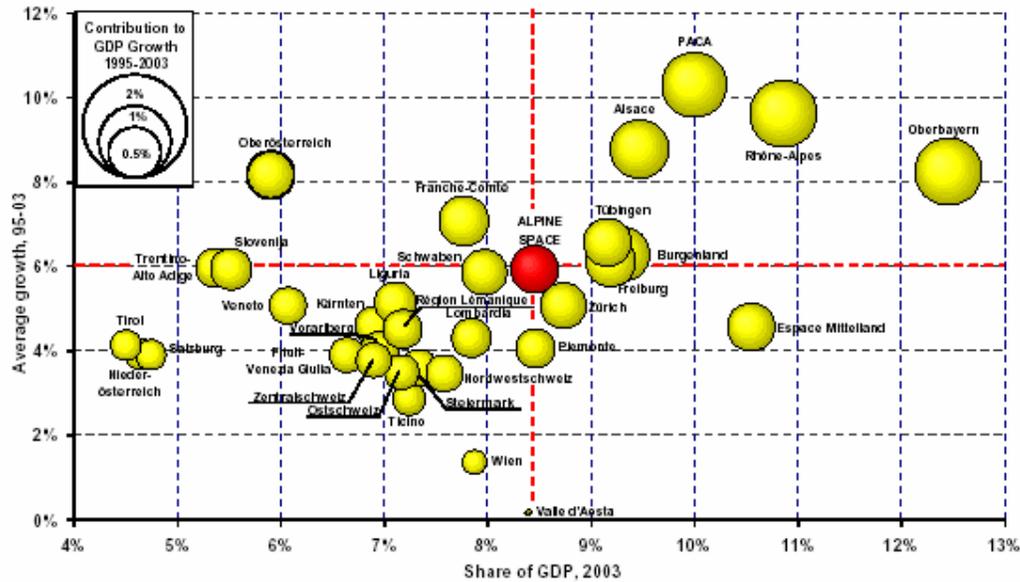
Furthermore it has to be noted that women are still underrepresented in several sectors and occupations, which are important from the point of view of knowledge economy. Relevant fields include innovation, research and development, where gender-sensitive measures are required in order to improve the representation of women. Strengthened attention to the gender-related issues of education and employment paths would be requisite also considering the circumstance, that higher employment rates of women are regarded as an important factor in efforts to counteract the negative consequences of demographic change on the availability of workforce in the future.

The situation described above highlights significant variations within the Alpine Space regions. These are partly connected with special national labour market situations. Progress towards more equality on the labour market can be observed, but, on the other hand, traditional division of roles in the society seems to be rather strong in some regions.

### ***Basis for a new or knowledge economy***

The Alpine Space has a competitive edge to develop knowledge economy as it encompasses regions with a high level of education and has a dense network of universities and research centres. The combined level of expenditure and employment in R&TD is above European average in several regions of the Alpine Space and is strong in many areas, such as Rhône-Alpes, Switzerland and Bayern. Metropolitan areas and Alpine cities concentrate research centres – e.g. München, Zürich, Milano, Wien, Lyon, Sophia-Antipolis etc. – even if some can be found in medium sized cities as well. The industrial bases of the Alpine Space are associated to dynamic private research centres, which allow public-private synergies.

ICT infrastructures are well developed in the main metropolises and their influence areas, but are not so readily available in other places, especially areas lagging behind or in the core Alpine area. The south-eastern part of the Alpine Space has a rather low level of ICT infrastructures and is in a peripheral situation to that extent. The development of services based on ICT, such as transport and mobility management, tourism management, remoteness management, would however be an opportunity to increase the attractiveness of these areas and to reduce spatial disparities. The New Economy Sector which basically subsumes the IT and telecommunication sectors is also developed in the Alpine Space area, especially in a few specialised regions including Oberbayern, Rhône-Alpes and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. Within all these regions, more than 10% of GDP is produced by the New Economy Sector (figure 3).



**Figure 3: Contribution of the New Economy Sector to growth in the Alpine Space regions**

This forms a good basis to boost industrial innovation and keep a competitive industry by means of development of new innovative products and services.

## B Territorial structure

### *Urban system and urban-rural relations*

Balanced territorial development at any level from European to regional is believed to rely strongly on polycentrism. In several of the Alpine Space states and regions polycentric settlement development is an explicit policy goal. The topic could thus be of importance also for transnational cooperation within the Alpine Space area.

In European comparison, the Alpine Space is well endowed with Metropolitan Growth Areas (MEGAs): it has four of the European engines – Milano, München, Wien and Zürich, as well as several other important or potential MEGAs – Genève, Torino, Genova, Ljubljana, Bern, Lyon, Nice and Marseille. They are characterised by various degrees of multifunctionality<sup>10</sup>, ranging from prevalence of two functions, such as tourism and transport, respectively university in Genève or Lyon, to performing all or several observed functions (Wien, Milano, München). All MEGAs, as well as some other important agglomerations, are located within the Alpine Space belt. Their functional regions are in most cases reaching into the border areas of the Alpine core.

The Alpine core, on the other hand, has seven major towns, including Grenoble, Salzburg, Maribor, Innsbruck, Trento, Bolzano/Bozen and Klagenfurt – also termed Alpine agglomerations, which corre-

<sup>10</sup> Functions observed include administration, decision-making, industry, tourism, transportation and university.

spond to regional capitals outside the Alpine area –, but no metropolitan area or capital<sup>11</sup>. This seems to produce spatial imbalances and tensions in the development of a polycentric urban system in Alpine Space regions and states.

Furthermore, the settlement system of the Alpine Space consists as well of medium and small sized cities. Their role is generally more accentuated in the Alpine core, where they perform important functions for immediate hinterlands, but are generally integrated into international networks and flows as well.<sup>12</sup> Due to diversified infrastructure, facilities and services, medium and small sized cities are often attractive as places for living as well as locations for economic activities.

The past decades have witnessed diversified development trajectories of cities and their functional urban regions; generally, economic development and population growth favoured metropolitan areas and large agglomerations. Consequently, gaps appeared or widened in urban functional hierarchies. Notwithstanding, the cities in the Alpine core experienced constant growth in population, mostly at the expense of surrounding rural areas and in several cases due to their proximity to large agglomerations of the Alpine Space belt. This trend will lead to a further polarisation between agglomerations and the peripheral areas in terms of intensive urbanisation processes versus strong depopulation in case the present demographic trends are maintained.

Opportunities and problems connected with the urban system development and urban-rural relations in the Alpine Space offer a variety of challenges with a view to addressing the concerns of EU cohesion policy and of transnational cooperation:

- + Metropolitan Growth Areas are European and partly global level players, which need to maintain and improve their competitive position well beyond the scope of the Alpine Space cooperation area. This may lead to a kind of “detached” position within the Alpine Space. The issue is to search for connections at the cooperation area level as well, and to foster their regional embedding.
- + Controversial discussions exist with reference to relations between Alpine core and Alpine belt cities. These relationships should be clarified and options for cooperation sought and experimented. The same is true also for relations between urban areas in general, as well as for cooperation between urban and rural regions.
- + Cities and agglomerations experience problems which may diminish their attractiveness as residential areas or location for economic activities. Large cities and agglomerations often suffer from congestion, low quality of the environment, social tensions, marginalisation of groups of population, security concerns.
- + High levels of development are connected with increasing pressure on the environment and natural resources through, e.g. take up of land and fragmentation of natural areas due to housing and infrastructure construction. This problem may be observed in the Alpine Space belt and core areas.
- + Of special concern is the so called sprawled development – uncontrolled growth of agglomeration areas at the expense of surrounding, mostly rural areas – which results in loss of iden-

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<sup>11</sup> Perlik, M., Messerli, P. and W. Bätzing, (2001), Towns in the Alps. Urbanization Processes, Economic Structure and Demarcation of European Functional Urban Areas in the Alps. Mountain Research and Development, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp. 243-252.

<sup>12</sup> Perlik, M. and P. Messerli, (2004), Urban Strategies and Regional Development in the Alps. Mountain Research and Development, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 215-219.

- tity of urban and rural areas, increased commuting and inefficient use of resources. The problem touches upon several fields, such as governance in general, spatial and development planning, resource use planning or gender equality.
- + Several medium and small towns which are important for the development of peripheral territories especially in the Alpine core, are in decline; this is due partly to decreased provision of public services. Necessity for economic restructuring, functional and social reorientation is thus high.
  - + The ever more complex spatial patterns and developments require introduction of new governance concepts, such as joint planning in functional urban regions, inclusion of new categories of stakeholders in decision processes, new methods of participation, networking etc. All of these seem to remain underused in the context of urban and regional development as well as of urban-rural relations in the Alpine Space.

## 1.4.2 Accessibility and connectivity

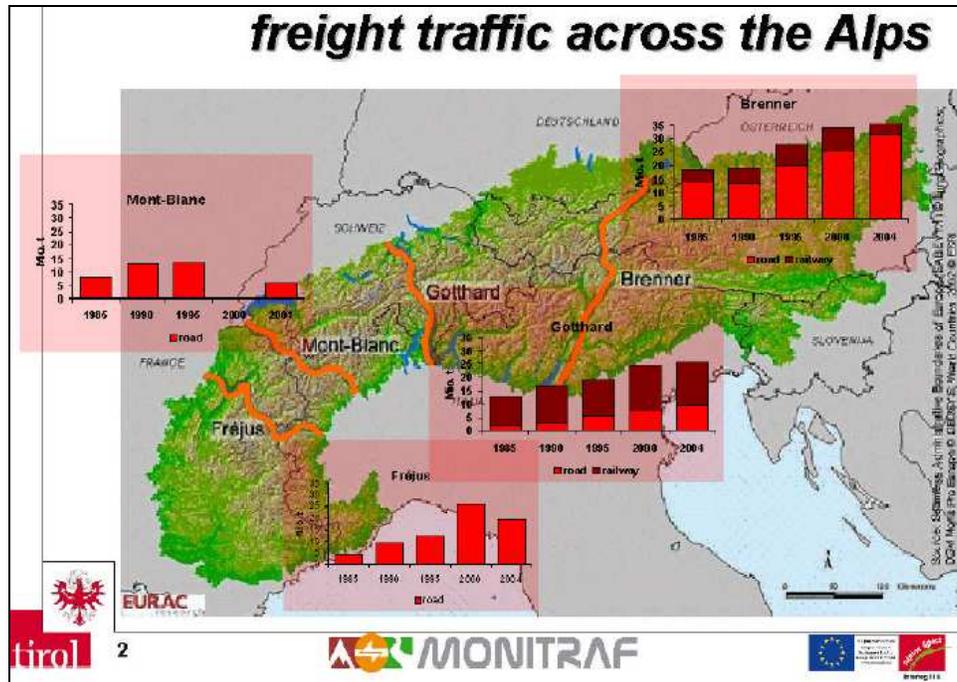
### *Position on major European routes*

Located in the heart of an enlarged Europe and at the crossroad of different transeuropean routes, the Alpine Space is well connected to other European territories and is endowed with high capacity infrastructures. It contains important primary level hubs (including Milano, München and Zürich), and gateway cities. Links from the North Sea to the Mediterranean, from the Baltic to the Adriatic or from the Iberian Peninsula to Central and Eastern Europe cut through the Alpine Space and make it an important **transit area**.

Gathering some of Europe's wealthiest regions and well connected to transoceanic gateways, the Alpine Space is also an important **traffic generator** both internally and for exchanges with other areas. This is especially true of the western-central part of the Alpine Space as part of the European capital core.

Low and deep valleys, such as Sillon Alpin, Valais or Inn Valley, as well as mountain passes, for instance San Bernardino, Simplon, Gotthard or Brenner, are factors due to which Alpine range is not a major obstacle for communication. Mountains imply, on the other hand, constraints for traffic due for instance to slopes, seasonal conditions, congestion bottlenecks, as well as heavy investments in infrastructures. This statement can be illustrated by cost of construction and maintenance of tunnels, such as Mont Blanc, Lötschberg, Gotthard, San Bernardino or Arlberg. Connections to other European territories in the Alpine Space lowland are performant as regards far reaching river basins such as the Donau, Rhône, Rhein and Po valleys. These river basins often act as multimodal transport corridors, enabling transport by road, rail or waterway (Rhein, Donau, Rhône).

Being on a **key bottleneck position on European transit routes**, Alpine core territories bear the responsibility of maintaining the heavy infrastructures in operational conditions (figure 4). They need to cope with the impact of traffic corridors both in terms of congestion and environmental pollution but do not necessarily benefit from them in economical terms. Trans-Alpine corridors generally exert high degree of environmental sensitivity, which is due to the sensitive ecosystems, the particular microclimatic conditions and the noise propagation patterns in deep valleys.



(Source: MONITRAF, Monitoring of road traffic related effects in the Alpine Space and common measures, Venezia, June 17<sup>th</sup> 2005, Alpine Space INTERREG IIIB Programme)

**Figure 4: Map of the freight traffic across the Alps**

Beside the fact that transportation links between metropolitan areas are partly unsatisfactory, remote regions are often poorly served with infrastructure and connections to higher level infrastructure. Confronted with a general European traffic rise as well as global issues such as increasing oil prices or climate change impacts, Alpine Space and especially Alpine core territories are keen to mitigate traffic effects, to develop more sustainable transport modes and to draw economic benefit out of this position. Development of better logistic chains as well as transfer of a part of the transit traffic from road to rail (multimodal transport system), are innovative ways promoted by the territories. Such solutions have been enacted in Switzerland through infrastructure investments and logistic alternatives, e.g. transit of trucks in the Lötschberg rail tunnel. They will be promoted in future through projects such as the Lyon – Torino high-speed railway link. Transport is a good example why it makes sense to tackle a problem in a wider scale, i.e. by involving key actors from outside the cooperation area or even outside the EU as for instance routes of transport do not stop at the end of the cooperation area but cross it.

#### **Specific and contrasted issues at local and regional level**

At regional and local scales the picture is more contrasted between the different territories of the Alpine Space.

**Alpine Space lowlands** globally have good infrastructure networks and transport systems, including public transportation, ensuring a good level of accessibility. Metropolitans such as Lyon, München, Milano, Zürich or Wien act as large multimodal hubs at European scale and command wide networks of infrastructures connecting cities of different size. Metropolitan areas can suffer from traffic congestion as a consequence of the concentration of population, activities and transit flows even if public transport is well developed. Connections between Alpine Space main cities are not easy through public transport and rely mainly on road or air connections.

**Alpine core areas** face contrasted situations in terms of mobility. Some are well connected to Alpine lowlands and/or polarised by medium size cities, for instance Innsbruck, Bolzano/Bozen or Grenoble, whereas others are confronted with remoteness and accessibility constraints because of geographic conditions. This is true for example of the south-western Alps, parts of Südtirol/Alto Adige or Dolomites. As population becomes sparse and is ageing, some areas experience declining public transports due to an increased loss of cost effectiveness and affordability. However, public transport is usually the primary carrier of the elderly, women, youngsters and disabled. The decline of attractive public transport services therefore mostly affects these groups.

Tourism areas are generally characterised by a good accessibility level but face seasonal congestions and are confronted with costly infrastructure investment and maintenance. Mobility all too often relies on road and private cars even if more sustainable traffic mobility management solutions through collective transports are progressively implemented. In several projects within the INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space Programme, innovative solutions have been sought for in this field. Especially in remoter and sparsely populated regions there is a lack of economic incentives for improvement of transportation services.

**ICT connections** are generally good in the main cities and Alpine lowlands, especially in the western and northern parts of the Alpine Space. They are more limited in the eastern part of the cooperation area and in its inner core, even if they could prove to be a good way to improve accessibility and connectivity of peripheral areas. This seems of even stronger relevance, when considering the impacts of an ageing and shrinking population.

Generally, development of innovative transport solutions at different scales to optimise the use of infrastructure should be promoted.

Connectivity to transport terminals is organised according to a core/periphery pattern in the Alpine Space with high levels of connectivity in the lowlands of the Alpine belts and lower levels in the core area of the Alpine mountainous bow. The Alpine Space appears as a rather permeable area where remoteness is felt acutely in noticeable but limited areas. This problem is further strengthened by the fact that public transport connections within the Alps and beyond are not well developed (*Map 3 Connectivity to transport terminals in the Annex*), a fact that is seriously affecting equal opportunities and social inclusion.

The Alpine Space and especially its core areas appear to be making the best out of accessibility constraints in Europe when considering competitiveness, a situation only to be found in some competitive peripheral parts of Europe. This also means that more mobility does not necessarily mean more growth and that accessibility is not a sufficient condition for competitiveness. Some underperforming areas can be found in France, Italy or Slovenia, possibly more on competitiveness grounds than on accessibility ones (*Map 4 Accessibility and economic performance in the Annex*).

Railway links cross the Alpine Space through a limited number of places, such as Frejus, Simplon, Gotthard or Brennero/Brenner, but allow for some of the most important freight flows in Europe to go across the Alps. Given the geographical constraints as well as a number of different national railway systems, train connections within the Alpine Space are not very good and are rather included in national logics. New policies supporting a shift from road to railway transport and other modes are missing.

The Alpine Space road system is good and irrigates the whole area even if the motorway network is denser in the western part of the Alpine Space. Motorways are found in the main valleys and cross the Alps regularly from North to South. A northern and a southern motorway belts entwine the Alpine Space from West to East (Map 5 Evolution of the motorway network in the Annex).

### **1.4.3 Environment, resources and risk management**

#### **A Natural and cultural diversity**

##### ***Natural resources***

Several of the Alpine Space regions<sup>13</sup> are characterised by an above average degree of naturalness, expressed in a high share of natural surfaces and low agricultural intensity. These regions form a distinct belt, which is mainly identical with the Alpine Space core area and is a unique phenomenon in the centre of Europe (Map 6 *Degree of naturalness of European NUTS II regions* in the Annex). On the other hand, regions of the Alpine Space belt, especially in Italy, Germany and Austria, have mostly an average to moderately below average degree of naturalness in European comparison. This general distinction points at different situations and problems in the Alpine core and Alpine Space belt areas, but also within regions.

The high share of (semi-)natural areas is connected with rich natural heritage, valuable cultural landscapes and rich biodiversity. The value attributed to nature finds expression in the growing number as well as in the high share of protected areas: about 23% of the Alps are protected under different categories<sup>14</sup>. Almost 40% of these areas are in France, further 24% in Austria, 20% in Italy and 8% in Slovenia. Several of the protected areas, especially larger ones, play an important role in sustainable development of regions, e.g. by attracting investment and tourist flows, creating employment and possibilities for placing the local products, but also by soft factors, such as organising processes in the regions. Some good practice examples from all over Europe include Biosphärenpark Grosses Walsertal (A), Parco Naturale del Mont Avic (I), Parc Naturel Régional du Queyras (F) or the Eifel Nationalpark (D)<sup>15</sup>.

The activities of the Alpine network of protected areas have to be highlighted as a positive example of cooperation. They have been strongly supported by the INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space Programme.

Various developments threaten the natural heritage of the Alpine Space and its characteristics: abandonment of traditional farming practices, intensification of agriculture, activities connected with tourism, settlement development, infrastructure construction and operation. The latter two result in take up of land and contribute to spatial fragmentation and sprawl. Regions where urban pressure is high are scattered throughout the Alpine Space, but are typically connected with agglomeration areas experiencing economic and population growth. These pressures are expected to aggravate in the future.

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<sup>13</sup> At NUTS II level.

<sup>14</sup> National Park, Regional/Nature Park, Natural Reserve or Biosphere Reserve.

<sup>15</sup> Jungmeier, M., et al. (2006), Protected areas, Future in the Alps: Report of Project Question 3, CIPRA.

### ***Cultural heritage, culture, identity***

Two assumptions seem to underlie the current discussion on cultural heritage, and more generally culture, in the EU and in the Alpine Space in the context of spatial development: that cultural heritage and culture significantly contribute to quality of life and represent important factors of locational advantage, and that the EU in general as well as the Alpine Space dispose of rich and varied assets. Another important link is made between cultural heritage, culture and identity.

As stated on many occasions, the Alpine Space cooperation area unites several distinct cultural systems. This is, not least, reflected also in the varying approaches to safeguard and enhance cultural heritage.

Considering integrated supply of heritage assets, encompassing presence of protected cultural landscapes and conjuncts, of museums, monuments and galleries, analyses reveal two areas of concentration: Germany and the northern regions of Austria, Slovenia and several Italian regions show average to very high supply. Whereas the regions in France, Switzerland and large part of Austria, on the other hand, seem to have low to very low supply of these heritage assets in European comparison. The picture is rather different if protected cultural landscapes are observed: Slovenia, France and Austria are at the forefront with high to very high density whereas the majority of German Alpine Space regions score very low and the Italian and Swiss regions mostly low.

The above statements highlight the existence of varied situations and problems regarding issues of maintenance and exploitation of cultural heritage and culture in general, also in relation to economic activities, in the Alpine Space. This, in turn, suggests a high potential for exchange of experience and synergies through transnational cooperation. Beside cultural heritage, the current cultural production – especially with reference to the question of quality of life and identity – might prove as a fruitful field of transnational exchange.

By way of example, one special problem, namely the “competition” for cultural assets between quality of life and tourism, may be mentioned. Valuable assets contribute to higher quality of life and serve as a basis for tourism activities as well. Tourism flows bring jobs and income, by making use of cultural assets, but may sometimes have deteriorating effects on the assets themselves or the identity of places. This controversy is felt in the Alpine Space core and belt cities, characterised by massive flows of tourists, as well as in certain rural areas.

## **B Resource efficiency, natural and technological risks**

### ***Resource efficiency***

**Water** is considered as one of the main natural resources of the Alpine Space: as drinking water, resource for hydropower generation, tourism and other economic activities. Generally, availability of sufficient quantities has not been a problem in the past, but the expected impacts of climate change may considerably alter this favourable situation. Especially the regions on the southern side of the Alps may be affected by severe droughts in the future – in the summer period, scarcity of water is already affecting some areas, such as the Po plain.

The water network of the Alpine Space encompasses several large European river systems, entering into different seas: Donau, Po, Rhein, Rhône. Developments in the last decade, most notably recurring

floods, have opened up anew the issue of **river management**. Various activities have been triggered: studies have been carried out, new strategies and plans are being drafted. The latter are based mostly on the concept of integrated river management. Examples of comprehensive strategy or plan preparation include the Rhône river in its course on the French territory, as well as the river Po. In both cases, water management authorities are working closely with local and regional authorities and other concerned actors. The new developments and tools used in water management may be a subject of exchange between the river catchments area authorities and other stakeholders.

Of special concern with reference to water management and, more specifically, harmonisation of uses is in some parts of the Alpine Space the **use of water for agricultural production**.

Exploitation of water for power generation and drinking water supply is performed at various scales: large hydroelectric power plants (HPPs) and centralised water supply systems are strong players, which are often only loosely connected to the local and regional context. Small HPPs and decentralised water supply systems are, on the other hand, more locally rooted and controlled. There are numerous developments, which are changing the preconditions for these usages as well, such as consequences of climate change or liberalisation of water supply. The topic is of particular concern for peripheral regions of the Alpine core and their communities, which could base their development more strongly on endogenous resources. On the other hand, the issue of drinking water supply links urban and rural areas, often quite distant from each other.

**Energy efficiency** has been receiving quite a lot of attention in the recent years: national programmes are being implemented and specific instruments made available. Activities are being supported also by several EU programmes and initiatives, such as the Green Building Programme or Intelligent Energy Europe, as well as by initiatives and networks.

The issue of energy efficiency is rather pertinent in the Alpine Space as well, since its regions use slightly more energy than the respective national economies. This may be explained mainly by the climatic conditions. On the other hand, final energy consumption per capita has risen in the period 1995-2000 in the majority of regions (by up to 5%), and diminished (up to 1%) only in eight of the Alpine Space regions. The increase has been attributed to growing energy consumption by the households. Targeted activities have contributed to an improvement of this situation after the year 2000.

Within the context of the EU Kyoto commitments and the aim of reducing energy consumption in the EU by 20% until the year 2020<sup>16</sup>, energy efficiency represents a major challenge extending well beyond the level of single regional economies. Cooperation of actors across regional and national borders in the Alpine Space in specific issues of energy use and energy efficiency may contribute to finding and sharing innovative solutions, tailored to the special needs of the cooperation area and its actors, while also contributing to achieving the goals of the wider community.

The share of **energy from renewable resources** in structure of energy supply in regions and states of the Alpine Space varies a lot. In Bayern, for example, it accounts for 9% and in Austria for 22.7%. Also the preconditions for exploitation of renewable resources differ significantly between the regions: they can rely on different combinations of biomass availability, hydrological potential, potential for solar energy use etc. In any case, raising the share of energy from renewable resources features high on the political agendas of states, but also of numerous regions of the Alpine Space. As a consequence, a lot

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<sup>16</sup> CEC (2006) A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy, COM(2006) 105 final.

of research and experimentation has been going on with reference to utilisation of renewable energy sources, along with legislative initiatives, awareness raising campaigns etc. All these areas included a variety of stakeholders and initiatives, which may be compared, exchanged and upgraded through transnational cooperation.

### ***Natural and technological risk prevention and management of climate change***

Hazards, especially natural ones, are being given enhanced attention within the EU policies, but also in single states and regions. This is due mostly to an increase of large-scale **natural hazards**, especially storms and floods, in the past decades.

For the Alpine Space, more specifically its core area, natural hazards are a rather often occurring phenomenon (Map 7 *Natural hazards in European NUTS II regions* in the Annex). They are predominantly small scale, such as avalanches and land slides, but the relatively high risk of their occurrence resulted in setting up of elaborate prevention, response and mitigation systems and measures. In the Alpine belt, extensive and recurring floods have taken place in the past decade. It is therefore not surprising, that the topic of natural hazards in the Alpine area was subject of several projects in the INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space Programme. The achieved results as well as the process character of transnational cooperation substantiate the need for further activities in this field.

Recently, concerns about the future **impacts of climate change** have added a new dimension, since hardly any geographical area or social sphere will be spared. Indirect impacts will presumably be felt in tourism, agriculture, forestry, industry, water supply etc. Due to the high level of sensitivity of the natural landscape the Alpine Space is reacting faster and more violently to the warming of the climate and because of its particular topography natural risks manifest themselves more strongly than elsewhere. Thus, stronger focus on prevention and mitigation and also adaptation is required, whereby cooperation between scientists and decision-makers as well as interdisciplinary approaches need to be intensified. The Alpine Space as a sensitive mirror in which the effects of climate changes are focused in a more visible way than elsewhere. Solutions which will be developed through cooperation within the Alpine Space can then be useful and applied to other mountain areas.

As to **technological hazards**, the topic has not been given specific consideration in the Interreg III B Alpine Space Programme, but would seem potentially relevant for transnational cooperation (Map 8 *Technological hazards in European NUTS II regions* in the Annex). A specific topic of interest is, for example, transportation of hazardous substances.

## 1.5 SWOT ANALYSIS: TRENDS CHALLENGING THE PROGRAMME

Categories	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p><b>Growth, Competitiveness and Innovation</b></p> <p><i>Basis for sustainable growth</i></p> <p><i>Economic assets</i></p> <p><i>Territorial balance of growth</i></p> <p><i>Environmental sustainability</i></p> <p><i>Social sustainability and human capital</i></p> <p><i>Economic resources</i></p>	<p>Alpine Space features as one of the most competitive areas in Europe. Several successful central areas or economically successful peripheral regions.</p> <p>Main metropolitan cities relayed by strong Alpine cities pull the growth of the Alpine space.</p> <p>Efficient infrastructures and a good level of education, research and development.</p> <p>A dense pattern of SMEs, specific productive cultures, know-how and networks.</p> <p>Diverse, service based economy and varied growth factors.</p> <p>Competitive, innovative and restructured industries.</p> <p>Competitive transnational clusters (biochemical, agro-food etc.).</p> <p>Major tourism destination and strong tourism economy in the Alpine core.</p> <p>Environment as a key productive factor.</p>	<p>Regions in the eastern part of the Alpine Space are lagging behind.</p> <p>Development is partitioned: some prosperous areas are connected to metropolitan dynamics or living on tourism and others are left behind.</p> <p>Marked territorial discrepancies exist at smaller scales, especially in the Alpine core.</p> <p>Uneven distribution of R&amp;TD centres and infrastructure.</p> <p>Partly weak links between R&amp;TD institutions and economic actors, most notably SMEs.</p> <p>Sectoral and territorial weaknesses apparent: agriculture, tourism.</p> <p>Some Alpine core areas rely too much on certain sectors (industry, tourism, agriculture).</p> <p>Adverse environmental impact of tourism in the Alpine core.</p>	<p>New technologies and development of knowledge economy can be an opportunity to reduce spatial discrepancies through the development of e-services and basis for economic growth in peripheral areas.</p> <p>New frameworks for knowledge and innovation generation or transfer between education and R&amp;TD institutions and economic actors.</p> <p>Reinforced industrial innovation, keeping industry competitive.</p> <p>Alpine productive cultures and networks as factors of adaptability and assets for growth.</p> <p>Development of innovative products, based on local resources (agro-food, construction techniques etc.).</p> <p>Tourism offer diversification with a wider range of products on wider seasonal basis.</p> <p>Development of other activities in territories relying heavily on single activities (e.g. industry or tourism)</p> <p>Changing energy paradigm.</p>	<p>Enlarging territorial imbalances due to persisting negative developments in peripheral regions.</p> <p>Increased micro-territorial discrepancies, especially in the Alpine core, threaten economic cohesion.</p> <p>Global threats over industry resulting from globalisation.</p> <p>Possible downturns in some economic sectors (industry or tourism).</p> <p>Social tensions over changing economic paradigms.</p> <p>Threats on tourism: climate change, competition, increasing structural costs (accessibility, environment, water etc.), sensitivity to economic downturns.</p>

Categories	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p><b>Territorial Structure</b></p> <p><i>Efficient and polycentric urban system</i></p> <p><i>City form, problems of sprawling development in urban regions</i></p> <p><i>Demography, migrations</i></p>	<p>Strong and potential metropolitan areas as well as well functioning medium and small sized cities.</p> <p>Medium sized cities provide diversified infrastructure, facilities and services.</p> <p>Well developed services of general interest, also in the mountainous part compared to other mountainous areas in Europe.</p> <p>Alpine Space is attractive for immigration of well-educated population.</p>	<p>Growing difference in functional hierarchies between metropolitan areas, medium and small towns.</p> <p>Large cities experiencing a multitude of problems (congestion, spatial segregation, security etc.).</p> <p>Several small and medium sized cities in decline.</p> <p>Urban sprawl or suburbanisation threatening spatial identity and quality of life.</p> <p>High cost of maintaining services in sparsely populated areas.</p> <p>Overageing, decline of working age population.</p> <p>Migration of larger proportions of remote rural area dwellers to cities.</p>	<p>Stronger regional embedding of the major urban centres, most notably metropolitans.</p> <p>Improving the attractiveness of urban areas as living and working environment.</p> <p>Urban, urban-rural and rural-rural cooperation based on joint interests and projects.</p> <p>New technologies and organisational forms as an opportunity for service delivery.</p> <p>Designing and testing policies to support and promote favourable migration trends.</p>	<p>High probability that urban sprawl and "rurbanisation" will continue.</p> <p>Prevalence of interests of stronger partners in networks, especially in border areas.</p> <p>Vicious cycle regarding provision of services of general interest in peripheral areas in connection with depopulation processes.</p> <p>Growth of social tensions as a consequence of increased immigration.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility and Connectivity</b></p> <p><i>General accessibility</i></p> <p><i>Sustainable transport</i></p> <p><i>Quality of transport and communication services</i></p>	<p>Key transit area at European level.</p> <p>Generally highly developed transport and telecommunication infrastructure and services.</p> <p>Good integration in the European transport networks with primary level hubs and gateway cities.</p> <p>Well-developed regional transport systems in central areas.</p> <p>Generally good quality public transport and innovative solutions in the Alpine Space belt regions as well as in some Alpine core areas.</p>	<p>"Bottleneck" position on European transit routes leading to the concentration of traffic and environmental impacts.</p> <p>Links between main Alpine metropolitan areas partly unsatisfactory.</p> <p>Remote regions often poorly served with infrastructure and connections to higher level infrastructures, as well as with public transport.</p> <p>Highest transport volumes on the Alpine Space road network in Europe.</p> <p>Missing intermodal terminals and weak logistics impeding provision of competitive services.</p>	<p>Development of mass multimodal transport systems for freight.</p> <p>Development of rail infrastructures between metropolitan areas (tunnels, high speed railways).</p> <p>Improvements in connectivity of peripheral areas by increased use of ICT.</p> <p>Development of innovative transport solution at different scales to optimise the use of infrastructures.</p> <p>New policies supporting a shift from road transport to other modes.</p> <p>More efficient transport logistic by using technology support.</p>	<p>Continued growth of transport flows due to progressing European integration and accelerating globalisation.</p> <p>Further development of road based accessibility at the expense of more sustainable transport modes.</p> <p>Further demise of public transport in sparsely populated areas, related with reduced mobility and chances for several social groups</p> <p>Lacking economic incentives for improvement of services especially in remote and sparsely populated regions.</p>
<p><b>Environment, Resources and Risks</b></p>	<p>Above average degree of naturalness and biodiversity in European comparison.</p> <p>A high and growing extent of protected areas.</p>	<p>Fragmentation, loss and diminishing diversity of natural areas.</p> <p>High pressure on cultural assets, especially in most tourist frequented regions and towns.</p>	<p>New development and management concepts and measures for protected areas.</p> <p>Safeguarding and valorisation of heritage places and traditional culture by applying innovative ap-</p>	<p>Continued pressure on natural heritage and natural resources.</p> <p>Access to and use of cultural assets by the local population hindered due to massive tourist flows.</p>

Categories	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p><i>Conservation and creative management of natural resources</i></p> <p><i>Conservation and creative management of cultural heritage</i></p> <p><i>Resource efficiency</i></p> <p><i>Reduction of technological and natural risks, climate change</i></p> <p><i>Environmental issues</i></p>	<p>Successful development strategies of regions based on protected areas.</p> <p>High concentration and diversity of cultural assets in large parts of the Alpine Space.</p> <p>High share of energy from renewable sources and efficient use of energy in parts of the Alpine Space.</p> <p>Availability of high quality drinking water and potentials for hydropower generation.</p> <p>Development of integrated measures in the field of natural risks.</p>	<p>Limited availability and potential for use of renewable energy sources, such as wind or even biomass.</p> <p>Occurrence of a number of damaging floods in the past decade, which could only partly be attenuated by adaptation measures.</p> <p>Several regions prone to natural hazards, as well as to other impacts of climate change.</p> <p>Some Alpine Space regions with high risk potential for technological hazards.</p> <p>Land fragmentation and traffic impacts, such as congestion, noise and air emissions, in specific areas (urban regions, along transport corridors).</p>	<p>proaches.</p> <p>Exploring attitudes and practices towards cultural assets and their contribution to attractiveness, identity and quality of life.</p> <p>Exchange in the field of integrated river management.</p> <p>Better valorisation of drinking water by supply areas, new relations with end-user areas.</p> <p>Strengthened transnational approach in natural and technological hazard prevention and mitigation.</p> <p>Shifts in modal split in favour of more sustainable modes and mitigation of negative environmental impacts of transport.</p>	<p>Change of identity or degradation of the substance of natural and cultural heritage as a result of economic changes.</p> <p>Liberalisation of water supply may have adverse effects.</p> <p>A dynamic increase of natural hazards is expected in the next decades due to climate change.</p> <p>Potentially strong indirect economic impacts of climate change, as well as adverse impacts on living conditions.</p> <p>Increasing pressure on the environment from transport – greenhouse gas emissions from road and air transport.</p>

## 1.6 MAIN CHALLENGES FOR THE COOPERATION AREA

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One of the results of the "Prospective Study" was a set of scenarios for the cooperation area ("Alpine Core and the MEGAs", "Regional Diversity: puzzle and competition", "North-South Mediation", "Networks, Corridors, Connecting Elements", "Openness and Enlargement", "Positioning: We and the Others") as the answer to an apparently simple question: *"Given the current activities of the INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space Programme on the one hand, and the substantive key issues arising from main territorial trends and policies in the Alpine area on the other, what strategic vision of the area should be agreed to in order to guide the priorities of a future programme?"* Experience has shown, however, that defining a strategic vision for transnational cooperation is matter of consensus-building on the foundation of multiple and often divergent viewpoints, more than of assuming beforehand a unique conception of the future which maybe desirable for a territory. Therefore, the pursuit of one shared vision for the cooperation must necessarily pass through the possible combinations of the existing different views as a starting point for building convergence.

In the light of the Commission Strategic Guidelines, the SWOT Analysis, the above-mentioned scenarios and the challenges for the co-operation area as identified by the ex-ante-evaluation that were used to guide the discussions in the programming Task Force the following main challenges for the Alpine Space are clearly emerging and set the basis for the identification of programme objectives and priorities.

### **Innovation and competitiveness**

Increasing Innovation and Competitiveness are common challenges for all European regions. In analysing the opportunities and threats in this context for the Alpine Space, however, specific challenges can be made out: capitalising on Alpine relevant knowledge, innovation in specific sectors including tradition and respecting heritage and spatial development. Cultural identity and heritage is a competitive factor that shall be built on in the cooperation area. A network of metropolitan areas surrounding the Alps and of small and medium sized towns within the Alps will foster the ability of the Alpine Space to participate in the knowledge economy, becoming an economic engine for the Europe of tomorrow.

The diversity of the Alpine Space can encourage productive cooperation as well as competition. The Alpine Space should gain impetus by this dual movement: cooperation among its regions with strong individual identities can be considered as a means to increase its overall competitiveness.

On the one hand SMEs in the Alpine Space face adverse conditions with regard to their innovation capacities – location disadvantages, lack of qualified workforce in some areas, high transaction costs. On the other hand the innovation potentials for SMEs are high, due to qualified workforce, R&TD capacities, surrounding markets and roots in traditional sectors. It will therefore be necessary to increase the competitiveness by developing the economic key sectors of the cooperation area and acknowledge their importance for regions as well as to increase the innovation activities in the traditional sectors and link them to global economy (a. services, e.g. tourism and healthcare; b. handicraft, agriculture, forestry) and to foster cooperation between the diverse actors in the field of innovation and technology transfer. The development scenarios that refer to this challenge are "Regional Diversity", "Networks, Corridors, Connecting Elements", "Openness and Enlargement" and "Positioning: We and the Others".

## Cohesion

The networks of metropolitan areas surrounding the Alps and of small and medium sized towns within the Alps are the main driving forces for development in the cooperation area. The quality of networks, the accessibility of services and mobility management in the Alpine Space will determine the conditions for progress.

Strategically this means to promote polycentrism, while at the same time ensuring an effective distribution of the dynamics and benefits throughout the territory by supporting the relay-function of small and medium sized towns. One of the main challenges is to find and develop common strategies and perspectives for a balanced territorial development taking into account the geographic and social disparities, the economic needs, the natural resources and the cultural heritage. This refers to the scenarios "Alpine Core and the MEGAs", "Networks, Corridors, Connecting Elements".

## Transport and mobility

The Alpine Space is increasingly concerned by North-South and East-West European traffic, in the heart of the continent's economy. The reinforcement of highway tunnels and of high speed transit infrastructures will shape this mediation into main transalpine corridors, each corresponding to a specific European economic axis. The relevant strategy should endeavour to organise and to capitalise the transit economy of each of the major Alpine routes, while at the same time ensuring the overall solidarity so as to prevent side effects and imbalances among the Alpine territories.

Therefore it is necessary on the one hand to accept the need for transport as basis for the economy while on the other hand there are points of conflict in this development. It will be necessary to balance the pressure on the Alps from freight and passenger transport by developing sustainable and innovative solutions, e.g. by better exploiting the potentials of logistic platforms, supporting coordinated mobility services or rather thinking in networks than in axes. This includes the improvement of connectivity in peripheral areas. "North-South Mediation" and "Polycentrism, Distribution, Knowledge networks..." are the relevant scenarios in the background.

## Environment

Increasing environmental burdens and intensified efforts of the partner states to protect the environment and reduce environmental impacts ask for new and adapted answers in the field of management of natural resources, development of cultural landscapes and heritage, water management and reduction of natural risks. Natural resources and natural risks need well coordinated policies, strategies and tools for management and mitigation. With the effects of climate change the pressure on the ecosystem of the Alps increases heavily. Strategically this means to identify strategies to cope with the effects of climate change, to protect the mountainous Alpine core, as defined in the Alpine Convention, while allowing and encouraging economic activities and the sustainable use of natural resources. Three development scenarios refer to these major factors of alpine development: "Alpine Core and MEGAs", "Regional Diversity", "North-South Mediation".

The following **programme objectives** and especially the **priorities** can be considered as the **result of the discussion on these challenges with regard to time, money, governance, partnerships and political power of implementation**.

## 2 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### 2.1 POSITIONING OF THE PROGRAMME

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Joint transnational cooperation projects under the INTERREG IIIB Programme within the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) framework aimed at increasing territorial integration by promoting a balanced spatial development and by supporting durable cooperation networks between diverse actors, organisations and institutions within the Alpine Space.

One of the key changes concerning the Structural Funds programmes in the period 2007-2013 is the increased focus that the European Union puts on the strategic approach of these programmes. Future programmes shall demonstrate how they contribute to growth, employment and sustainable development as set out in the renewed Lisbon agenda and the renewed EU sustainable development strategy<sup>17</sup> (i.e. the European Union shall become a dynamic knowledge-based economy while actively maintaining the natural and cultural resources of the region and alleviating negative environmental impacts on the territory). On the other hand future programmes shall also tackle the particular challenges and needs of the cooperation area. Moreover, with regard to transnational cooperation a move away from spatial planning and spatial development issues is expected and concrete and visible results shall be generated by the programmes.

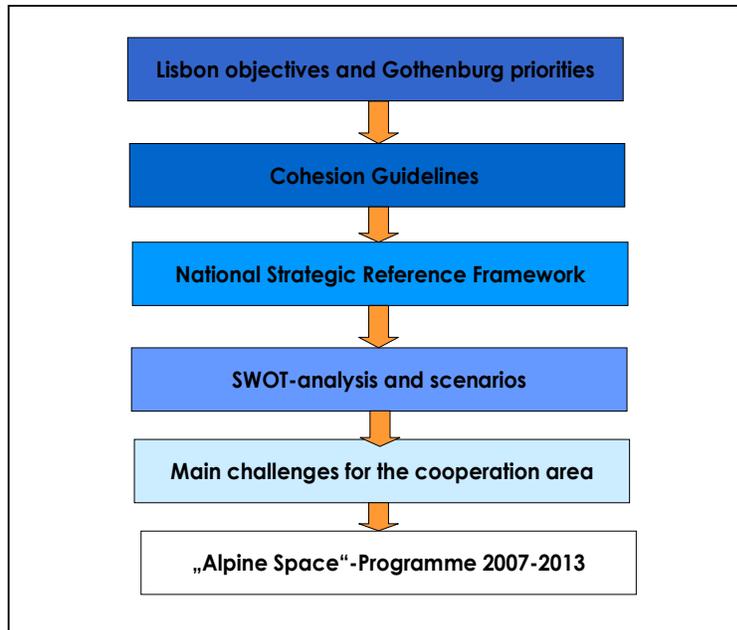
In 2007 the EU-member states elaborated the Territorial Agenda. Within the limits of its scope, the programme will consider the outcomes and recommendations of this process (e.g. the implementation plan presented by the presidencies) in its decisions and will strive to contribute to its implementation.

With regard to the above-mentioned framework the Alpine Space Programme 2007-2013 aims at **increasing competitiveness and attractiveness of the cooperation area by developing joint actions in fields where transnational cooperation is required for sustainable solutions.**

In doing so, the programme positions itself in between programmes in the field of regional competitiveness and employment and programmes fostering cross-border and interregional cooperation. It will not fund activities aiming at objectives which can better be tackled by regional programmes and it will not support projects that operate in fields which are of interest of only one or few regions adjacent to state borders respectively deal with topics that are not relevant for the whole or at least widest parts of the Alpine Space cooperation area.

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<sup>17</sup> COM 10917/06, Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS) – Renewed Strategy.



**Figure 5: Multilevel planning process applied to the programme**

The programme tackles issues that are complementary to diverse EU sectoral policies and initiatives (such as 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme on research and technological development, Marco Polo, TEN, e-TEN, information society programmes, funding programmes by the EC DG Environment, etc.). Rather than supplementing programmes co-funding actions in these fields, the Alpine Space Programme will support projects that provide for a transnational dimension of these issues, by finding common solutions for common problems in the cooperation area. This means that the Alpine Space Programme could fund the preparation of projects that will be dealt with in other programmes, in which a different or deeper approach within a project will be requested. Or – vice versa – that project results achieved under other programmes could be put in practise in a transnational dimension in the Alpine Space Programme.

The programme acknowledges the objectives of "equality between men and women and non-discrimination" and "sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimension" as laid down in articles 16 and 17 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 as its own and will strive to apply them at all stages of implementation.

## 2.2 THE SPECIFIC PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

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The overall programme goal, as expressed above, leads to the identification of the following specific objectives for the cooperation area in the programming period 2007-2013:

- + to encourage innovation, entrepreneurship and strengthen research and innovation capacities for SMEs;
- + to enhance a balanced territorial development to make the Alpine Space an attractive place to live, work and invest;

- + to improve the accessibility of the Alpine Space and manage the economical and environmental consequences of transport systems;
- + to improve accessibility to services and connectivity within the Alpine Space;
- + to protect, manage and enhance the natural and cultural assets for sustainable development;
- + to prevent and mitigate natural and technological hazards and manage their consequences, with specific regard to climate change impacts.

## 2.3 PROGRAMME STRATEGIES, GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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In late 2002 the partner states began a discussion on strategic projects for the cooperation area. The main result of this process was the development of a catalogue of strategic issues that should be tackled by projects co-funded by the INTERREG IIIB Programme and the decision to organise three thematic workshops that should cover the three priorities of the programme and focus on the most important challenges within these three priorities. The workshops that were then organised aimed at presenting project results and findings in the different fields of interest, bringing together the key actors in these fields and at exchanging ideas for future projects on the respective key topics. Another result of this discussion process on strategic projects was the commissioning of a transnational team of experts to elaborate the “Prospective Study”.

Both, the workshops and the “Prospective Study” can be regarded as an essential input for the preparation of the Alpine Space Programme for the period 2007-2013 as they formed the background for the development of the programme strategies and guiding principles as set out below. Important inputs were also given by the ex-ante evaluation which constantly provided with feedback on the elaboration of these elements (cf. chapter 6 of the present document).

### 2.3.1 Programme strategies

The overall programme goal and the above-mentioned specific programme objectives shall be reached by applying the following **strategies**.

#### **Enhancing endogenous potentials**

Existing competences, knowledge and skills, as well as cultural richness are a peerless treasure for sustainable development and competitiveness of the cooperation area. Existing clusters or specialisations which were developed organically from traditional industries and potentials for Research and Technological Development (R&TD) and innovation are crucial for success in this respect. The Alpine Space cooperation area shall not lose talents and resources. The programme shall rather capitalise existing potentials and also contribute to the creation of new endogenous potentials by supporting networks of excellence on a transnational scale and partnerships with key players and new partners.

#### **Involving relevant actors, political commitment**

The strategic approach that characterises Cohesion Policy in the period 2007-2013 calls for the involvement and commitment of relevant stakeholders and decision-makers, in order to reach more effective results, to contribute to a better governance of development processes and to enhance capacities of public authorities. Thus, one of the main challenges in programme governance will consist in addressing and attracting the competent and relevant partners that can provide for right answers to the

problems the cooperation area is confronted with. The programme will also make efforts to reach a political and widespread commitment and awareness. Furthermore, a stronger involvement of the Alpine Convention is strived for whenever appropriate partnerships with key players from outside the cooperation area and even the European Union shall be supported by the programme (article 21 (2) and (3) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006).

### **Capitalisation of experiences and results**

The manifold results of the projects implemented in the Alpine Space Programme 2000-2006 and the experiences made in programme and project implementation shall be exploited and used as starting point for transnational cooperation in the new structural funds period. Whenever relevant, implementation projects taking up these results will be encouraged, thus avoiding dispersion of existing knowledge and relations in the cooperation area.

The programme will fund projects that strive for clearly defined, tangible and quantifiable results and put significant efforts into the capitalisation and valorisation of results and their transfer into concrete actions. Networking activities between projects will be encouraged to ensure sustainability, transferability and durability of projects results. In this respect, the programme will strive for an effective dissemination of project achievements and ensure a capitalisation of results for a wider public. The programme shall increase its effectiveness by supporting projects which have synergies, a lever effect or a coordination function on other regional development related programmes of the area.

### **Coordination with other relevant EU-programmes**

As the partner states aim at using synergies and avoiding overlapping between the different EU-funded programmes and intend to use the programming funds in the most efficient and effective way, the following activities will be undertaken during programme implementation:

- + The partner states ensure the coordination of activities under the present programme with other EU-funded programmes applied to their territory as well as with relevant national and regional policies and programmes (e.g. representatives of the partner states in the Programme Committee will regularly inform each other about the implementation of relevant programmes, policies and projects in their country).
- + The programme bodies (MA, JTS and ACP<sup>18</sup>) will have frequent contacts with other cooperation areas and with the INTERACT Programme to ensure an active exchange of information and experiences about diverse projects and initiatives.
- + When submitting project proposals, lead partners will take over responsibility that the proposed project is not financed by other EU-programmes and, on the other side, describe if and how the project is linked with other Community, national, regional programmes and policies.
- + During the national evaluation processes the relevant national committees and/or organisations will check additionality, synergies and overlappings of the submitted proposals with other projects and programmes.

Communication activities of the programme will include regular exchange with cross-border programmes.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> MA – Managing Authority; ACP – Alpine Space Contact Points; JTS – Joint Technical Secretariat; cf. section 4.1

<sup>19</sup> Coordination with other relevant EU-programmes is, however, not a unidirectional exercise where only the Alpine Space programme bears responsibility and sets activities.

### **2.3.2 Guiding principles**

The following **guiding principles** shall illustrate the aspects that the partner states expect the projects to take into account. **Project selection criteria and indicators** will be defined to assess if and how these aspects are respected by the projects.

#### **Innovation-oriented approach**

Innovation is an overall orientation of the programme. This includes approaches, partnerships, methodologies, tools but also the use of new technologies. The approach shall be a basis for enhancing competitiveness, for improving services, for easing accessibility to labour markets, for promoting sustainable development and for preventing natural hazards.

#### **Mountain oriented approach**

Although the programme covers an area with various territorial features, the Alpine Space cooperation area is characterised by the Alps, its assets, resources and problems. Therefore, the needs and/or demands of mountain areas should be given specific attention.

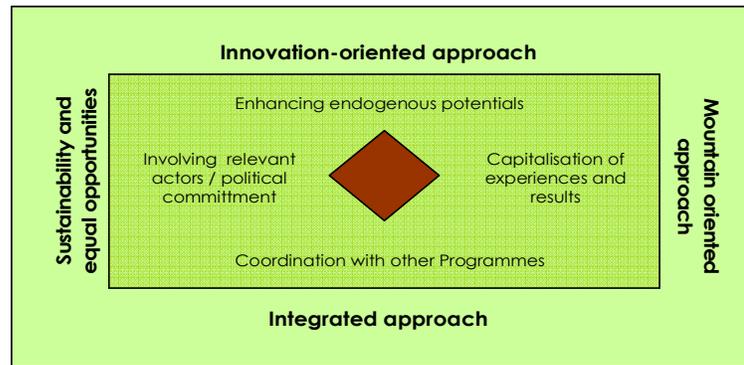
#### **Integrated approach**

The programme shall support cooperation vertically (among different levels of government), horizontally (among different policy sectors and policy actors) and geographically (across administrative boundaries). This shall ensure a better quality of cooperation activities, and lead to results better rooted in the territory.

#### **Sustainability and equal opportunities**

The paradigms of sustainability (equal consideration of the economic, environmental and social pillars) as stipulated in article 17 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 and equal opportunities (equality between men and women and non-discrimination) as stipulated in article 16 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 shall be followed by all projects carried out by the programme. Within the limits of its scope the programme will strive to support the equal opportunities principle in its widest meaning, especially the equality between men and women, equality in access to public services and labour market (also for disabled persons) wherever possible.

The programme partners commit themselves to the partnership principle as laid down in article 11 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 and will therefore involve key actors not only in programme preparation, but will do so also in programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation (especially by involving these actors in national committees or by nominating them as members of the programme committee or other groups or committees that will set up in the course of programme implementation). The Managing Authority will monitor the respect of the partnership principle and report in the annual implementation reports.



**Figure 6: Programme strategies and guiding principles**

## 2.4 GENERATION OF HIGH QUALITY PROJECTS

The **main aim of transnational cooperation** is to increase **cooperation** across partner states **on matters of strategic importance**. As such key issues the present documents have identified the following: "Competitiveness and Attractiveness of the Alpine Space", "Accessibility and Connectivity", "Environment and Risk Prevention". The programme concentrates on these selected topics of high relevance for the cooperation area to **foster the specific strengths and exploit the existing opportunities** of the cooperation area whereby weaknesses and threats should be overcome.

The **transnational perspective** ensures a specific **added value** in dealing with the identified key issues, thus contributing to the overall Community goal of territorial cohesion; the programme shall concentrate on finding common and innovative solutions to concrete stakeholders' needs requiring a transnational approach.

The new Alpine Space Programme will put more focus on a strategic dimension of projects than in the past programming period. The objectives, priorities and activities envisaged under this programme are well qualified for strategic project approaches because the fields of actions as for instance cooperation between R&TD centres and SMEs, natural risk management and answering to requirements of climate change impacts or developing sustainable transport management systems have a very strong transnational dimension and are of high relevance for the cooperation area. With projects related to the priority fields of this programme, sustainable development as well as growth and internal coherence of the programme area can be achieved.

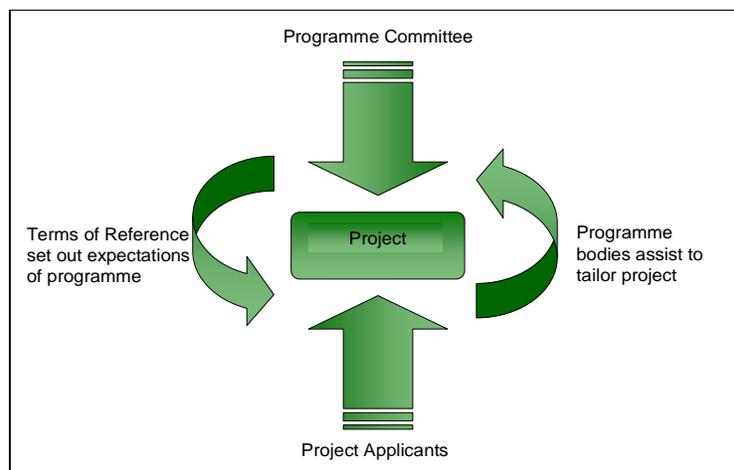
The description of tasks of the programme bodies and the implementation procedures as set up in chapter 4 of the present document are designed to facilitate and steer the emergence of projects **that meet the requirements** as regards **content** and output orientation as well as a **high quality standard in project administration**.

Special efforts will be made to bring key actors or the various relevant fields together and to stimulate the creation of (new) transnational and/or interdisciplinary networks and partnerships. The involvement of non institutional actors shall be stimulated. One tool to achieve this is the organisation of thematic

workshops as it was successfully done in the second half of the INTERREG IIIB Programme since new, valuable ideas for projects of strategic relevance emerged during these events. Another tool is the systematic analysis and promotion of project results in order to make key actors aware of relevant work that was done and to stimulate the development of other projects building on these results. In addition, close cooperation with other relevant EU-programmes and organisations such as the Alpine Convention which will be intensified in the new programme shall help to establish contacts between relevant stakeholders and to identify potentials for projects of strategic importance for the cooperation area.

With regard to project generation and development a **two-fold-approach** is foreseen, aiming at balancing bottom-up and top-down generated projects: through a pro-active support of project generation by ACP and JTS project ideas developed **bottom-up** shall be picked up at a very early stage to ensure that they can be shaped to fit into the programme objectives. On the other hand, a **top-down** approach will be followed as well, meaning that partner states will be responsible for project generation/development and for defining the concrete expectations on project activities, results, partnerships etc. In concrete, this will be done by the Programme Committee that will adopt the "terms of reference" that will be set up for each call for projects and in which these expectations will be set out.

The envisaged **two-step application** procedure will be an ideal tool to support this two-fold approach.



**Figure 7: Two-fold approach to generate projects**

## 2.5 IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITY AXES

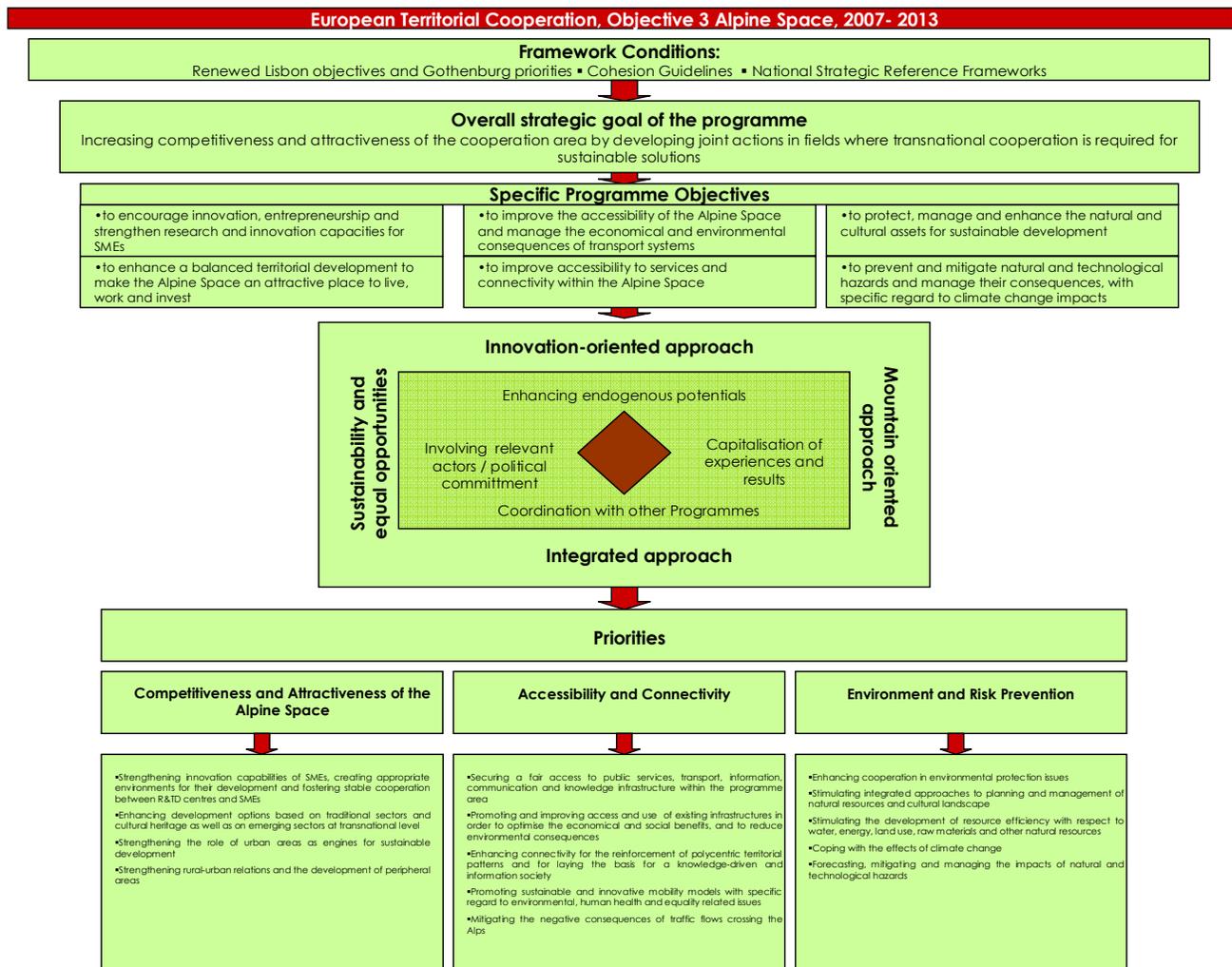
Transnational cooperation means looking beyond local issues, exchanging experiences, building new knowledge and set joint activities in order to improve the quality of achieved results. In this sense, the specific programme objectives as set out previously shall be reached through joint projects which will benefit from working across regions. This shall allow the achievement of a common sustainable territorial development, following the programme strategy and guiding principles as outlined above.

With regard to the framework conditions as set out by the European Union (regulations on Structural Funds and Community Strategic Guidelines), the National Strategic Reference Frameworks in the single Member States participating in the programme and on the basis of the analysis of the programme

area, the identified challenges for the new programme and the derived programme objectives, the following priority axes have been identified for the Alpine Space Programme:

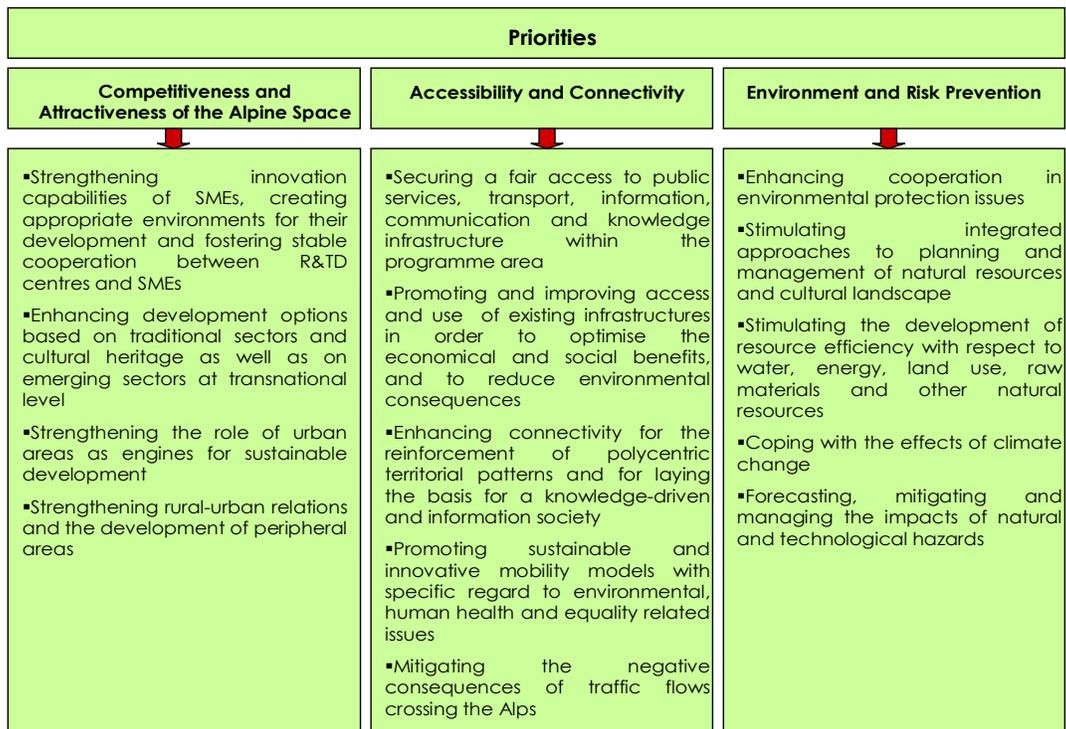
- 1 Competitiveness and attractiveness of the Alpine Space
- 2 Accessibility and connectivity
- 3 Environment and risk prevention

The priority axes shall contribute to the achievement of different objectives; chapter 3 of the present document provides a detailed description of the context, the main objectives, the indicative activities and the main target groups/beneficiaries for each priority axis. The graph on the next page shall give an overview on the logical structure of the programme.



**Figure 8: Logical structure of the programme**

### 3 PROGRAMME PRIORITIES



**Figure 9: Programme priorities**

This chapter provides for detailed description of programme priorities, identified on the basis of programme objectives and strategy. For each priority a description of context is given, and specific objectives are identified. A list of indicative activities shall give project applicants a clear picture of strategic fields of intervention and of concrete activities that the programme aims at supporting. Compliance with and concrete contribution to the programmes' objectives, strategies and guiding principles are also key principles to be followed by project applicants, with special regard to transnational added value, concrete results and impact on the cooperation area.

#### 3.1 PRIORITY 1: COMPETITIVENESS AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE ALPINE SPACE

This priority refers to the programme objective "to encourage innovation, entrepreneurship and strengthen research and innovation capacities for SMEs" and "to enhance a balanced territorial development to make the Alpine Space an attractive place to live, work and invest".

##### Context and rationale

The Alpine Space is one of the most attractive areas for living, working and recreating throughout Europe. It has the basic potential to attract highly qualified workforce in all key branches. The area has a rich and diversified economic structure with strong links to the territory, a well-developed polycentric

urban system and hosts centres of excellence of European importance in the field of R&TD. However, some geographic and economic preconditions are less advantageous if compared to those of other European economic regions.

Therefore actions will be supported within this priority to promote the Alpine Space as a dynamic economic region in Europe, and to overcome the disadvantages of locational factors.

The Alpine Space's economy is strongly characterised by a high share of SMEs. However, regionally, especially in the core alpine area, low internal innovation capabilities, scarce cooperation between SMEs and R&TD institutions can be observed. This makes it difficult for SMEs to reach a critical size and mass, limits their growth and innovation capability and reduces their competitiveness on an international scale.

Tourism is one of the major economic forces in the Alps. It brings job and income by making use of cultural and natural assets. On the other hand, it may sometimes have deteriorating effects on the assets themselves. The Alps as tourism destination have to compete on a global market. Balanced tourism development has to respect global trends, depends on innovative solutions and has to respect the specific assets of the cooperation area.

Cities and urban areas in the Alpine Space are the growth engines, centres of qualification, research and development as well as the places where main services and infrastructure are based. Some of those areas are of major European importance.

The Alpine Space is characterised by a well-developed polycentric urban system which is especially strong in the regions surrounding the Alps. The exploitation of an underused potential of various forms of urban and urban-rural cooperation networks is considered as a great asset. On the other hand, growing disparities between urban and rural areas small scale disparities especially within the mountain areas, demographic change and urban sprawl phenomena affect the development process. These phenomena require to be faced on a long term basis and in a transnational perspective. A better and sound use of endogenous potentials can help overcoming these negative phenomena and support balanced and long term development plans.

Culture and territorial identity are not only subjects of protection, but also serve as resources in various terms, not least as basis for regional economy. The consideration of culture and territorial identities is a prerequisite to ensure a high quality of life, sustainable and balanced development.

The priority addresses these key issues by promoting strategies and actions at transnational level in order to contribute to competitiveness, to mitigate growing disparities, to increase job opportunities and stabilise labour markets in disadvantaged regions, to make innovation accessible and to enlarge market opportunities for enterprises.

### **3.1.1 Main objectives of the priority axis**

- + Strengthening innovation capabilities of SMEs, creating appropriate environments for their development and fostering stable cooperation between R&TD centres and SMEs.
- + Enhancing development options based on traditional sectors and cultural heritage, as well as on emerging sectors at transnational level.
- + Strengthening the role of urban areas as engines for sustainable development.
- + Strengthening rural-urban relations and the development of peripheral areas.

### 3.1.2 Fields of activities of the priority axis

The development of the cooperation follows an approach that considers the innovation and growth potential of the region in respect to its endogenous resources while on the other hand it aims at reducing existing disparities to allow a broad participation in this development.

Transnational cooperation could contribute to increase growth and competitiveness in the cooperation area through the following approaches:

- + **Stimulating innovation** by environmental friendly technology transfer; facilitating, completing and strengthening value-added chains in economy based on regional resources as well as on institutions and exchange of experience between regional networks.
- + Fostering cooperation between urban and rural areas and allowing a broad participation in the development process transnational cooperation can be considered as essential for **reducing economic, social, cultural, regional disparities** between and within regions. This includes the cooperation between research, qualification and science institutions to develop new ways of enhancing and adapting human resources according to the needs of society.
- + **Diversifying economic activities**, taking into account traditional values, cultural heritage and natural assets as well as the environmental constraints. This would enhance development options based on traditional sectors and cultural heritage.

The following types of actions can contribute to the achievement of the above-stated objectives (non-exhaustive list).

#### Indicative activities

- + Actions supporting clusters generation and/or strengthening the key economic branches.
- + Development of pilot initiatives (structures, policies...) for technology transfer between research centres and SMEs.
- + Joint initiatives that deal with valorisation of cultural heritage (crafts, local products, architecture, identity...).
- + Development of production chains based on regional products, crafts, knowledge or heritage in all sectors by respecting the principle of nearness.
- + Development of joint quality labels for key economic branches.
- + Creation of tools for the improvement of living conditions and facilitation of economic growth in peripheral areas and areas affected by spatial disparity (e.g. safeguarding access to social and cultural services, providing SME access to ICT and knowledge society).
- + Development of joint policies for the enhancement of Alpine centres - small and medium sized towns (e.g. policies to reduce urban sprawl, policies to maintain functions of city centres).
- + Promotion of integrated tourism systems.

### 3.1.3 Main target groups, sectors, areas and beneficiaries

#### Target groups and sectors

As the priority aims at increasing competitiveness of the cooperation area and at improving related conditions, the main target groups are the relevant stakeholders: local, regional and national decision-makers; economic actors, particularly SMEs, and their organisations; education, training and research centres.

Actions carried out under this priority concern the Alpine Space population as a whole. Special focus should be put on groups with specific needs, for instance according to the age and the residence.

The main target sectors are: production and service industry, research sector, particularly those with a clear connection to SMEs and Alpine specificities; public services provider supporting competitiveness and innovation and aiming at reducing geographical and social disparities.

### **Target areas**

The whole cooperation area is concerned, but a special focus is on urban areas to strengthen their role as development and innovation poles and on peripheral areas in order to reduce disparities and enhance their potentials for competitiveness and innovation.

### **Main beneficiaries**

The beneficiaries of the priority are the main actors and relevant stakeholders in the field of development policies and innovation, such as:

- + Local, regional and national public authorities;
- + Local, regional and national development agencies;
- + Technological and scientific research centres;
- + Education and training centres;
- + Public/private organisations representing enterprises and especially SMEs (e.g. SME networks, cluster organisations);
- + Chambers of Commerce and Industry;
- + Labour market services;
- + Chambers of trade and crafts.

## **3.2 PRIORITY 2: ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY**

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This priority refers to the programme objectives "to improve the accessibility of the Alpine Space and manage the economical and environmental consequences of transport systems" and "to improve accessibility to services and connectivity within the Alpine Space".

### **Context and rationale**

Mountain areas by nature cause special constraints as regards accessibility to transport, infrastructures and knowledge. The Alpine Space faces a peculiar situation: on the one hand it is a centre of a dynamic economy requiring access to European transport networks and knowledge infrastructure via corridors, while on the other hand it is a transit area for goods and passengers in European or even global terms.

Taking into consideration both the particular geographical situation and the specific environmental sensitivity, the unique function of the Alpine structures from a European perspective is one of the issues to be dealt within this priority. Good cooperation and networking at transnational, national and regional levels is required in order to improve quality of transport of passengers, goods as well as quality and quantity of information into, through and within the Alps. New multimodal solutions, the improvement of sustainable mobility chains, creative logistic approaches and the access to ICT connections are clear transnational tasks and require a shift from single to network solutions in order to achieve common benefits for the Alpine Space as a whole. Activities within this priority should provide answers on a

European scale on how to manage the challenges and the specific geographical conditions of the programme area.

To meet the increasing demand for goods, information and (social) services new and sustainable solutions have to be introduced. Accessibility to goods and services, must not discriminate different groups and impede equal opportunities.

The potential change in mobility patterns as a result of depopulation and over-ageing clearly calls for transnational solutions.

### 3.2.1 Main objectives of the priority axis

- + Securing a fair access to public services, transport, information, communication and knowledge infrastructure within the programme area.
- + Promoting and improving access and use of existing infrastructures in order to optimise the economical and social benefits, and to reduce environmental consequences.
- + Enhancing connectivity for the reinforcement of polycentric territorial patterns and for laying the basis for a knowledge-driven and information society.
- + Promoting sustainable and innovative mobility models with specific regard to environmental, human health and equality related issues.
- + Mitigating the negative consequences of traffic flows crossing the Alps.

### 3.2.2 Fields of activities of the priority axis

Traffic, accessibility and connectivity are, in general discussions, seen as major challenges for the Alpine Space. Solutions to these problems need a wide political and financial commitment. In the framework of this programme, supporting, monitoring and evaluating activities of the following issues seem of particular relevance and should be developed:

- + Actions with regard to **accessibility** and **connectivity** that support economic activities provide for **sustainable solutions** and help the local population to get better connected to wider global networks.
- + The **negative effects of traffic** count among the most sensitive and controversial aspects of development in the cooperation area. Therefore actions that could help **mitigate** these effects as well as actions to develop alternative solutions have to be focused primarily.
- + Actions that aim at providing **innovative solutions** and that are in line with the principles of sustainable development for the growing need for **mobility**. Such activities refer to **logistics**, ICT-based and other innovative solutions.

The following types of actions can contribute to the achievement of the above-stated objectives (non-exhaustive list).

#### Indicative activities

- + Actions supporting integrated planning of transport and mobility issues.
- + Coordination of mobility strategies and mobility plans of regions.
- + Actions for the improvement of connectivity and increase in the quality and reliability of transport systems (including persons, goods and information).
- + Assessment and monitoring of mobility effects.

- + Feasibility studies preparing large investments in sustainable freight transport.
- + Coordinated actions for the improvement of transport security (e.g. in tunnels, both railway or road, be it for passenger or goods transportation).
- + Harmonisation and improvement of services for transport users (e.g. logistic services, mobility management, online information, ticketing etc.).
- + Development and implementation of innovative mobility models and solutions under various aspects (sectoral, regional, intermodal etc).
- + ICT-based innovative public services, services for citizens and economy.
- + Activities for broadband access in remote areas.
- + Coordination and elaboration of actions that mitigate negative effects of transport, mobility and accessibility.

### **3.2.3 Main target groups, sectors, areas and beneficiaries**

#### **Target groups and sectors**

The main target groups are the political, social, economical and administrative representatives of the Alpine Space population, as well as institutions representing the main demands for visitors and transients (tourism organisations, transport authorities, mobility operators, etc.).

Actions carried out under this priority concern the Alpine Space population as a whole. Special focus should be put on social groups with a limited access or specific mobility needs (for instance the elderly, tourists, the young etc.).

All sectors can be concerned by this priority, as far as they are dealing with accessibility and mobility issues. The public sector, being the main target group of this priority axis, shall seek for synergies and added-value with the private sector, e.g. by means of PPP (public-private partnerships) based concepts.

#### **Target areas**

The whole area of the Alpine Space is concerned by the priority. The specificities of Alpine Space territories should, however, be stressed, as they call for different solutions in terms of mobility and accessibility: metropolitan areas, small and medium sized cities, rural areas, remote and mountainous areas, tourist spots etc.

#### **Main beneficiaries**

The main beneficiaries of the priority are:

- + National, regional and local authorities;
- + Public and non profit oriented transport providers;
- + Providers of public services;
- + Education, training and technological research centres.

## **3.3 PRIORITY 3: ENVIRONMENT AND RISK PREVENTION**

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This priority refers to the programme objectives "to protect, manage and enhance the natural and cultural assets for sustainable development" and "to prevent and mitigate natural and technological hazards and manage their consequences, with specific regard to climate change impacts."

## Context and rationale

The enormous environmental diversity, the cultural landscapes and the richness of biodiversity represent common assets of the cooperation area. They ensure a high quality of life and at the same time serve as resources with regard to manifold economic and social activities. These assets require appropriate measures of preservation and protection with a view on sustainable development. In the light of increasing human interventions in addition to technological and natural risks, transnational approaches, common perspectives and management strategies are essential.

According to recent climate change models, global warming will affect the Alpine Space stronger than other regions in Europe. The expected increase of natural hazards due to the impacts of climate change will endanger settlements, infrastructure and human life alike. One of the key challenges that can be answered by a transnational approach is the development of new prediction and mitigation models of climate change effects. This, together with planning and technical measures can considerably improve hazard prevention.

As important economic factors (e.g. preserved environment as core element of attractive tourist destinations, natural resources as sources of energy) the natural and cultural landscapes shall not only be subject to protection but also to wise management and enhancement. In this perspective, the sound management of the water resources and the development of efficient renewable energies are of crucial importance to safeguard sustainable development.

### 3.3.1 Main objectives of the priority axis

- + Enhancing cooperation in environmental protection issues.
- + Stimulating integrated approaches to conservation, planning and management of natural resources and cultural landscape.
- + Stimulating the development of resource efficiency with respect to water, energy, land use, raw materials and other natural resources.
- + Coping with the effects of climate change.
- + Forecasting, predicting, mitigating and managing the impacts of natural and technological hazards.

### 3.3.2 Field of activities of the priority axis

The development of the cooperation area as a whole and especially of parts of it is highly dependent on its environmental quality. Resources have to be preserved and properly managed. Especially climate change impact as well as natural and technological risk need coordinated action. Transnational cooperation could bring considerable contribution to the Alpine area in the following issues:

- + **Natural environment and natural heritage** as a basis for living conditions and for economy must be **safeguarded** and **used wisely**. Integrated planning, management and development of resources are a way to achieve this.
- + **Water** is a characteristic and valuable Alpine resource that needs to be **preserved** and **sustainably managed** as basis for living conditions and for many economic sectors.
- + Climate change is affecting the Alps earlier and rather more severely than the rest of Europe. **Coping with effects of climate change** in all aspects (from changing river systems to changing cultural landscapes) will be a major challenge for the cooperation area.

- + The Alps are particularly exposed to **natural** and **technological risks**. Therefore the effects and the probability of these risks shall be **mitigated**. The topic of **flooding** is one of the key challenges for the development of settlements, regions and cities in the Alps especially under the growing impact of the changing climate.
- + **Energy resources** (solar, biomass, geothermal, wind, hydro) are to be considered as essential for a sustainable economy and for sustainable regional development. The use, management and improvement of the **endogenous resources** must be **promoted** and **implemented**.

The following types of actions can contribute to the achievement of the above-stated objectives (non-exhaustive list).

#### **Indicative activities**

- + Joint actions for conservation and integrated management of biodiversity and cultural landscape.
- + Development of joint management tools for protected areas.
- + Development and implementation of governance and management systems as well as integrated tools for water resources.
- + Integrated energy planning to increase efficiency and pilot implementation with a specific focus on locally available renewable sources.
- + Risk prevention measures focusing on “soft” methods.
- + Development of systems and standards for better modeling and forecast of hazards and hazards impact (climate, seismic, etc).

### **3.3.3 Main target groups, sectors, areas and beneficiaries**

#### **Target groups and sectors**

Target groups are the decision-makers and stakeholders at local, regional and national level, as well as institutions dealing with the challenges of: climate change, natural and technological hazards, sustainable use of energy, land and other natural resources.

#### **Target areas**

The Alpine Space cooperation area is entirely concerned by this priority, even if the topics to be dealt with as regards climate change/risk prevention are different in the core area (broader variety of risks, starting point for natural hazard, different nature of activities), the Alpine surroundings (mainly flooding with a certain time lag but broad variety of effects), and lowland areas. Ecological sensitive areas are excluded, in case the objective is likely to cause negative impacts on environmental issues.

#### **Main beneficiaries**

The main beneficiaries of the priority are:

- + Local, regional and national administrations and institutions;
- + Environmental agencies, water agencies, protected areas management bodies;
- + Energy agencies and similar institutions;
- + Technological and scientific research centres;

- + NGOs and NPOs in the fields of environment, water management, natural resources management and hazards control.

## 3.4 PRIORITY 4: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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### Context and rationale

Taking into account that seven countries representing several languages and various cultural backgrounds are participating in the programme and as experience made in the INTERREG IIIB Programme has proved, a well organised network of competent bodies will be essential for a successful programme implementation.

The programme bodies and the respective structures and procedures of the programme are set out in chapter 4 of this document. As can be seen from that, manifold activities of these bodies, if needed also of external experts, in the fields of programme management and monitoring, project development and implementation, administrative and technical support, evaluation, information, cooperation and networking inside and outside the cooperation area and control are foreseen. An efficient implementation of these actions requires corresponding personnel and financial resources. For these reasons priority 4 of the programme bundles all actions related to "technical assistance".

The total amount of expenditure foreseen for technical assistance will not exceed the limit as set out in Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

### 3.4.1 Main objectives of the priority axis

- + Ensuring an efficient and effective management and implementation of the programme,
- + Ensuring constant monitoring of the progress made by programme and projects,
- + Enhancing the visibility of the programme and its results,

### 3.4.2 Fields of activities of the priority axis

With the funds of this priority measures will be carried out in the following fields of activities:

- + **Management of the programme** by the MA with support of the JTS (cf. chapter 4.1.2 and 4.1.5)
- + Establishment of **co-operation and co-ordination** networks and contacts among programme bodies and partner states as well as with bodies and representatives of other relevant EU-co-funded programmes by MA, JTS and ACP,
- + Support of the generation and implementation of **high quality projects** (cf. chapters 2.4. and 4.2.).
- + Support to (potential) project holders in **developing and implementing projects as well as evaluation and monitoring** of projects by MA, JTS and ACP (cf. chapter 4.1 and 4.2). To this end diverse seminars and information events will be organised on national and transnational level (details will be set out in the communication plan),
- + Depending on the progress made (around midterm of programme implementation) an **evaluation of the programme implementation** will be carried out. To this end the MA will come up with a proposal on what aspects should be analysed in this evaluation (specification of ser-

vices) and the PC shall discuss and adopt the proposal. If needed, external experts will be commissioned, funds have been reserved for that.

- + Implementation of a proper **monitoring and accounting system** (details will be set out in the description of the management and control system respectively programme implementation handbook),,
- + Organisation and implementation of **audit activities** with regard to programme and projects (as will be set out in the description of the management and control system).
- + Implementing **widespread information activities** about the programme and the projects. Possible actions that will be carried out to this end will be set out in the programme's communication plan (cf. chapter 4.1.8).

### **3.4.3 Main target groups, sectors, areas and beneficiaries**

#### **Target groups, sectors and areas**

Target groups and sectors of this priority are manifold and the whole co-operation area is affected. Main target groups are the population of the co-operation area, (potential) project holders, representatives of other relevant EU co-funded programmes, relevant actors inside and outside the co-operation area as well as representatives from the political and administrative level (cf. chapter 2.3).

#### **Main beneficiaries:**

The main beneficiaries of the priority are:

- + Programme bodies,
- + Partner states participating in the programme.

### 3.5 COHERENCE OF PROGRAMME SWOT ANALYSIS, CHALLENGES AND OBJECTIVES WITH COHESION GUIDELINES

When setting up the present document the programme partners were constantly striving for coherence of the objectives of the overall programme and its priorities with the findings of the SWOT Analysis, the identified main challenges for the programme and the orientations given by the European Union in the Cohesion Guidelines. The following table shall provide for an overview on these aspects and illustrate the links between them.

SWOT analysis ( <i>summary</i> )	Main challenges	Programme objectives	Priorities	Cohesion Guidelines
<p>GROWTH, COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATION</p> <p>A dense pattern of SMEs, specific productive cultures, know-how and networks, but partly weak links between R&amp;TD institutions and economic actors and uneven distribution of R&amp;TD centres and infrastructure → Development of new frameworks for knowledge and innovation generation or transfer between education and R&amp;TD institutions and economic actors.</p> <p>Diverse, service based economy and varied growth factors, competitive transnational clusters (biochemical, agro-food etc.), but global threats over industry resulting from globalisation → Alpine productive cultures and networks as factors of adaptability and assets for growth, development of innovative products, based on local resources (agro-food, construction techniques etc.), exploring attitudes and practices towards cultural assets and their contribution to attractiveness, identity and quality of life.</p>	<p>INNOVATION AND COMPETITIVENESS</p> <p>Innovation potentials for SMEs are high due to qualified workforce, R&amp;TD capacities, surrounding markets and roots in traditional sectors. But SMEs in the Alpine Space face adverse conditions (location disadvantages, lack of qualified workforce in some areas, high transaction costs) → To increase the competitiveness by developing the economic key sectors by various policies (clusters, networks,...) and acknowledge their importance for regions, to increase the innovation activities in the traditional sectors and link them to global economy: a. services, e.g. tourism and healthcare; b. handicraft, agriculture, forestry, to foster cooperation between the diverse actors in the field of innovation and technology transfer.</p>	<p>To contribute to a sustainable economic development, by encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and strengthen research and innovation capacities for SMEs</p>	<p>1) COMPETITIVENESS AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE ALPINE SPACE</p> <p>Strengthening innovation capabilities of SMEs, creating appropriate environments for their development and fostering stable cooperation between R&amp;TD centres and SMEs.</p> <p>Enhancing development options based on traditional sectors and cultural heritage.</p> <p>Facilitating the participation of all social groups in economic, cultural and social activities.</p>	<p>Strengthening cooperation among businesses and between businesses and public research/tertiary education institutions, e.g. by supporting the creation of regional and trans-regional clusters of excellence.</p> <p>Supporting R&amp;TD activities in SMEs and technology transfer (enabling SMEs to access R&amp;TD services in publicly funded research institutions).</p> <p>Support for regional cross-border and transnational initiatives aimed at strengthening research collaboration and capacity building in priority areas of Community research policy.</p> <p>Strengthening R&amp;TD capacity building, including ICT, research infrastructure and human capital in areas with significant growth potential.</p> <p>Ensuring full exploitation of European strengths in the area of eco-innovations. Eco-innovations should be promoted, together with the improvement of SME practices through the introduction of environmental management systems.</p>

SWOT analysis <i>(summary)</i>	Main challenges	Programme objectives	Priorities	Cohesion Guidelines
<p>Major tourism destination and strong tourism economy in the Alpine core, but threats due to climate change, competition, increasing structural costs, and adverse environmental impact of tourism in the Alpine core → Tourism offer diversification with a wider range of products on wider seasonal basis, development of other activities in territories relying heavily on single activities (e.g. industry or tourism).</p>	<p>Cultural identity and heritage as competitive factor → Capitalising on Alpine relevant knowledge, innovation in specific sectors including tradition and respecting heritage and spatial development.</p> <p>Tourism is no main challenge to be tackled within transnational cooperation in the ASP.</p>			<p>Making regional R&amp;TD innovation and education supply more efficient and accessible to firms, in particular SMEs, for example by establishing poles of excellence, bringing together high technology SMEs around research and technological institutions, or by developing and creating regional clusters around large companies.</p> <p>The actions envisaged include the [...] promotion of sustainable urban development and R&amp;TD/innovation networks.</p>
<p><b>TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE</b></p> <p>Strong and potential metropolitan areas in addition to well functioning medium and small sized cities, but growing difference in functional hierarchies between metropolitan areas, medium and small towns; some prosperous areas are connected to metropolitan dynamics or living on tourism and others are left behind, several small and medium sized cities in decline. Enlarging territorial imbalances and marked territorial discrepancies at smaller scales, especially in the Alpine core → Urban, urban-rural and rural-rural cooperation based on joint interests and projects.</p> <p>Large cities experiencing a multitude of problems (congestion, spatial segregation, security etc.), urban sprawl or suburbanisation threatening spatial identity and quality of life</p>	<p><b>COHESION</b></p> <p>The diversity of the Alpine Space can encourage productive cooperation as well as competition. The Alpine Space should gain impetus by this dual movement → Cooperation among its regions with strong individual identities as a means to increase its overall competitiveness.</p> <p>The network of metropolitan areas (MEGAs) surrounding the Alps and of small and medium sized towns within the Alps are the main driving forces for development in the cooperation area. The quality of networks, the accessibility of services and mobility management in the Alpine Space will determine the conditions for progress → The network will foster the ability of the Alpine Space to participate in the knowledge economy, becoming an economic engine for the Europe of tomorrow.</p>	<p>To enhance a balanced territorial development to make the Alpine Space an attractive place to live, work and invest.</p>	<p><b>1) COMPETITIVENESS AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE ALPINE SPACE</b></p> <p>Strengthening the role of urban areas as engines for sustainable development.</p> <p>Strengthening rural-urban relations and the development of peripheral areas.</p> <p>Facilitating the participation of all social groups in economic, cultural and social activities.</p>	<p>In the framework of transnational cooperation support should be given to actions which seek to improve [...] intangible connections (networks, exchanges between regions and between the parties involved).</p> <p>Promoting land-use planning which reduces urban sprawl, and by rehabilitating the physical environment, including the development of natural and cultural assets.</p> <p>The actions envisaged include the [...] promotion of sustainable urban development and R&amp;TD/innovation networks.</p>

SWOT analysis <i>(summary)</i>	Main challenges	Programme objectives	Priorities	Cohesion Guidelines
<p>→ Improving the attractiveness of urban areas as living and working environment.</p> <p>The Alpine Space is attractive for immigration of well-educated population, but migration of larger proportions of remote rural area dwellers to cities, overageing, decline of working age population, growth of social tensions as a consequence of increased immigration</p> <p>→ Designing and testing policies to support and promote favourable migration trends.</p>	<p>→ To promote polycentrism, while at the same time ensuring an effective distribution of the dynamics and benefits throughout the territory by supporting the relay-function of small and medium sized towns, to find and develop common strategies and perspectives for a balanced territorial development taking into account the geographic and social disparities, the economic needs, the natural resources and the cultural heritage.</p>			
<p><b>ACCESSIBILITY AND MOBILITY</b></p> <p>Key transit area at European level, good integration in the European transport networks with primary level hubs and gateway cities, but "bottleneck" position on European transit routes leading to the concentration of traffic and environmental impacts, continued growth of transport flows due to progressing European integration and accelerating globalisation, further development of road based accessibility at the expense of more sustainable transport modes, missing intermodal terminals and weak logistics</p> <p>→ Development of mass multimodal transport systems for freight and of innovative transport solution at different scales to optimise the use of infrastructures, more efficient transport logistic by using technology support.</p> <p>Well-developed regional transport systems in central areas, generally good quality public transport and innovative solutions in the Alpine Space belt regions as well as in some Alpine core areas, but partly unsatisfactory links between main Alpine metropolitan areas, remote regions often poorly served with infrastructure and connections, land fragmentation and traffic impacts, such as congestion, noise and air emissions, in specific areas (urban re-</p>	<p><b>TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY</b></p> <p>The Alpine Space is increasingly concerned by North-South and East-West European traffic. The reinforcement of highway tunnels and of high speed transit infrastructures will shape this mediation into main transalpine corridors, each corresponding to a specific European economic axis</p> <p>→ To organise and to capitalise the transit economy of each of the major Alpine routes, while at the same time ensuring the overall solidarity so as to prevent side effects and imbalances among the Alpine territories.</p> <p>→ To balance/reduce the pressure on the Alpine environment from freight and passenger transport by developing sustainable and innovative solutions e.g. by better exploiting the potentials of logistic platforms, supporting coordinated mobility services, rather thinking in networks than as axes and to improve connectivity in inter alpine and peripheral areas.</p>	<p>To improve the accessibility of the Alpine Space and manage the economical and environmental consequences of transport systems.</p> <p>To improve accessibility to services and connectivity within the Alpine Space.</p>	<p><b>2) ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY</b></p> <p>Securing a fair access to public services, transport, information, communication and knowledge infrastructure within the programme area.</p> <p>Promoting and improving access and use of existing infrastructures in order to optimise the economical and social benefits, and to reduce environmental consequences.</p> <p>Enhancing connectivity for the reinforcement of polycentric territorial patterns and for laying the basis for a knowledge-driven and information society.</p> <p>Promoting sustainable and innovative mobility models with specific regard to environmental, human health and equality related issues.</p> <p>Mitigating the negative consequences of traffic flows crossing the Alps.</p>	<p>Promoting environmentally sustainable transport networks, providing for accessibility to common public transport services for certain target groups (the elderly, disabled persons).</p> <p>Ensuring uptake of ICTs by firms and households and promoting development through balanced support for the supply and demand of ICT products and both public and private services.</p> <p>Ensuring availability of ICT infrastructure and related services where the market fails to provide it at an affordable cost and to an adequate level to support the required services, especially in remote and rural areas and in new Member States.</p> <p>In the framework of transnational cooperation support should be given to actions which seek to improve the physical interconnection of territories (e.g. investments in sustainable transport) as well as intangible connections (networks, exchanges between regions and between the parties involved).</p> <p>The actions envisaged include the creation of European transport corridors (particularly cross-border sec-</p>

SWOT analysis (summary)	Main challenges	Programme objectives	Priorities	Cohesion Guidelines
<p>gions, along transport corridors), increasing pressure on the environment from transport                      → New policies supporting a shift from road transport to other modes and mitigation of negative environmental impacts of transport, development of innovative transport solution at different scales to optimise the use of infrastructures.</p> <p>Generally highly developed transport and ICT infrastructure and services, potential for improvements in connectivity of peripheral areas by increased use of ICT, well developed services of general interest, but vicious cycle regarding provision of services of general interest in peripheral areas in connection with depopulation processes (high cost of maintaining services in sparsely populated areas)                      → New technologies and organisational forms as an opportunity for service delivery.</p>				<p>tions) [...].</p>
<p><b>ENVIRONMENT, RESOURCES AND RISKS</b></p> <p>Above average degree of naturalness and biodiversity in European comparison, a high and growing extent of protected areas, successful development strategies of regions based on protected areas, but fragmentation, loss and diminishing diversity of natural areas, continued pressure on natural heritage and natural resources                      → New development and management concepts and measures for protected areas.</p> <p>High concentration and diversity of cultural assets in large parts of the Alpine Space, but high pressure on cultural assets, especially in most tourist frequented regions and towns, change of identity or degradation of the substance of natural and cultural heritage as a result of economic changes                      → Safeguarding and valorisation of heri-</p>	<p><b>ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>Pressure on the ecosystem Alps due to the increased effects of climate change, increasing environmental burdens and intensified efforts of the partner states to protect the environment and reduce environmental impacts ask for new and adapted answers in the field of management of natural resources, development of cultural landscapes and heritage, water management and reduction of natural risks                      → To identify strategies to cope with the effects of climate change, to develop coordinated policies, strategies and tools for management and mitigation, to protect the mountainous Alpine core, as defined in the Alpine Convention, while allowing and encouraging economic activities and the sustainable use of natural resources.</p>	<p>To protect, manage and enhance the natural and cultural assets for sustainable development.</p> <p>To prevent and mitigate natural and technological hazards and manage their consequences, with specific regard to climate change impacts.</p>	<p><b>3) ENVIRONMENT AND RISK PREVENTION</b></p> <p>Enhancing cooperation in environmental protection issues.</p> <p>Stimulating integrated approaches to planning and management of natural resources and cultural landscape.</p> <p>Stimulating the development of resources efficiency with respect to water, energy, land use, raw materials and other natural resources.</p> <p>Coping with the effects of climate change.</p> <p>Predicting, mitigating and managing the impacts of natural and technological hazards.</p>	<p>Undertaking risk prevention measures through improved management of natural resources, more targeted research and better use of ICTs, and more innovative public management policies including, for example, preventive monitoring.</p> <p>Supporting projects to improve energy efficiency.</p> <p>Supporting the development and use of renewable and alternative technologies (such as wind, solar, biomass).</p> <p>The actions envisaged include [...] actions for the prevention of natural risks (e.g. fire, drought and flood), water management at river basin level [...].</p>

<b>SWOT analysis (summary)</b>	<b>Main challenges</b>	<b>Programme objectives</b>	<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Cohesion Guidelines</b>
<p>itage places and traditional culture by applying innovative approaches.</p> <p>High share of energy from renewable sources and efficient use of energy in parts of the Alpine Space, but limited availability and potential for use of renewable energy sources, such as wind or even biomass.</p> <p>Availability of high quality drinking water and potentials for hydropower generation, but liberalisation of water supply may have adverse effects</p> <p>→ Exchange in the field of integrated river management, better valorisation of drinking water by supply areas, new relations with end-user areas.</p> <p>Potential strengthened transnational approach in natural and technological hazard prevention and mitigation, but several regions prone to natural as well as technological hazards, and to other impacts of climate change. Occurrence of a number of damaging floods in the past decade, dynamic increase of natural hazards due to climate change, potentially strong indirect impacts on economy and living conditions of climate change</p> <p>→ Development of integrated measures in the field of natural risks and of adaptation measures to climate change.</p>				

### 3.6 INDICATOR SYSTEM

The objectives defined for the priorities have been quantified by a limited number of indicators for output and results (article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006), in order to measure the achievement of the objectives of the respective priority axes. The respective data will be collected at project level and further processed in the electronic monitoring system that will be set up for the programme.

The collected data and their analysis (a task of MA and JTS) will be used for regular updates to the Programme Committee on the status of programme and project implementation, for the annual implementation reports as well as for the basis of the programme's external evaluations (e.g. an evaluation of the programme during the second half of the programme runtime). The results achieved by the projects shall be monitored and measure the achievement of the programme's objectives.

The indicators have been chosen with a focus on territorial cooperation, the main objective of the programme. In this respect, it does not seem likely that the programme impacts can be measured by context indicators due to the size of its available budget and due to the low probability that eventual changes of these indicators are directly related to the programme activities. It can however be assumed that the specific programme objectives can be achieved if the project results are properly used in order to reach the intended target groups and motivate them to action. Therefore, impacts of the programme activities will be further assessed by appropriate qualitative evaluation methods (e.g. by using social capital impacts indicators).

Core Indicators for the whole programme		Target
Number of projects respecting two/three/four of the following criteria : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ joint development</li> <li>▪ joint implementation</li> <li>▪ joint staffing</li> <li>▪ joint financing</li> </ul>	• two	100%
	• three	80%
	• four	20%
Number of projects on:	• water management	3
	• improving accessibility	6
	• risk prevention	7
	• R&TD and innovation networks	8

## Indicators at Priority level

### Priority 1: Competitiveness and Attractiveness of the Alpine Space

<b>Output Indicators Priority 1</b>	
<b>Name/definition</b>	<b>Target</b>
<b>Number of projects</b>	
Total Number of projects	25
Number of projects referring to objective 1: Strengthening innovation capabilities of SMEs, creating appropriate environments for their development and fostering stable cooperation between R&TD centres and SMEs.	> 8
Number of projects referring to objective 2: Enhancing development options based on traditional sectors and cultural heritage, as well as on emerging sectors at transnational level.	>3
Number of projects referring to objective 3: Strengthening the role of urban areas as engines for sustainable development.	>3
Number of projects referring to objective 4: Strengthening rural-urban relations and the development of peripheral areas.	>3
<b>Partnership</b>	
Number of development agencies	>20
Number of technology-and applied research centres	>20
Number of projects with cross sectoral and vertical partnership	>10
Number of organisations representing enterprise networks, clusters etc.	>10
<b>Appraisal of single project activities</b>	
Number of actions with regard to technology transfers and improvement of cooperation networks between SMEs, between these and other businesses and public authorities, re-search centres or education establishments of all kinds	10
Number of actions assisting SMEs for the promotion of environmentally-friendly products and production processes	>4
Number of actions supporting models of urban-rural development	>3
<b>Result indicators Priority 1</b>	
<b>Name/definition</b>	<b>Target</b>
Number of SMEs and R&TD centres (not being project partners) involved in activities resulting from the project	>150
Number of transnational economic clusters set up or strengthened	3
Rate of projects unlocking public investment other than the project co-financing	30%
Rate of projects unlocking private investment other than the project co-financing	30%

**Priority 2: Accessibility and Connectivity**

<b>Output Indicators Priority 2</b>	
<b>Name/definition</b>	<b>Target</b>
<b>Number of projects</b>	
Total Number of projects	13
Number of projects referring to objective 1: Securing a fair access to public services, transport, information, communication and knowledge infrastructure within the programme area.	>1
Number of projects referring to objective 2: Promoting and improving access and use of existing infrastructures in order to optimise the economical and social benefits, and to reduce environmental consequences.	>6
Number of projects referring to objective 3: Enhancing connectivity for the reinforcement of polycentric territorial patterns and for laying the basis for a knowledge-driven and information society.	>1
Number of projects referring to objective 4: Promoting sustainable and innovative mobility models with specific regard to environmental, human health and equality related issues.	>1
Number of projects referring to objective 5: Mitigating the negative consequences of traffic flows crossing the Alps.	>1
<b>Partnership</b>	
Number of local, regional or national authorities	>20
Number of transport providers	>20
Number of providers of public services	>10
Number of applied mobility research institutions	>5
<b>Appraisal of single project activities</b>	
Number of actions matching mobility needs and mobility offers for all groups of society	5
Number of actions for integrated traffic and mobility planning and multimodal transport	3
Number of actions aiming at improving traffic flow on existing infrastructures	5
Number of actions aiming at offering ICT based public services (e-health, e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion etc)	5
Number of actions for broadband access in remote areas	2
Number of actions aiming at improving transport security	2

<b>Result Indicators Priority 2</b>	
	<b>Target</b>
Number of transport authorities/mobility operators (not being project members) involved in activities resulting from the project	>10
Networking of mobility actors and stakeholder on formal basis beyond the project duration	3
Rate of projects unlocking public investment other than the project co-financing	30%
Rate of projects unlocking private investment other than the project co-financing	30%

**Priority 3: Environment and Risk Prevention**

<b>Output Indicators Priority 3</b>	
<b>Name/definition</b>	<b>Target</b>
<b>Number of projects</b>	
Total Number of projects	22
Number of projects referring to objective 1: Enhancing cooperation in environmental protection issues.	>1
Number of projects referring to objective 2: Stimulating integrated approaches to planning and management of natural resources and cultural landscapes	>1
Number of projects referring to objective 3: Stimulating the development of resource efficiency with respect to water, energy, land use, raw materials and other natural resources.	>3
Number of projects referring to objective 4: Coping with the effects of climate change.	12
Number of projects referring to objective 5: Forecasting, predicting, mitigating and managing the impacts of natural and technological hazards.	>7
Number of projects improving quality and efficiency of protection/mitigation measures	>3
<b>Number of project partners</b>	
Number of local, regional or national administrations and institutions	>60
Number of environmental agencies, water agencies, energy agencies, protected areas management bodies etc	40
Number of applied-research centres	30
Number of NGOs and NPOs	20
<b>Appraisal of single project activities</b>	
Number of management initiatives for protected areas	5
Number of cooperation actions in water management	10
Number of actions dealing with natural and technological hazards and risk prevention	10
Number of actions aiming at sustainable use and efficient management of resources (wind, solar, biomass, hydroelectric, geothermal and other)	8
Number of actions aiming at conservation and integrated management of natural heritage and cultural landscape	6
<b>Result Indicators Priority 3</b>	
	<b>Target</b>
Number of environmental authorities and NGOs (not being project partners) involved in activities resulting from the project	30
Rate of projects unlocking public investment other than the project co-financing	30%
Rate of projects unlocking private investment other than the project co-financing	10%

**Priority 4: Technical Assistance**

<b>Output Indicators Priority 4</b>	
<b>Name/definition</b>	<b>Target</b>
Number of transnational information events about programme and projects	>2
Number of national information events about programme and projects per state	>2
Number of workshops and seminars with the aim of providing for support in project start up and implementation	>4
Number of brochures produced about programme and running projects	>3
Number of calls	>4

<b>Result Indicators Priority 4</b>	
	<b>Target</b>
Number of quality projects in programme	>25%
Increase of quality of projects during programme implementation	n.a.

## 4 IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS: JOINT STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES WITH REGARD TO PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND PROJECT LIFE CYCLE

### 4.1 PROGRAMME BODIES

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The following joint implementation structures have been agreed by the partner states in the light of the experiences made in the INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space Programme, of the respective findings of external experts who evaluated this programme (Mid-term Evaluation, "Prospective Study", Interact-studies) and the EU-regulations on structural funds for the period 2007-2013.

The structure and relationship of the programme bodies are based on the following overall principles:

- + slim, efficient and effective structures;
- + clear definition of tasks and responsibilities;
- + balance between structures on national and transnational level;
- + respect of the partnership principle as set out in article 11 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

#### 4.1.1 Programme Committee (PC)

In accordance with article 63 pp of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 and article 19 (3) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 the partner states will set up a Programme Committee within three months starting from the date of the notification of the EC decision approving the Operational Programme.

The Programme Committee shall be composed of 2-3 representatives of each partner state whereby the partner states will seek to respect the partnership principle as laid down in article 11 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 when nominating the members of the PC. In the PC each partner state shall have one vote.

A representative of the Managing Authority is a full member of the PC according to the rules of procedure.

A representative of the European Commission will be a member of the PC in an advisory capacity.

Representatives of the Joint Technical Secretariat shall take part in the meetings as technical support.

Representatives of transnational organised non-governmental bodies (NGOs) and Alpine organisations and networks, especially the Alpine Convention, can be members in an advisory capacity.

The Programme Committee shall meet regularly, at least once a year. It will be chaired according to a rotation principle, i.e. each year a different partner state will chair the Programme Committee. Decisions will be taken by consensus of the full members of the Programme Committee.

All relevant details will be set out in the “rules of procedure” that the PC will draw up.

The Programme Committee will assume tasks related to monitoring the programme implementation and to the selection of projects for co-funding.

With regard to programme implementation and monitoring it will be task of the PC to steer the programme and to ensure the quality and effectiveness of its implementation especially:

- + it shall consider and approve the criteria for selecting the projects financed within six months of the approval of the Operational Programme and approve any revision of those criteria in accordance with programming needs;
- + it shall periodically review progress made towards achieving the specific targets of the Operational Programme on the basis of documents submitted by the Managing Authority;
- + it shall examine the results of implementation, particularly achievement of the targets set for each priority axis and the evaluations of the programme referred to in article 48 (3) of Council Regulation (EC) No1083/2006;
- + it shall consider and approve the annual and final report(s);
- + it shall be informed of the annual control report and of any relevant comments the Commission may make after examining that report;
- + it may propose to the Managing Authority any revision or examination of the Operational Programme likely to make possible the attainment of the Funds’ objectives or to improve its management, including its financial management;
- + it shall consider and approve any proposal to amend the content of the Commission decision on the contribution of the Funds;
- + it may establish Task Forces to deal with specific issues;
- + it shall approve the yearly report and working plan of the Managing Authority and the Joint Technical Secretariat;
- + it shall be responsible for the use of the Technical Assistance budget;
- + it shall approve the communication plan of the programme.

With regard to the selection of projects for co-funding the PC shall:

- + adopt the Terms of Reference and the roadmap of each call;
- + select projects for co-funding.

In the PC, the administrative level of all partner states is represented. With regard to the political level the partner states attach great importance to an appropriate awareness raising and involvement of

political representatives in the programme implementation. This will be endeavoured via activities such as organisation of events (details will be set out in the communication plan).

#### **4.1.2 Managing Authority (MA)**

In accordance with article 60 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 and article 15 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 the Managing Authority shall bear the responsibility for managing and implementing the Operational Programme. In particular, the MA shall be responsible for:

- + acting as an interface between the European Commission and the participating states and regions;
- + ensuring compliance of the programme with Community regulations and policies;
- + ensuring that projects are selected for funding in accordance with the criteria applicable to the Operational Programme and that they comply, for their whole implementation period, with applicable Community and national rules;
- + verifying that the expenditure of each partner participating in a project has been validated by the body carrying out the control as set out in article 16 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006;
- + ensuring that there is a system for recording and storing in computerised form accounting records of each project under the Operational Programme and that the data on implementation necessary for financial management, monitoring, verifications, audits and evaluation is collected;
- + ensuring that partners and other bodies involved in the implementation of projects maintain either a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code for all transactions relating to the project without prejudice to national accounting rules;
- + ensuring that the evaluations of the Operational Programme referred to in article 48(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 are in accordance with article 47 of the same regulation;
- + setting up procedures to ensure that all documents regarding expenditure and audits required to ensure an adequate audit trail are held in accordance with the requirements of article 90 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006;
- + ensuring that the Certifying Authority shall receive all necessary information on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure for the purpose of certification;
- + supporting the work of the Programme Committee and providing it with the documents required to permit the quality of the implementation of the Operational Programme to be monitored in the light of its specific goals as well as implementing the decisions of the Programme Committee;
- + drawing-up and, after approval by the Programme Committee, submitting to the Commission the annual and final report(s) on implementation;
- + ensuring compliance with the information and publicity requirements laid down in article 69 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006;
- + contractual arrangements for programme and project implementation.

The partner states have appointed the Land of Salzburg (Austria), represented by the Government Office of the Land Salzburg, department 15 for Economy, Tourism and Energy to act as Managing Authority.

### **4.1.3 Certifying Authority (CA)**

In accordance with article 61 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 and article 14 (1) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 the Certifying Authority shall be responsible in particular for:

- + drawing-up and submitting to the Commission certified statements of expenditure and applications for payment certifying the aspects as laid down in article 61 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006;
- + ensuring for the purposes of certification that it has received adequate information from the Managing Authority on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure included in statements of expenditure;
- + taking account for the purposes of certification of the results of all audits carried out by or under the responsibility of the Audit Authority;
- + monitoring of commitments and payments of ERDF funds and maintaining accounting records in computerised form of expenditure declared to the Commission;
- + keeping an account of amounts recoverable and of amounts withdrawn following cancellation of all or part of the contribution for an operation;
- + receiving the payments made by the Commission;
- + making the payments to the lead partner.

The partner states have appointed the Land of Salzburg, represented by the Government Office of the Land Salzburg, department 15 for Economy, Tourism and Energy to act as Certifying Authority. Since the same body, namely the Land of Salzburg, will act as Managing and Certifying Authority (MA and CA) it will be provided for a clear separation of responsibilities and tasks (as has been in the INTER-REG IIIB Alpine Space Programme). Thus, the tasks of the MA and the CA will be performed by two different sub-units of the Government Office of the Land Salzburg: the unit "Regional development and EU regional policy" will act as MA and the unit "Promotion of Economy and Technology" will act as CA.

### **4.1.4 Audit Authority (AA)**

In accordance with article 62 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 and article 14 (2) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 the Audit Authority is responsible for:

- + ensuring that audits are carried out to verify the effective functioning of the management and control system of the Operational Programme;
- + ensuring that audits are carried out on operations on the basis of an appropriate sample to verify expenditure declared;
- + presenting to the Commission within nine months of the approval of the Operational Programme an audit strategy;
- + submitting by 31<sup>st</sup> of December each year an annual control report to the Commission including all the elements detailed in point (d) of article 62 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

The function of the Audit Authority will be performed by the Federal Chancellery of Austria, department IV/3 Financial Control of the ERDF.

The Audit Authority will be assisted by a group of auditors comprising a representative of each Member State participating in the Operational Programme carrying out the above listed duties detailed in article 62 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

Further details as regards the role and functions of the group of auditors will be provided in the description of the management and control system.

#### **4.1.5 Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS)**

In accordance with article 14 (1) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 the Managing Authority after consultation with the Member States represented in the programme area shall set up a Joint Technical Secretariat. The main tasks of the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) will be to provide for expertise and assistance to the Managing Authority, the Programme Committee (PC) and, where appropriate, to the Audit Authority in carrying out their respective duties. Furthermore the JTS shall be the central contact point for public interest in the programme, as well as for potential partners and selected operations. The day-to-day implementation of the programme will be carried out by the JTS.

With regard to programme implementation the JTS shall be responsible for:

- + enhancing the transnational dimension of the programme;
- + providing expertise and technical support to the Programme Committee and Task Forces;
- + implementing the communication plan and developing public relations;
- + coordinating and cooperating with the Alpine Space Contact Points (ACP);
- + enhancing links with other EU-programmes and with organisations, institutions and networks relevant for the objectives of the programme in the Alpine Space.

With regard to the project flow the JTS shall be responsible for:

- + organising and coordinating the calls for proposals;
- + facilitating the project generation process at transnational level and acting as node in the ACP network;
- + providing for technical support to project applicants during the project application process;
- + coordinating the national and carrying out the transnational evaluation during the project evaluation process;
- + providing for assistance and support to the projects at transnational level and monitor progress made by projects during the implementation phase;
- + analysing potentials for and fostering synergies and networks between approved projects;
- + analysing, capitalising and promoting project results.

#### **4.1.6 Alpine Space Contact Points (ACP)**

Each partner state will set up a Contact Point securing a link between the transnational and national/regional level in programme implementation and serving as a contact point for project applicants and partners in the respective country.

The main responsibilities of the Alpine Space Contact Points (ACP) will be to assist project applicants/partners during the project generation, application and implementation phases in the respective partner state. Thus, the ACP will be responsible for:

- + taking respective measures to stimulate the project generation process;
- + giving technical support to the project applicants during the project application process;

- + carrying out the national verification of projects with regard to partners situated in the country of the ACP and bearing the responsibility for bringing in the results of the national evaluation of the overall project content;
- + providing for assistance and support to the partners in the respective partner state and monitoring progress made by projects;
- + supporting the JTS in monitoring the progress made by projects during the implementation phase;
- + capitalising project results in the respective national context.

The ACP will also take appropriate measures (e.g. newsletters, websites, public events) to raise awareness and to disseminate information about the programme on national and regional level in their respective countries.

Furthermore, the ACP will support the JTS and the MA in the fulfilment of their tasks and co-operate within the network of the programme bodies.

#### **4.1.7 National Coordinators**

Each partner state of the programme shall be represented by one national co-ordinator who is member of the national delegation of the PC. The function of the national coordinators shall especially be to safeguard a continuous coordination among partner states and to prepare decisions of the PC.

Besides the above-mentioned constant coordination at transnational level, the partner states will endeavour to ensure that the different stakeholders in their territory are appropriately informed and involved in the programme implementation, taking into account the partnership principle as laid down in article 11 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006. Thus, the partner states will take respective measures such as setting up national committees to ensure appropriate coordination activities in their countries.

#### **4.1.8 Transnational Task Forces**

Transnational Task Forces may be established following a decision of the Programme Committee. They shall deal with programme priorities and/or specific thematic and strategic fields including issues of environmentally sustainable development, especially with the calls for project proposals. The composition of these Task Forces will depend on the respective topic that is dealt with. When establishing a transnational Task Force, the PC shall give indications about the issue to be treated, the time of operation, available resources, expected outputs and composition of the Task Force.

## **4.2 PROJECT LIFE CYCLE**

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In this section, key information on the tasks and responsibilities of programme bodies and project partners as well as procedures with regard to the project life cycle is set out. Details will be laid down in the communication plan and the programme implementation handbook.

#### **4.2.1 Project generation**

Persons and organisations interested in projects shall be adequately informed about the objectives and priorities of the programme and the prerequisites for obtaining ERDF co-funding. All programme bodies, but especially the JTS and ACP will be involved in this task. Moreover, the partner states strive towards a pro-active approach regarding the generation of projects. Thus, the ACP under guidance of the JTS shall take respective measures to stimulate the project generation process (e.g. information activities, support in partner search). The JTS will facilitate the process from an overall (i.e. transnational) point of view, bringing in its own expertise and acting as node in the network of ACP.

#### **4.2.2 Project development and application**

To ensure a high quality of the selected projects in terms of thematic outcomes and administrative implementation, project development and preparation will be supported by the programme bodies in an appropriate way.

Projects will normally be selected in a two-step application procedure following calls for project proposals. At least one call shall be launched per year depending on the availability of funds.

The Programme Committee shall adopt Terms of Reference for each call, defining at least the relevant priority axes, thematic fields within certain priority axes and expected results.

An application package with all relevant information for potential project applicants will be made available on the programme's website.

Basis for the pre-selection of project ideas - step one of the procedure - will be the submission of a document ("Expression of Interest") with key information about the project (e.g. overall budget, main activities and objectives, expected outputs and results, description of project partnership) followed by a technical evaluation<sup>20</sup> of the project proposal with regard to the requirements of the programme and Terms of Reference. The pre-selection will be carried out by a Task Force as established by the Programme Committee whereby all partner states shall be represented in this Task Force.

The Managing Authority will inform the project applicants about the results of the selection process.

Applicants of pre-selected project ideas will be invited to submit an application form and further documents which will be the basis for the selection of projects in step two. If appropriate, applicants will be given recommendations by the Task Force on how to further elaborate the project proposal to shape it to the expectations of the programme.

Between step one and two of the application process the JTS and the ACP will give technical support to the project applicants.

#### **4.2.3 Project evaluation and selection**

The partner states ensure a clear, transparent and traceable evaluation and selection of projects. Hence, criteria and details on the evaluation process (which will be set out in the programme Implementation Handbook) will be made available in the applicant's package.

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<sup>20</sup> The technical evaluation will be carried out by the JTS with the support of the ACP.

A set of eligibility and selection criteria will be defined to safeguard that the projects meet the programme's objectives and strategies. **Eligibility criteria** will be used for administrative checks of the submitted project applications. They are not content related. The set of eligibility criteria will especially include the following criteria:

- + submission of application form in due time;
- + completeness of submitted application documents;
- + transnational project partnership, i.e. project application shall foresee the cooperation of partners of at least three countries (of which two shall be Member States) in at least two of the following ways: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing and joint financing;
- + no funding by other EU-Programmes.
- +

**Selection criteria** are meant to measure the quality of a project and will be applied to projects that have been declared eligible. By using these selection criteria an evaluation of the project proposals will be carried out in terms of a check of consistency with the programme objectives and strategies and the specifications of the Terms of Reference as well as the requirements for a sound project management. The Task Force may decide on the involvement of external experts in the evaluation procedure. The JTS will coordinate the national assessment processes and carry out the transnational evaluation. The JTS will submit the results of the evaluation process to the Programme Committee which will select the projects to be co-funded by the programme. The Managing Authority will inform the project applicants about the results of the selection process.

#### **4.2.4 Contractual arrangements**

In order to ensure a solid legal basis for a smooth project implementation and the compliance of the project with legal provisions on EU- and national level, the programme will provide the projects with a model partnership agreement. On the basis of this model the partnership agreement will be elaborated by the lead partner in coordination with the other project partners and will be checked by the MA and the JTS.

The submitted and signed partnership agreement is the prerequisite for the MA to prepare the subsidy contract. As regards the latter a standardised contract will be used for all projects. The subsidy contract will be concluded between the MA and the lead partner.

#### **4.2.5 Project organisation**

In accordance with article 20 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 for each project a lead partner ("lead beneficiary" in the terminology of the regulations) shall be appointed by the project partners ("beneficiaries" in the terminology of the regulations) among themselves. This lead partner shall bear the overall responsibility for the application and implementation of the entire project. As will also be set out in the subsidy contract and in the partnership agreement each lead partner shall, inter alia, assume the following responsibilities:

- + to conclude the partnership agreement with all partners to ensure a sound project implementation;
- + to ensure a sound transnational project management;

- + to ensure appropriate information and publicity measures;
- + to ensure that the expenditure paid by the partners has been used for the purpose of implementing the project and corresponds to the activities agreed between the partners participating in the project;
- + to transfer the ERDF contribution to the partners participating in the project.
- +

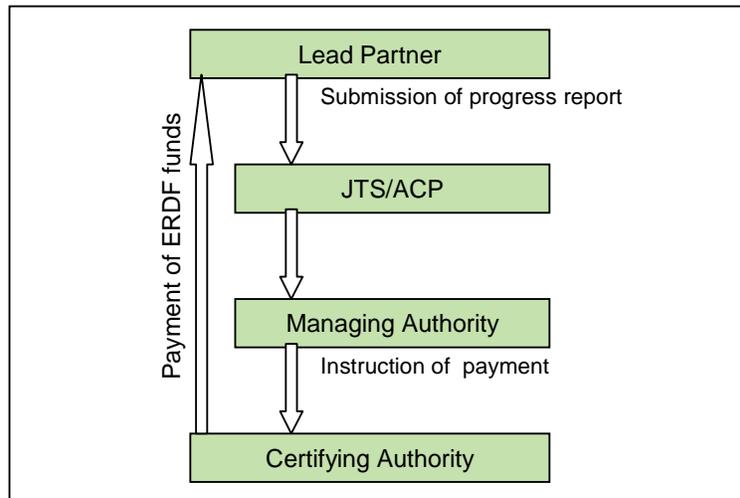
In the light of the positive experiences made in the INTERREG IIIB Alpine Space Programme the function of a lead partner shall also be open to partners coming from non-Member States. In this case their role is to be seen as that of a **"technical" lead partner** who carries out all activities as set out above except for the tasks and responsibilities related to the ERDF contribution received by the project. In such cases the partners participating in a project will nominate a lead partner coming from a Member State who will carry out these tasks. Thus, it will be this **"ERDF" lead partner** (signing the subsidy contract jointly with the "technical" lead partner) who is responsible for handling and monitoring of the ERDF-funds.

As will be set out in the partnership agreement, each **partner** participating in a project shall inter alia:

- + assume responsibility in the event of any irregularity in the expenditure which it has declared;
- + inform the Member State where it is located about its participation in a project in case this Member State is not participating in the programme concerned (for cases in which the programme makes use of the possibility to spend ERDF-funds outside the cooperation area respectively outside the European Union).

#### **4.2.6 Project implementation and financial flows**

The lead partner may only request ERDF payments by providing proof of progress of the project as described in the application form. Thus, the lead partner will regularly present progress reports to the JTS and MA. In these documents the lead partner will report on activities carried out by the project partnership and eligible expenses (i.e. expenses that have already been validated by the controllers authorised by the Member States). The JTS and ACP will check the compliance of the report with the project application. On the basis of the JTS/ACP check, the MA will ask the Certifying Authority to initialise the payment of the respective ERDF funds. In accordance with article 61 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 the CA will initialise the payment to the lead partner that is responsible for transferring the ERDF contribution to the partners participating in the project.



**Figure 10: Financial flows at project level**

In case of any irregularity, the Managing Authority on behalf of the Certifying Authority will request and ensure the repayment of the ERDF funds.

Further details as regards the financial flow will be provided in the description of the management and control system and the programme implementation handbook.

#### **4.2.7 Accounting, monitoring and financial control systems**

Reliable accounting, monitoring and financial reporting systems will be established ensuring that accounting records of each project are recorded and stored and that the data on implementation necessary for financial management, monitoring, verifications, audits and evaluation is collected. Further details will be defined in the description of the management and control system.

After having set up a monitoring system for the programme, the MA will, in accordance with the partner states and in coordination with the European Commission, ensure an efficient way of data exchange following the requirements as set out in articles 39-42 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006. As the data management will be internet-based, the necessary actions to facilitate the exchange will be based on the technical feasibility.

The Member States will set up a control system as outlined in article 16 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 and specified in articles 12-26 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 and will nominate a body responsible for the internal and external coordination of this task. Detailed information on the procedures and rules on the eligibility of expenses will be provided in the description of the management and control system and the programme implementation handbook.

#### **4.2.8 Information and publicity**

According to article 69 (1) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 the partner states and the Managing Authority will provide information on the programme and projects co-funded by the programme. The

information will be addressed to European Union citizens and beneficiaries with the aim of highlighting the role of the Community and will ensure that assistance from the funds is transparent.

The information and publicity measures will build on the experiences made in the INTERREG IIIB Programme and will be adopted according to the new needs and requirements. To this end a communication plan will be set up, taking into account the requirements as set out in articles 2 and 3 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006.

To encourage and facilitate a wider project participation in the western parts of the Alps specific attention will be given to activities in this part of the cooperation area. These activities shall help to overcome a certain imbalance of participation that was observed in the previous programme and shall achieve better visibility of the programme in this area.

The activities will be implemented by the respective ACPs in close coordination and with support of the JTS. They are mainly designed to actively promote the programme and support generation and development of projects.

## 5 FINANCIAL TABLES

### 5.1 INDICATIVE BREAKDOWN OF THE COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION BY CATEGORY IN THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

Dimension 1		Dimension 2		Dimension 3	
Priority theme		Form of finance		Territory	
Code	Amount	Code	Amount	Code	Amount
Priority 1		01	97.792.311	09	97.792.311
03	11.260.785				
09	6.434.734				
14	9.652.101				
57	4.826.050				
<i>Total P1</i>	<i>32.173.670</i>				
Priority 2					
11	2.757.743				
13	2.757.743				
15	2.757.743				
26	9.652.102				
28	9.652.102				
<i>Total P2</i>	<i>27.577.433</i>				
Priority 3					
43	4.826.050				
49	9.652.101				
51	4.826.050				
53	9.652.101				
54	1.608.684				
58	1.608.684				
<i>Total P3</i>	<i>32.173.670</i>				
Priority 4					
85	4.889.615				
86	977.923				
<i>Total P4</i>	<i>5.867.538</i>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>97.792.311</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>97.792.311</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>97.792.311</b>

## 5.2 FINANCING PLAN OF THE PROGRAMME GIVING THE ANNUAL COMMITMENT OF ERDF IN THE PROGRAMME

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*Year by source for the programme, in Euro:*

	<b>ERDF</b>
2007	13.293.896
2008	13.048.898
2009	13.344.770
2010	13.825.828
2011	14.320.790
2012	14.755.750
2013	15.202.379
<b>Grand Total 2007-2013</b>	<b>97.792.311</b>

### 5.3 FINANCIAL PLAN OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME GIVING, FOR THE WHOLE PROGRAMMING PERIOD, THE AMOUNT OF THE ALLOCATION OF ERDF IN THE PROGRAMME, THE NATIONAL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS AND THE RATE OF REIMBURSEMENT BY PRIORITY

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Priority axes by source of funding (in Euro)

	Community funding (a)	National public funding (b)	National private funding (c)	Total funding (d) = (a)+(b)+ (c)	Co-financing rate (e)1= (a)/(d)	For information	
						EIB contributions	Other funding
Priority Axis 1 (public costs)	32.173.670	10.160.106	0	42.333.776	76,00%	0	1.480.500
Priority Axis 2 (public costs)	27.577.433	8.708.663	0	36.286.096	76,00%	0	1.269.000
Priority Axis 3 (public costs)	32.173.670	10.160.106	0	42.333.776	76,00%	0	1.480.500
Priority Axis 4 – TA (public costs)	5.867.538	3.159.444	0	9.026.982	65,00%	0	270.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>97.792.311</b>	<b>32.188.319</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>129.980.630</b>	<b>75,24%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.500.000</b>

## 6 PROGRAMMING AND ACCOMPANYING EVALUATION PROCESSES

As already indicated in the introduction details of the programming, concomitant processes are set out in the present chapter.

The partner states of the programme commissioned an expert to carry out the **Ex-ante-Evaluation** of the programme.

Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 defines the objectives of the Ex-ante-Evaluation of the Operational Programmes. With regard to these aims the ex-ante-evaluator of the present programme was asked to find answers to the following questions:

- + Does the programme represent an appropriate strategy to meet the challenges confronting the region or sector?
- + Is the strategy well defined with clear objectives and priorities and can those objectives be realistically achieved with the financial resources allocated to the different priorities?
- + Is the strategy coherent with regional, national and Community policies?
- + Are appropriate indicators identified for the objectives and can these indicators and their targets form the basis for future monitoring and evaluation of performance?
- + What will be the impact of the strategy in quantified terms?
- + Are implementation systems appropriate to deliver the objectives of the programme?

The Ex-ante Evaluation was performed adopting a participatory approach aiming at the pro-active involvement of different actors, and a dialogue-oriented relationship among the evaluator and the various stakeholders of the programme. The assessment of the various drafts of the programme document and the intensive discussions on the findings of the evaluation in the meetings of the Task Force ensured a close cooperation and an effective dialogue with the Task Force (TF) as well as the other experts involved in the programming process.

As a result of this mutual commitment of the evaluator and Task Force members as well as of the work group members that drafted the present document, all recommendations and suggestions provided by the evaluator all along the programming process were thoroughly discussed and mostly taken on board in the document. The evaluation process was characterised by an effective dialogue and feedback and adequate information on all sides, i.e. TF members, drafting team, desk officer of EC and stakeholders.

**The main findings of the Ex-ante-Evaluation are set out below<sup>21</sup>:**

### **Overall strategy and programme rationale**

In the final release of the Operational Programme (OP), following the intensive discussion within the Task Force and with the evaluator, the strategic overall logic was considerably improved. A scenario dimension was introduced into the programme rationale and links between the analysis of the coopera-

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<sup>21</sup> Summary of the main findings of the Ex-ante Evaluation (2007), carried out in the framework of the Alpine Space 2007-2013 programming process.

tion area and the programme objectives and strategy were provided, clarifying in a realistic and effective way the actual basis of the programme rationale.

The global goal appears to be coherent and complete taking into account the need for contributing to the achievement of Lisbon and Gothenburg agenda and the overall objectives of cohesion policy in its original approach, correctly positioning this transnational programme among the full range of regional and cross border instruments.

The final version of the OP has been considerably improved particularly providing links between SWOT Analysis, main challenges, programme objectives, priorities and cohesion guidelines. Weaknesses still exist about the quantification of targets at programme level.

The limited financial dimension of this programme and the difficulties encountered in quantification of baselines may justify the absence of a quantification of targets at this strategic level. Nevertheless an effort is recommended in order to establish during the implementation phase a collecting and processing data system in order to monitor not only projects' performances but also the situation in the cooperation area as a whole, and programme objectives' progresses and achievements.

In this context priorities are clear and the list of possible activities consequent and concrete. Although the association between priority objectives, indicative actions and expected results is at the moment purely conjectural, it gives the opportunity to better foresee the actual implementation of actions. As a general remark the overall structure of objectives and indicative activities reached a good simplification after the extensive confrontation along the programming process, and the indicators system gave a valuable contribution to this clearness. Some unbalances and potentials for confusions still appear, particularly considering financial breakdown by categories, but they shouldn't compromise the achievement of the objectives, if a proper flexibility will be applied in the implementation phase.

### **Synergies and complementarities with other policies**

The content of the Operational Programme appears to be generally consistent with the NSRFs<sup>22</sup> of the single member states. The drafting process of the Alpine Space Programme also involved several regional authorities of the cooperation area and the public consultations held on national and transnational level also gave the possibility for regions and other stakeholders to bring in their positions into the drafting process and to create synergies e.g. with regional programmes.

### **Indicator system and measurability of impacts**

An indicator system has been included in the final version of the OP marking a substantial improvement towards the previous version of the document. At priority level the indicator system is even too much detailed and cross references between different breakdown categories (project results, project activities, project partners, horizontal objectives...) may sort out in a rigid and inflexible grid. Given the difficulties in measuring baselines that still affect the overall quantification of programme targets, no proper result indicator is defined and problems will arise in measuring the actual contribution of priorities and actions to programme overall objectives achievement and impact evaluation. As recalled in other parts of the ex-ante-report a strong recommendation is given for setting up a systematic collecting and processing of context data and statistics at regional and cooperation area level in order to start up a more rigorous monitoring and evaluation system at programme level.

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<sup>22</sup> National Strategic Reference Frameworks

### Implementation system

The present management structure has overcome some difficulties encountered in the 2000-2006 programme, arising from an unclear definition of tasks and roles and from implementation problems such as double functions of persons being member in MC and SC. Merging of Steering Committee and Monitoring Committee into one Programme Committee responds to this problem.

Based on the experiences made in the INTERREG IIIB Programme the new programme strives for a higher quality and efficiency of programme structures and procedures thus allowing for optimism about continuous upgrading of quality of projects that will be funded.

The following table shall provide for an overview on which recommendations of the Ex-ante-Evaluation were taken into account and which were not including reasons for the respective decision of the programme partners.

<b>Observations and recommendations of the expert</b>	<b>Consideration in the programme document</b>
Lack of figures and quantitative appreciation of the described phenomena in the situation description and SWOT analysis	No changes were made in the OP as such figures and statistics are very difficult to collect and process. The evaluator took note of this opinion but nevertheless recommended to make an effort during the implementation phase in order to set up a monitoring system providing coordinated and homogeneous data at regional and cooperation area level was taken on board.
Attention to entrepreneurship	Included in the final version of the programme
Encouraging the dissemination and enlargement of existing and functioning networks	Included in the final version of the programme
<b>Observations and recommendations of the expert</b>	<b>Consideration in the programme document</b>
Possibility to make use of new regulatory tools for transnational cooperation	No specific reference has been made in the OP to the EGTC that was meant with this observation of the evaluator as it shall be up to the project holders to decide on the best way on how to organise transnational cooperation. Programme bodies and partner states, however, will support project holders in their intentions and provide for sufficient information on the respective possibilities.
Guiding principles need to be evaluated if set up as requirement for application	Included in the final version of the programme is the requirement for all projects to be consistent with the paradigm of sustainability.
Guiding principle on innovation not alternative to specific ori-	Fully included in the final version

ented measures	of the programme, with a clearer orientation of priority 1.
Uncertainty of the overall logical framework and design of the strategic goals chain	Improved in the final version of the programme. Links between SWOT analysis, strategic objectives and priorities are now explicit.
Overlapping and vagueness of priorities objectives	Improved in the final version of the OP. The structure of priorities is overall satisfactory.
Indicator system	Indicator system was reworked in the final version of the programme.

The full text of the Ex-ante-Evaluation-report can be found on the programme's website: [www.alpinespace.org](http://www.alpinespace.org).

The partner states of the programme also commissioned an expert to carry out a **strategic environmental assessment** of the programme.

According to Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) of the present programme and the finalisation of this programme were undertaken in the following steps:

- + scoping of the environmental report, i.e. determination of scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the report);
- + preparation of the environmental report;
- + consultations of environmental authorities and public;
- + taking account of the environmental report and the results of the consultations in drafting the operational programme;
- + notification of decision;
- + monitoring (to be carried out during programme implementation).

The programme partners asked the expert carrying out the SEA to take note of the handbook on SEA for cohesion policy 2007-2013 set up in the framework of the GRDP (Greening Regional Development Programmes) project. As recommended in this document, the environmental assessment of the programme followed the worst case principle and applied a long-term perspective. Thus, this principle was the basis of the evaluation to make sure that the main task of the strategic environmental assessment – to identify possible negative impacts at an early stage – is fulfilled. It is worth mentioning that for this reason the results of the SEA might appear more negative than findings of SEA applied to other comparable Structural Funds programmes. The programme partners, however, have been striving to take the findings of the SEA into consideration when setting up the present document. Based on the findings of the SEA-experts the objectives defined in the description of the priorities were reconsidered and partly reformulated, the same applies for the fields of actions, indicative activities and target areas.

Regarding the monitoring of the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the programme according to article 10 of the above-quoted SEA-directive the SEA-experts suggested a set of indicators to be used. These indicators shall constitute the basis for further elaboration and adaptation by the programme to be used as an effective tool of project steering and assessment from the early

stages of OP implementation. Depending on the nature of the interventions, qualitative assessments will be sufficient. Where necessary also quantitative data of a reasonable detail will be included in the assessment.

A detailed monitoring will be carried out at the latest at midterm of the programming period, when for the first time in the life cycle of the programme major environmental effects should be observable and as at that time it is still possible to take remedial action at the strategy level of the OP.

These monitoring activities will be carried out either by the Joint Technical Secretariat or by external experts. Subject of the monitoring shall be all objectives of the programme priorities, but special focus shall be put on those objectives which are likely to produce important negative effects on environment.

Appropriate management arrangements shall ensure at all levels of programme implementation, that – beyond the legally required absolute minimum standards – possible effects which are unsustainable or unfavourable to environment, especially as concerns impacts on climate change, the maintaining of biodiversity and ecosystems, and the drawing on natural resources, are avoided or kept as low as possible. The programme's positive effects and potentials for synergies in the sense of maximising its contribution to an environmentally sustainable development shall be exploited at best and, where possible, be strengthened.

It is envisaged – by using the INTERACT platform - to have an exchange of best practises and information with other programmes on territorial co-operation with the aim to ensure a harmonised proceeding of project design, assessment and monitoring from an environmental impact point of view. Depending on the results of these consultations, the partner states will set up a task force to agree on details and further steps to be taken to develop and strengthen the programme's environmental management arrangements.

**In the following the main findings of the SEA are set out<sup>23</sup>:**

Within the three priorities of the Alpine Space Operational Programme 2007-2013, a total of 14 objectives were assessed. Of these 14 objectives five are likely lead to medium or high effects on various environmental issues. These objectives are part of Priority 1 Competitiveness and attractiveness of the Alpine Space and 3 Environment and risk prevention. Negative development on part of the environmental issues is expected because of probably increased building activity/and or increased volume of traffic, protection against natural hazards and particular aspects of renewable energies. Mitigation and compensation measures will have a high relevance to reduce the environmental effects as good as possible.

Nine objectives have slight negative, no or positive impacts on the environmental issues. Mitigation and compensation measures are also of high relevance in these cases in order to keep environmental pressures as low as possible as well as measures to strengthen positive impacts.

In summary it can be concluded that overall priority 2 Accessibility and Communication has the fewest negative environmental impacts on the environmental issues as a whole, since only from one objective increase of traffic could be expected and following slight negative impacts are indicated, whereas all other either have no significant impact or might actually have positive effects by mitigating negative effects of traffic flows or developing appropriate sustainable and innovative mobility solutions.

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<sup>23</sup> Extract of the strategic environmental assessment (SEA), (2007), carried out in the framework of the Alpine Space 2007-2013 programming process.

In priority 1 and 3 both objectives with high negative effects on the environmental issues and objectives with positive impacts can be found. In each case positive effects are the result for the population whereas negative effects on natural resources could occur. Mitigation measures for the negative effects of these two priorities are of great importance.

Interrelationships and cumulative effects between the environmental issues of one object as well as between the different objectives are treated in the SEA-report. Effects on interrelationships between Priorities 1 and 2 are not expected because they have different target areas.

In order to decrease negative effects of the programme mitigation measures had to be developed, which are summarised in the SEA-report. Negative impacts on the specific environmental issues can be avoided by careful selection of projects respecting the addressed mitigation measures.

One major purpose of the Strategic Environmental Assessment is the consideration of reasonable alternatives. For this purpose two more objectives, according to the draft of the programme of August the 14<sup>th</sup> which was subject to the public consultation were presented the SEA-report. They had to be taken into account for the final evaluation. In correspondence to the assessment results of the first draft of the environmental report some objectives were alternated or even left out during the elaboration of the final version of the Operational Programme. In return others were added. In the SEA-report these alterations of objectives are also described.

Overall the cooperation of the Task Force and the evaluation process within the SEA led to a constant improvement and discussion concerning sustainability and mitigation of negative impacts on the environment. Feedback between the drafting team and the Strategic Environmental Assessment team as well as resonances from the consultations led to significant changes in the programme which can be appreciated on the part of the concerned environmental issues. Therefore the process can be seen as successful and correspondent to the recommended approach to ensure iterative planning, as suggested in guidance like the handbook on SEA for cohesion policy 2007-2013.

During the implementation of the programme unexpected negative environmental effects should be monitored. This monitoring is based on project assessment by the respective programme bodies as well as on the observations of national authorities and reported to the programme. Remedial actions by the programme have to be implemented within the scope of its instruments.

The following table shall provide for an overview of the **milestones of the programme preparation process** (from February 2006 to March 2008).

Alpine Space 2007-2013 Operational Programme

Activities/milestones	2006												2007	
	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	
1st Task Force meeting (selection of experts), <i>Munich</i>	22.02.													
Contracting of experts/clarification of tasks		03.03.												
SWOT, OP-strategy and priorities - first analysis of relevant documents, by experts		31.03.												
Involvement/Information exchange with EC, done continuously by MA			04.04.											
<b>Coordination with national positions, economic and social partners</b> in the responsibility of TF and WG-members, to be done continuously			07.04.											
2nd Task Force meeting (kick-off with facilitator), <i>Rome</i>			07.04.											
SWOT, OP-strategy and priorities - further elaborations on basis of discussion of TF-meeting in Rome by experts			21.04.											
1st meeting Work Group II (financial issues), <i>Salzburg</i>			27.04.											
1st meeting Work Group III (procedures, structures), <i>Salzburg</i>			27.04.											
1st meeting Work Group I (OP-strategy, priorities), <i>Salzburg</i>			28.04.											
SWOT, OP-strategy, priorities - first draft of <b>first 3 chapters of OP = SWOT-inventory, cornerstones/proposals on strategy/objectives/priorities</b> , by <b>WG I &amp; SWOT-experts</b> , consolidated document to be submitted to TF				16.05.										
2nd meeting WG II (papers on "FLC", "2ndLC", "MS&financial flows", updates on budget issues in MS, open questions, other WG), <i>Munich</i>					17.05.									
2nd meeting WG III (discussion on draft papers on project generation, application, evaluation a. implementation), <i>Munich</i>					18.05.									
Ex-ante Evaluation: first assessment of OP-strategy and priorities; on basis of ongoing exchange of data/info with WG I and SWOT-experts					19.05.									
SEA (Scoping, assessment of objectives, strategies)			10.04.		19.05.									
3rd Task Force meeting (discussion on appointment of MA for next OP, discussion/decision on first draft of first 3 OP-chapters, information about first results of WG II and III), <i>Munich</i>					26.05.									
<b>Rework of first 3 OP-chapters by WG I</b> , taking into account input from Ex-ante Evaluator and TF, draft of <b>chapter 4 on implementing provisions</b> and <b>chapter 5 on financial provisions</b> , taking into account TF-discussion, <b>by WG II and III and submission of consolidated document to TF</b>						07.06. 12.06. for WG I								
Summit Event, to be used for <b>involvement of key actors by presentation of priorities of future OP</b>							19./20.06.							
4th Task Force meeting (discussion of drafted parts of OP), <i>Milan</i>						21.06.								
2nd meeting WG I (discussion feedback of Summit Event, TF-meeting, results of WG II & III, SWOT, proposal for indicators), <i>Milan</i>						22.06.								
3rd meeting WG II (papers on "FLC", "2ndLC", "MS&financial flows", updates on budget issues in MS, open questions, other WG), <i>Milan</i>						22.06.								
3rd meeting WG III (discussion on re-drafted papers on project generation, application, evaluation and implementation, discussion of programme bodies), <i>Zurich</i>							06.07.							

Alpine Space 2007-2013 Operational Programme

Activities/milestones	2006												2007	
	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	
Further elaborations on <b>chapters 1-5</b> (implementing/financial provisions) by WG-members and experts						13.07.								
Meeting between EC and delegation composed of MA and TF-members (future MA, presentation of OP), <i>Brussels</i>						13.07.								
5th Task Force meeting (discussion on draft OP), <i>Bled</i>						20.07.								
3rd meeting WG I (draft chapters 1-3, indicators), <i>Bled</i>						19/21.07.								
4th meeting WG II (papers on "FLC", "2ndLC", "MS&financial flows", updates on budget issues in MS, open questions, other WG), <i>Venice</i>						27.07.								
<b>Revision of OP-draft by all WG and relevant experts</b>						31.07.								
<b>Compilation of all chapters</b> into one single document by MA/JTS							04.08.							
Possibility of comments of TF, EC, Alpine Convention							09.08.							
Ex-ante Evaluation of draft OP (objectives, priorities, indicators, procedures, structures), on basis of ongoing exchange of info/data with all WG and SWOT-experts							11.08.							
Elaboration of SEA-report							11.08.							
SEA, public consultation (to be used as public consultation of key players as well; public can comment on OP and SEA-report)							14.08.		22.09.					
6th Task Force meeting (discussion of OP-draft, Ex-ante Evaluation, indicators, public consultation), <i>Vienna</i>								15.09.						
4th meeting of WG I (results of public consultation, improvements to be done in chapters 1-3 of OP, indicators, categories of intervention), <i>Vienna</i>										12.10.				
<b>Analysis of outcomes of public consultation regarding SEA-report</b> and proposal on how to deal with comments by SEA-experts										13.10.				
<b>Analysis of outcomes of public consultation regarding OP content</b> by MA and proposal on how to deal with observations										13.10.				
5th meeting of WG II (FLC, 2ndLC, MS&financial flows, financial table of OP) and 4th meeting of WG III (programme bodies, papers on project generation, application, evaluation, implementation), <i>Vienna</i>										13.10.				
Common meeting of WG-members together with <b>TF-members and experts</b> to discuss on how to <b>deal with comments/observations on OP</b> submitted in public consultation, final review on all chapters of the programme document, financial tables, <i>Paris</i>										20.10.				
Rework of OP taking into account results of TF meeting by drafting team (MA, JTS, speaker of WG I)										27.10.				
Written consultation of TF on reworked version of OP											6.11.			
Meeting between EC and delegation composed of TF-members, MA, JTS (discussion of draft OP), <i>Brussels</i>											13.11.			
TF meeting discussing improvement potentials in the light of EC remarks on pre-final draft; Discussion on co-funding rates and financial breakdown, <i>Vienna</i>											22.11.			
Rework of OP taking into account results of EC and TF meeting											21.12.			
Adoption of OP by TF												19.01.		
Finalisation of Ex-ante report												08.01.		
Finalisation of SEA-report												26.01.		
Finalisation of OP by MA/JTS													02.02.	
Adoption of OP on national level														Feb.07
<b>Submission of OP to EC</b>														End Feb.07

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