For applicants

## ↳ What will be funded?

### Programme priorities

In 2021-2027, the Interreg Alpine Space programme co-finances projects contributing to four main objectives or priorities. Each priority can be declined in specific objectives, which define the direction in which we want to develop the Alpine region.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Priority 1 | Priority 2 | Priority 3 | Priority 4 |
| Climate resilient and green Alpine region | Carbon neutral and resource sensitive Alpine region | Innovation and digitalisation supporting a green Alpine region | Cooperatively managed and developed Alpine region |
| SO “Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches” | SO “Promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions” | SO “Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies” | Action “Enhance institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, as well as other territorial strategies |
| SO “Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution” | SO “Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy” | SO “Reaping the benefits of digitalisation for citizens, companies, research organisations and public authorities” |

For a detailed description of contents of each priority and specific objectives, including information on the main challenges, type of actions and the expected contribution to EUSALP, please refer to the [Interreg programme](https://www.alpine-space.eu/about/post2020/asp/20210713_final_draft_ip_colour_code.pdf).

### Priority 1: Climate resilient and green Alpine region

The strong effects of climate change challenge inter-relations within natural, economic, and societal systems. Moreover, pressure is high on the rich Alpine biodiversity. This particular context calls for urgent action.

#### ↳ Specific objective 1: Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches

The signs of climate change require urgent action. The consequences of climate change in the Alpine region are expected to be manifold and represent a considerable challenge for Alpine nature, economy, and society. Climate change will lead to an increase in natural hazards that pose an explicit threat to settlements, infrastructure, livelihoods, and human lives in mountainous regions as well as in the forelands of the Alps. From a transnational Alpine perspective, the inter-relations within the natural, economic, and societal systems are of special interest. The variety and the extent of the impacts caused by climate change in the different Alpine regions are yet uncertain in detail. Because of these uncertainties, the adaptive capacity of the Alpine region urgently needs to be strengthened. Solutions should be developed to cope with the impacts of climate change, to establish climate services and to foster the resilience of the Alpine region.

Therefore, the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027 will support the development of inter-regional and transnational frameworks, joint management approaches and services that foster risk prevention and disaster resilience in a comprehensive and sustainable way.

The programme is looking to promote **climate change adaptation-measures** in the Alpine region by the following indicative types of action:

1. Solutions and pilots to strengthen the preparedness and adaptive capacity of the Alpine society, economy and nature to cope with the impacts of climate change and establish climate services to foster the resilience of the Alpine region;
2. Solutions and pilot actions to bridge the gap between climate research and practical implementation and to integrate new research results into the adaptation practice;
3. Information exchange and knowledge transfer at a transnational/regional/local level to adapt to the impacts of climate change and to raise awareness among experts, policy makers and citizens;
4. Methodologies and tools aiming at measuring and monitoring the specific impacts of climate change to the lithosphere-biosphere-hydrosphere-cryosphere.

Together with these adaption measures, the programme will also promote measures for **risk prevention and disaster resilience** by:

1. Preventive, integrative and strategic planning measures in the fields of spatial planning and risk management; disaster monitoring-, warning- and response- systems at different territorial levels concerning all kind of natural hazards and fostering Nature Based Solutions;
2. Solutions and pilot activities for different types of territories in highly affected and exposed regions as well as exposed main communications axes and human settlements;
3. Skills and competences for policy makers and stakeholders at different policy levels to make better use of digitalisation in the field of risk prevention, risk management and climate change adaptation;
4. Participatory concepts, pilot projects in risk management as well as communication measures aiming at raising awareness and preparedness among policy makers as well as citizens;
5. Solutions and pilot activities to set up coordination structures for the sustainable management of multifunctional protective forests and the establishment of Nature Based Solutions.

#### ↳ Specific objective 2: Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution

The Alpine region marks a transnational biodiversity hotspot, even though it is situated within one of the most densely inhabited and connected areas in Europe. Alpine biodiversity and ecological connectivity have been under pressure for many decades, especially since the 1950s. Human activities, land use, exploitation of natural resources and pollution lead to habitat fragmentation and loss of biodiversity and cultural landscapes.

The Interreg Alpine Space ppogramme will focus on the joint and strategic development of transnational Green and Blue multifunctional infrastructure. Green and blue multifunctional infrastructures (GBI) offer integrated solutions that protect biodiversity and support the sustainable valorisation of ecosystem services (e.g. water, clean air). The programme will foster transnational cooperation, knowledge-exchange and reinforced research on the concrete impacts of climate change on Alpine biodiversity, in both protected and other areas.

This important focus of the programme is expressed in the indicative types of actions that will be supported:

1. Pilot projects supporting multifunctional Green and Blue infrastructure-networks, Nature Based Solutions and innovative planning methodologies in order to strengthen Alpine biodiversity and ecosystem services, tailored for different territorial needs and taking into account their impacts on social, cultural and economic systems;
2. Transnational solutions and pilot projects on sustainable land use management, climate-friendly settlement development, soil protection and the sustainable valorisation of natural and cultural heritage to reduce biotope fragmentation and to support the connectivity of ecosystems;
3. Transnational cooperation, knowledge-exchange and reinforced research on the concrete impacts of climate change on Alpine biodiversity as well as the impacts of mitigation and adaptation measures for different types of territories;
4. Integrated solutions and pilot activities to cope with the impacts of energy management, hydropower, and energy grids on ecosystems and biodiversity;
5. Measures of communication and awareness raising among different political levels and citizens in favour of ecosystem services and Green and Blue infrastructure strategies.

Explore the results of similar projects financed in 2014-2020!

### Priority 2: Carbon neutral and resource sensitive Alpine region

The European Union aims at becoming the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. To reach the targets, the efforts must be increased in the next years. The ambition and the potential of the Alpine region are high.

#### ↳ Specific objective 1: Promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions

Energy efficiency measures must be increased in the Alpine region to meet EU climate change targets. Energy efficiency measures reduce the amount of energy needed and help lowering greenhouse gas emissions, thereby contributing to carbon neutrality. The two most energy-intensive sectors in Europe are mobility/transport and the building sector. Innovative measures should go beyond efficiency to foster new concepts of well-being oriented towards sufficiency as well as “post-carbon” lifestyles.

The Alpine region is a suitable laboratory for the elaboration and testing of innovative, cooperative approaches in the field of energy efficiency. The Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027 will contribute to the transition to post-carbon and sufficiency-oriented solutions in the transnational context of the Alpine region. Decoupling economic growth from resource consumption remains a huge challenge. It should be addressed together with energy efficiency targets and the further transition to low energy consumption and circular economy approaches in the following fields:

* Building/housing/residential sector
* Green/clean/soft mobility and transport e.g. connected to tourism and leisure time activities as well as specifically public passenger and freight transport
* Integrative land-use-policies and energy-based spatial planning solutions to support efficient and synergetic use of energy

The programme is looking to support the following indicative types of action:

1. Innovative solutions and concrete pilot actions that foster sufficiency-oriented-post-carbon lifestyles as well as cross- sectoral approaches for different types of territories, taking into account the sustainable implementation of new energy-resources;
2. Development of skills and competences for policy makers and stakeholders at different policy levels as well as energy communities to support the transition from efficiency to sufficiency and post-carbon oriented approaches;
3. Solutions, knowledge exchange, good practices and R&D activities focussing on the transition from energy efficiency to sufficiency-oriented approaches considering Multi-Energy-System-Integration and the sustainable use of renewables;
4. Cooperative and sustainable solutions to improve energy poverty policies concerning adequate and healthy heating, cooling, lighting and energy-to-power-appliances to enhance social inclusion, social innovation and encourage common policies for the Alpine region;
5. Knowledge transfer, pilot activities, as well as communication measures towards different policy levels and the citizens/consumers in order to foster the paradigm shift towards sufficiency- and post-carbon approaches.

#### ↳ Specific objective 2: Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy

Fostering circular economy is one of the main thrusts of the European Green Deal. Circular economy refers to sustainable systems that treat resources as particularly valuable. The principles of avoiding "waste" and trying to keep resources in use for as long as possible are relevant for the entire production-cycle. Circular economy approaches appear to be very suitable for supporting the needs of sustainable economic development, climate-protection, and social adaptation in the Alpine region.

The Alpine region is characterized by a high potential for natural resources. Circular-economy-approaches will show great impact and foster the reduction of the overall material use as well as the implementation of innovative solutions and new technologies. The Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027 will take a step further and link the circular economy approach with bio-economy and other green economy-concepts. Besides, it will support the development of closed material cycles in key sectors such as Alpine tourism, mobility, energy, construction and housing and related sectors. To support this economic transformation, consumers and their behaviours have to be addressed. Finally, circular economy approaches strengthen the economic development in rural as well as in urban regions.

The programme is looking to support the following indicative types of action:

1. Circular/green/bio-economy solutions to facilitate the development and implementation of circular and green economy-approaches among different actors with a focus on the Alpine key resources and key sectors abovementioned;
2. Good practices exchange and pilot activities supporting inter-regional circular economy approaches that promote bio-economy, the use of indigenous biological and regional products and waste reduction specifically in the abovementioned key sectors;
3. "Transnational value chain” solutions based on regional assets and resources, competences and needs referring to the EU-key-concept of “strategic value chains”, supporting industrial and innovation stakeholders in the Alpine region;
4. Skills and competences of stakeholders at all policy levels and in the relevant business sectors to pave the way towards the implementation of circular, green economy as well as bio-economy approaches including the set-up of indicators and monitoring systems;
5. Solutions and pilot activities dealing with communication, capacity building, political framing approaches and awareness raising for stakeholders at different policy and implementation levels as well as citizens/consumers to support a better understanding of the transformation processes needed;
6. Solutions and pilot activities supporting the development of clusters specialised in circular and green economy and bio-economy that foster research, innovation, implementation and cooperation particularly in the abovementioned key sectors.

Explore the results of similar projects financed in 2014-2020!

### Priority 3: Innovation and digitalisation supporting a green Alpine region

Transnational cooperation on innovation and the uptake of advanced technologies is of key importance to foster a climate resilient, resource sensitive and inclusive Alpine region. In particular, digitalisation offers opportunities to increase social sustainability and green innovation.

#### ↳ Specific objective 1: Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

The programme aims to improve research and innovation capacities in the Alpine region. Cooperation on innovation capacities can strengthen the programme's impact in particular thematic fields by increasing the innovation potential of Alpine actors. It also contributes to reduce the polarisation between urban and rural regions by improving inter-regional cooperation.

At the same time, the programme should further ensure the involvement of diverse actors from research, innovation, academia, private sectors, public sector, and civil society. Beyond result-oriented innovation, the focus is also on innovation for processes and aiming at reducing territorial imbalances. This approach should also support social innovation and its application for instance to services of general interest, sustainable tourism or mobility. Clusters and innovation hubs can continue to benefit from transnational cooperation. They are indeed key players supporting the concrete deployment of innovation services, leading to innovation diffusion and increased innovation capacities of the regional ecosystems.

Given the programme´s mission, innovation includes a “green” character of activities, impacts of projects as well as methods and practices of project management.

The programme is looking to support the following indicative types of action:

1. Developing or testing joint solutions and actions to support innovation and uptake of advanced technologies. These activities should involve policy-level actors and have an open and inclusive character, for example in the following areas:
* shaping an innovation ecosystem that builds on the natural and the cultural heritage of the area, supporting the development of sustainable and innovative value chains. The value chains should involve the relevant actors, including individuals and social stakeholders, to promote and explore solutions for social innovation, eco-innovation and green economy as a trigger for regional development;
* fostering the innovation capacities, addressing innovation gaps on a transnational level in non-urban areas, reinforcing urban-rural as well as rural-rural linkages in the field of innovation, fostering access of rural businesses to the urban innovation support services and diffusion of innovation support services;
* supporting clusters and innovation hubs-cooperation in different territories, as well as transnational value chains relevant for regional smart specialisation strategies (“S3”), focusing particularly on urban-rural links;
* supporting experimental models and “green” start-ups to better address innovation topics in the Alpine region, involving greening practices building upon the natural and cultural heritage and knowledge of the actors in the Alpine region;
* Testing ideas for transnational innovation activities and entrepreneurship with a view to reducing territorial imbalances in all sectors, processes and ecosystems in the Alpine region, as well as solutions for identifying and mitigating adverse social and environmental impacts;
* promoting and exploring application of social innovation to services of general interest, mobility, health and medical innovations, sustainable tourism;
* develop and test transnational training programmes to improve skills for green and digital transition and contributing to broaden innovation capacities.
1. Testing and implementing transnational networking activities, networking tools, advisory services and exchange platforms for example to:
* foster social and process innovation based on the natural and cultural heritage of the Alpine region.
* connect regional innovation ecosystems (e.g. to develop joint solutions for innovation diffusion)
1. Supporting the coordination between innovation activities and policies and other policy domains of highest relevance in the Alpine region.

#### ↳ Specific objective 2: Reaping the benefits of digitalisation for citizens, companies, research organisations and public authorities

Digitalisation offers opportunities to address joint challenges that are particularly prominent in mountainous areas such as the Alpine region. New digital tools can be developed to increase resilience of Alpine regions and mitigate the impacts of accessibility problems and remoteness coupled with negative demographic situations in many regions. Due to the emergence of COVID-19, the need to support digital transition in these fields in an inclusive way in all regions became even clearer. This has created a «window of opportunity» for strengthening and making use of digitalisation to support life and work of citizens to enforce sustainable development even in the face of external challenges. Application of digital solutions can pave a way to a more open, inclusive, and participative society and citizen-empowerment that is based on cooperation between different actors such as authorities, citizens, and businesses.

Digitalisation can be used to support social changes and behaviour, lifestyle, and leisure shifts that support more sustainable communities. In the context of the private sector, it also facilitates the implementation of greening practices by businesses and associations as well as ensuring consideration concerning the exclusion of negative impacts of digitalisation on the environment.

There are diverse ways in which territorial cooperation can bring about the benefits of digitalisation. Projects can explore new and flexible opportunities for working and provision of products and services. They can also involve advanced innovative digital solutions such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, Internet of Things and Alpine-wide interoperability of data. It is particularly important that activities tackle the digital divide between less and more advanced regions as well as between more and less fluent users.

The programme is looking to support the following indicative types of action:

1. Pilot projects, activities and joint solutions to harness the benefits of digitalisation in different fields to bring about socially and environmentally sustainable change. For example:
* better addressing the response to sustainable development efforts, contributing to solutions for climate resilience, resource sensitivity, green and carbon neutrality as well as ensuring inclusiveness and social accessibility to these solutions for a just transition;
* supporting flexible SGI provision in all types of areas and for all types of users with regards to e-health/smart health, e-government as well as telemedicine;
* supporting e-learning and new working structures in order to provide more attractive living possibilities in remote areas to different social groups;
* supporting business development opportunities, product and service development, strengthening of regional value chains and regional marketing, with a view to reducing territorial imbalances;
* contributing to the elaboration and implementation of Smart Villages and Smart Cities concepts;
* accompanying SMEs and associations in their digital transformation, to increase environmental sustainability.
1. Integration of digitalisation as a transversal policy issue: supporting coordination between digitalisation activities and policies and other policy domains of highest relevance in the Alpine regions and in response to sustainable development efforts, demographic trends and increase in well-being, particularly focusing on the following policy issues:
* digitalisation-related security risks such as cyber security, privacy, data-protection;
* digital divide between regions as well as between more and less fluent users.
1. Activities to facilitate networking activities, networking tools, advisory services and exchange platforms in order to increase territorial cohesion and/or social inclusion in the Alpine region, for example by:
	* setting up or supporting transnational network structures and platforms for sharing exchange of good practices and knowledge with regards to policy solutions supporting digitalisation;
	* setting up or supporting Digital Innovation Hubs;
2. Common data collection, indicators and monitoring systems harmonized across borders, update and sustainability of data collection and monitoring systems.

Explore the results of similar projects financed in 2014-2020!

### Priority 4: Cooperatively managed and developed Alpine region

#### Action: Enhance institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, as well as other territorial strategies

The Alpine region is characterised by a long tradition of international and inter-regional cooperation on governmental and non-governmental level.

This Interreg-specific action offers the possibility to deepen cooperation and governance structures in the Alpine region. The Interreg Alpine Space programme aims at further clarifying, deepening, supporting, and improving cooperation structures, with a particular focus on the professionalization of governance and stakeholder structures as well as on preparing the ground for innovative projects and a stronger involvement of the civil society. This should contribute to improved synergies, supporting EUSALP in developing an appropriate governance system.

Furthermore, the actions of the Interreg specific objective also aim at addressing and involving further relevant cooperation frameworks within the Alpine region – from professional structures like the Alpine Convention and to Alpine wide governance initiatives interested in the further enhancement of Alpine regions´ governance structures, as specified in the indicative types of actions below.

Related types of action:

1. Setting up transnational frameworks, platforms, networks and mechanisms in the field of governance to enhance cooperation between Alpine stakeholders including the mapping of resources, potentials and processes as well as defining innovative implementation pathways and structures;
2. Developing and implementing solutions to enhance cooperation and organisation processes within the EUSALP governance structure;
3. Developing solutions and pilot projects for communication measures and tools to support multi-level governance, reaping the benefits of digitalization;
4. Supporting capacity building and trainings for public authorities and stakeholders at different policy and governance-levels in order to adapt to new challenges (e.g. digitalization, professionalization, process-innovation);
5. Developing tailor-made strategies and solutions for the integration of and communication with stakeholders at different policy and governance-levels, as well as with the civil society – also including “the next generation” (youth) – and non-institutional actors;
6. Fostering and implementing knowledge transfer, exchange and capitalisation activities addressing the major governance aspects and key stakeholders of the Alpine region;
7. Fostering the use of available funding instruments for governance support and EUSALP implementation;
8. Developing and implementing joint solutions for monitoring, reporting and evaluating multilevel and transnational policy instruments;
9. Implementing joint pilot projects for the design, testing, up-scaling, comparison and evaluation of innovations in the field of public administration;
10. Developing mechanisms for the uptake and implementation of multilevel and transnational governance.

### Cooperation area

The cooperation area of the Interreg Alpine Space programme covers the Alps and their surrounding lowlands. This diverse area at the heart of the European Union represents an attractive region to work and live in, for 70 million inhabitants, covering a surface of 390.000 km². It spreads across the borders of seven countries that share geographical and environmental characteristics and challenges.

These states differ considerably in terms of culture and economy. This cultural and natural wealth and heritage, at the crossroads between European cultures and languages (Germanic, Roman and Slavic) made of the Alps a popular touristic destination. It is also very diverse in terms of economic. The Interreg Alpine Space programme area covers some of the most important European metropolitan areas as well as remote rural areas, which explains its diversity in terms of economic activities and demographic situations.

The Alpine region is affected by issues related to its mountainous environment and diverse culture (accessibility, a rich and sensitive biodiversity and environment, economic disparities) but also by global trends such as climate change, globalisation, and digitalisation. These challenges call for cooperation and joint solutions to rethink our economies, societies, and development strategies.

MAP

The programme area for the Alpine Space Programme 2021-2027 comprises the following territories:

Austria: the whole territory

France - NUTS 2: Alsace, Franche-Comté, Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur, Rhône-Alpes

Germany – NUTS 2: Oberbayern, Niederbayern, Oberpfalz, Oberfranken, Mittelfranken, Unterfranken, Schwaben; Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Freiburg, Tübingen

Italy – NUTS 2: Lombardia, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Provincia Autonoma di Trento, Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano / Bozen, Valle d'Aosta / Vallée d'Aoste, Piemonte, Liguria

Liechtenstein: the whole territory

Slovenia: the whole territory

Switzerland: the whole territory.

## ~~↳ When can you apply? (calls)~~

## ↳ How to apply?

Applications for funding can be submitted during calls for project proposals. Calls for project proposals are opened every 12 to 18 months, with the publication of terms of reference describing the programme's expectations in terms of content. The programme will co-finance both small-scale and classic projects.

Applications for small-scale projects (12 to 18 months, max. €750,000 ERDF) can be submitted on an ongoing basis, and decisions on project selection are taken twice a year.

Calls for classic projects (max. 36 months) are open for about two months. Classic projects are selected following a two-step application procedure: in the first step, applicants submit a short version of the application form via the Joint Electronic Monitoring System (JEMS). Promising proposals will be invited to submit a detailed application form.

In the handbook for project generation and application, project applicants can find information related to the process of project generation and application as well as practical guidance on the programme’s quality expectations towards project proposals:

* Quality requirements and contents
* Project generation
* Who can participate
* Funding principle
* What can be co-financed? The programme´s eligibility rules
* Project application: the two-step application procedure
* National requirements
* Project selection: procedure and criteria
* Project net revenues

We invite interested parties to:

* Read our cooperation programme carefully, as all proposals are required to identify the priority and specific objective they will be contributing to;
* Discover the results delivered by the programme in the [output library](https://www.alpine-space.eu/project-results/project-websites/project-outputs-library). Another source of interest are the ARPAF projects whose results are accessible from the [EUSALP website](http://alpine-region.eu/);
* Get in touch with the contact point in your country (ACP) for more information, support in your partner search or advice on the consistency between your project idea and the cooperation programme;
* Read our handbook for project generation and application as well as the FAQ section of the programme website.

### When to apply? Calls for project proposals 2021-2027

Small-scale projects: ongoing submission

#### Indicative deadlines for submitting proposals:

* 2021, week 8 and week 34
* 2022, week 8 and week 34
* 2023, week 8 and week 34
* 2024, week 8 and week 34
* 2025, week 8 and week 34
* 2026, week 8 and week 34

Classic projects

#### Indicative deadlines for submitting proposals:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Expressions of interest (step 1) | Application forms (step 2) |
| Call 1 | 15 December 2021 | March – April 2022 |
| Call 2 | 15 December 2022 | March – April 2023 |
| Call 3 |  |  |
| Call 4 |  |  |
| Call 5 |  |  |

## ↳ FAQ

Frequently asked questions from applicants and project partners on project generation and application are answered on this page. They complete or explicit the information of the handbook for project generation and application.

You cannot find the answer to your question in either the handbook or the FAQ? Contact us!

#### What is an ideal number of partners in a project?

#### What is the role of observers and what is a good quality network of observers?

#### Where can I get information on projects that have already been funded?

#### What is the difference between an output and a deliverable?

#### Does the lead partner have the responsibility to collect and upload national requirements in the JEMS?

#### Does the programme co-finance infrastructure?

#### Which rules do apply if a private project participant intends to contract an affiliated organisation?

## ↳ National information

When applying for funding, project applicants should also observe some rules and submit some documents for the partner state in which they are located. You can find on this page a summary of these national requirements.

For more information on the application procedure in your national language, we invite you to visit the page dedicated to the Interreg Alpine Space programme in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia and Switzerland.

## ↳ Partner search

Classic projects shall involve at least six partners from four different countries of the programme area, and small-scale projects at least three partners from three different countries of the programme area.

Are you looking for an institution from a specific country or with a specific expertise to complete your project partnership?

* Get in touch with the contact point (ACP) in your country for support in your partner search
* Use the [keep.eu](https://keep.eu/) database to explore the institutions involved in Interreg projects across Europe since 2000. It will help you find a partner with the exact experience needed for your project. Learn more [here](https://keep.eu/learn-how-to-find-the-right-partner-for-a-project-in-keep-eu/).