

# Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027 - Public consultation

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## Introduction



## Voice your opinion!

Help us shape the new Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027. We are presenting you the latest draft of the programme and the study made on its expected impact on the environment.

We warmly invite you to provide your opinion on the programme overall structure and the objectives selected, and how they support the aim of preserving and valorising the unique environment of the Alpine region. Find below:

- [the further elaborated draft of the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027](#)
- [and the executive summary of the draft report on the strategic environmental assessment - SEA.](#)

The consultation is open from 13 July to 14 September 2020.

You can check the full questionnaire of this consultation [here](#). You will need approximately 15 to 30 minutes to contribute to the consultation, depending on the number of topics you choose to comment on. You can save your progress at any time and come back to it later by selecting "Save and continue" on the top right corner of each page.

The consultation is available in English language and we kindly invite you to provide your comments in English.

Thank you for your cooperation!  
The Interreg Alpine Space programme

### About:

Interreg Alpine Space is a European transnational cooperation programme for the Alpine region. Since 2000, it contributes to a better quality of life in the Alps. The programme co-finances projects to make the region more innovative, develop low carbon solutions, valorise the cultural and natural heritage, and improve transnational governance... through transnational cooperation. Learn more at [www.alpine-space.eu/asp-2021+](http://www.alpine-space.eu/asp-2021+) on the Interreg Alpine Space programme and what has been done so far to prepare a successful, new programme for the period 2021-2027.

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## Identification

Your first name\*

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Your last name\*

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Your email address\*

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The name of your organisation\*

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Please choose the category which describes your institution most accurately:\*

- Business support organisation, including chambers of commerce, networks and clusters
- Enterprise (incl. SME)
- General public / citizens
- Higher education and research institution
- Interest group including NGOs and citizen's association
- National, regional or local development agency
- National, regional or local public authority
- Other public organisation
- School/education and training centre
- Sectoral agency
- Social organisation

Where is your organisation located (main seat)?\*

- Austria
- France
- Germany
- Liechtenstein
- Italy
- Slovenia
- Switzerland
- Other - Please specify\*: \_\_\_\_\_\*

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## Your expertise

Are you experienced with the Interreg Alpine Space programme?\*

- Yes
- No

Are you familiar with the European Union Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP)?\*

- Yes
- No

On which document would you like to take the consultation?\*

- The revised Interreg Programme
- Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Both

Have you participated in the online stakeholder consultation launched in spring 2020 on the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027?\*

- Yes
- No

*Due to the corona pandemic, the originally planned physical stakeholder workshops had to be cancelled. Instead, an online consultation for national stakeholders took place in spring 2020. During this consultation, over 300 participants gave their feedback – thank you very much! The feedback has been consolidated and included in the current draft of the programme, along with an in-depth discussion of the programme partners. Both helped to further refine the focus of the programme. This revised and modified draft now forms the basis for the public consultation of the programme.*

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## General structure

### The Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027: general structure

The draft programme consists of four priorities. Each priority refers to a selected policy objective as set by the EU draft regulations. The policy objectives are further subdivided into selected specific objectives, as shown below:

<b>Priority 1: Climate resilient and green Alpine region (PO 2)</b>		<b>Priority 2: Carbon neutral &amp; resource sensitive Alpine region (PO 2)</b>	
SO iv: promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience	SO vii: enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution	SO i: promoting energy efficiency	SO vi: promoting the transition to a circular economy
<b>Priority 3: Innovation and digitalisation oriented green Alpine region (PO 1)</b>		<b>Priority 4: Cooperatively managed and developed Alpine region</b>	
SO i: enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies	SO ii: reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies and governments	Enhance institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies ("Interreg specific SO")	

Policy objectives (PO) and specific objectives (SO) come from the EU (draft) regulations. Priorities are defined by the programme.

PO 1: A smarter Europe - innovative and smart economic transformation

PO 2: A greener, low-carbon Europe

Additionally the programme will include the Interreg specific objective "A better Interreg governance by enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies". The content of this objective will be developed within the next drafting steps as soon as further information will be available. However, the activities foreseen for this objective should focus on supporting the governance-relation between EUSALP and the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027.

In the first part of the survey you will be able to give a general feedback to the overall strategy, policy objectives and each selected specific objective. You will have the opportunity to provide your comments on these elements at the end of the survey.

### Your opinion

In your opinion, does the strategy of the programme ([as described in section 1.2](#)) address the main joint challenges of the programme area adequately? \*

I totally agree    I tend to agree    I tend to disagree    I totally disagree

In your opinion, are the selected policy objectives relevant for the Alpine Space in the next seven years?\*

I totally agree    I tend to agree    I tend to disagree    I totally disagree

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## Specific objectives

You have now the possibility to give your feedback on one, several or all specific objectives.

Which of the following specific objectives would you like to assess?\*

- Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience
- Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution
- Promoting energy efficiency measures
- Promoting the transition to a circular economy
- Enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies
- Reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies and governments
- All of the above

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## Priority 1 - SO: Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience

*Specific objective:*

**Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience**

### Your opinion

Below the questions, you will find the current draft of the Interreg programme for this specific objective. Please read it carefully and let us know what you think about it.

I rate the relevance of this specific objective for the next seven years as:\*

Very high     High     Low     Very low

The thematic focus of the specific objective is clear.\*

I totally agree     I tend to agree     I tend to disagree     I totally disagree

### Draft of the Interreg programme for this specific objective

The Alpine region will be highly affected by climate change in the upcoming years. The annual average temperature will increase, changes in precipitation events and patterns are foreseen and the snow line increases. The Alpine region will have to face periods of water scarcity and heat as well as of high

precipitation, causing floods, landslides and other natural hazards. The mountainous regions as well as foothills and forelands of the Alps are highly vulnerable zones. Sectors particularly affected would be e.g. tourism and leisure time activities, food production (shift in crops and farm management), forestry and water management but also transport and mobility. 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. The signs of climate change require urgent action. Adaptation to climate change is one element of a possible reaction, mitigation is another. Within this specific objective, measures that foster the adaptation to climate change – “the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects.” as the IPCC puts it – should be covered. Mitigation measures will be covered in PO2 SO i (promoting energy efficiency), and SO iv (promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience).

*The following areas seem to be of particular relevance for the implementation of this specific objective within the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021 – 2027:*

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 are yet quite unclear (e.g. how will the concrete impacts of an increase in landslides and floods on tourism/leisure activities look like? How can administrations ensure road safety in the case of an increase in landslides? How do we have to deal with further soil consumption?). Additionally, differentiations within regions are still difficult to predict (e.g. “heat islands” in built-up areas). Hence, an increase in knowledge and the development of consultancy and services specifically in this context would contribute to development of tailor made, transnational adaption measures across the Alpine region that would enable preparation and involvement of stakeholders and citizens.

Adaptation measures related to risk prevention and disaster resilience should go hand-in-hand with the above mentioned general adaptation measures covered in this specific objective. 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. Therefore the Alpine Space Programme 2021-2027 should support the development of inter-regional and transnational frameworks, joint management approaches and services that foster risk prevention and disaster resilience in a comprehensive way.

In the Alpine region, actors can already look back on traditions of cooperation in climate change adaptation and risk management. In order to meet the global (UN Agenda 2030, Paris Agreement) and even more ambitious EU climate strategies and goals (e.g. European Green Deal, European Climate Law), increased efforts and a strong focus are the means of choice. Making the Alpine region more resilient with regard to the impacts of climate change requires a joint effort of the key actors together with citizens and citizen`s organisations as well as a shift from sectorial to integrated and participatory approaches at transnational, regional and local level and should therefore be a main focus of the Alpine Space Programme 2021-2027.

Which are the most relevant actions that the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027 should support? Please select up to 3 of those you deem most relevant in the field of climate change adaptation.\*

[ ] Developing strategies, solutions and pilots to rise 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 (e.g. societal/economic adaptation, health aspects, changes and needs of ecosystem services, financial aspects,...).

Supporting information exchange and knowledge transfer at transnational/regional/local level in order to adapt to changing weather patterns (e.g. heat, precipitation) as well as extreme weather events and to raise awareness of risks and natural hazards among experts and policy makers.

Organising solutions and pilot actions to bridge the gap between climate research and practical implementation and to integrate new research results into the adaptation practice at different levels and for different types of territories.

Developing methodologies and tools aiming at measuring and monitoring the specific impacts of climate change to the lithosphere-biosphere-hydrosphere-cryosphere.

The proposed indicative actions are clear and they provide the ground for appropriate project proposals.

I totally agree    I tend to agree         I tend to disagree         I totally disagree

Which are the most relevant actions that the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027 should support? Please select up to 3 of those you deem most relevant in the field of risk prevention and disaster resilience.\*

Setting-up of preventive planning measures in the fields of spatial planning and risk management through the joint development of tools, interoperable databases; disaster monitoring-, warning- and response- systems at different territorial levels concerning all kind of natural hazards.

Improving skills and competences for policy makers and stakeholders at different policy levels to make better use of digitalization in the field of risk prevention, risk management and climate change adaptation, e.g. by harmonizing and sharing data (incl. open data) and implementing innovative digital tools.

Developing integrated and participatory concepts and implementing pilot projects in risk management as well as communication measures aiming at raising awareness and preparedness among policy makers at different policy levels as well as among citizens.

Developing concepts and setting up coordination structures for the sustainable management of multifunctional protective forests and the establishment of Nature Based Solutions, taking into account Green and Blue infrastructure, water management and ecosystem services.

Developing solutions and pilots for different types of territories in highly affected and exposed regions (e.g. high altitude environment with glacial mass reduction, permafrost degradation, or regions specifically hit by draught) as well as exposed main communications axes (e.g. roads, railways).

The proposed indicative actions are clear and they provide the ground for appropriate project proposals.\*

I totally agree    I tend to agree         I tend to disagree         I totally disagree

*Specific objective:*

**Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution**

**Your opinion**

Below the questions, you will find the current draft of the Interreg programme for this specific objective. Please read it carefully and let us know what you think about it.

I rate the relevance of this specific objective for the next seven years as:\*

Very high     High    Low    Very low

The thematic focus of the specific objective is clear.\*

I totally agree    I tend to agree    I tend to disagree    I totally disagree

## Draft of the Interreg programme for this specific objective

The Alpine region marks a transnational biodiversity hotspot, even though situated within one of the most densely inhabited and connected areas in Europe. This particular context calls for urgent action. Alpine biodiversity and ecological connectivity have been under pressure for many decades, especially since the second half of the last century. Human activities, land use, exploitation of natural resources and pollution lead to habitat fragmentation and loss of biodiversity. Additionally, consequences of climate change (e.g. heat, drought,...) as well as certain climate mitigation and adaptation measures (e.g. the reinforced use of wind- or hydropower in sensitive regions) pose threats to Alpine biodiversity. The on-going and predicted reduction of living space and biotope fragmentation causes high losses in biodiversity and reduces ecosystem services.

What particularly distinguishes Alpine biodiversity is the coexistence of zones hardly influenced by humans and zones that have been cultivated for centuries by human beings for their living. Both are characterized by their high importance for Alpine biodiversity: In untouched areas, specific habitats were able to evolve. Valuable habitats however have also developed in areas used for agriculture and forestry, the so-called “cultural landscapes” of the natural and cultural heritage of the Alps. The traditional Alpine landscape is therefore a mosaic of different habitats.

*Regarding these the following orientations seem particularly relevant for the implementation of this specific objective within the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027:*

As the traditional Alpine landscape is characterized as a mosaic of coexisting habitats, the Alpine Space Programme will put a focus on the joint development of transnational Green and Blue multifunctional infrastructure-networks. Green[1] and blue multifunctional infrastructures (GBI) offer integrated solutions that protect biodiversity and support the sustainable valorisation of ecosystem services. Networks of GBI also contribute to the provision of recreational areas close to residential homes and the help improve air quality. The latter is of particular importance for touristic and recreational opportunities and strongly supports health aspects (see e.g. “One-health-approach”).

Apart from that, the Alpine region will look more closely at the effects of climate change on biodiversity. Changes in temperature and precipitation have impacts on the phases of growth as well as the composition of the flora and fauna. This implies threats e.g. caused by “invasive species” or diseases but also opportunities for new species. Additionally, certain climate change mitigation and adaptation measures have strong impacts on the Alpine biodiversity and ecosystem services. Therefore, the Alpine Space Programme 2021-2027 will foster transnational cooperation, knowledge-exchange and reinforced research on the concrete impacts of climate change on Alpine biodiversity, in both protected (e.g. Natura 2000 areas, national parks, all further kinds of sanctuaries) and other areas.

The different territorial and transnational effects as well as the interplay of protected and non-protected habitats and the related ecosystem services should be the focus of attention. In addition, investigating “wilderness areas” and their contribution towards ecosystem services and biodiversity will be supported.

The extraordinary diversity of habitats makes the Alpine region one of the most important areas both for the preservation of biodiversity as well as the sustainable valorisation of ecosystem services. Developments in recent years and predicted future developments connected to climate change call for reinforced action. Cooperation at transnational, regional and local level as well as inclusive approaches will strongly support these efforts and therefore pose an important focus of this programme.

[1] Green Infrastructure can be broadly defined as a strategically planned network of high quality natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features, which is designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services and protect biodiversity in both rural and urban settings." (European Union (2013).

Which are the most relevant types of action that the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027 should support? Please select up to 3 of those you deem most relevant.\*

Implementing pilot projects that support Green and Blue infrastructure-networks ("TEN-G"), Nature Based Solutions (NBS) and innovative planning methodologies in order to strengthen Alpine biodiversity and ecosystem services, taking into account their contribution towards the social, cultural and economic systems (e.g. "One-health-approach"; integrated and sustainable approaches of system integration and valuation).

Developing transnational solutions and implementing pilot projects on sustainable land use management, climate-friendly settlement development, soil protection and the sustainable valorisation of natural and cultural heritage, including cultural landscapes.

Supporting 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, as well as in and for urban regions (e.g. to fight urban heat islands,...).

Supporting measures of communication and awareness raising among different political levels and citizens concerning the valorisation of ecosystem services as well as Green and Blue infrastructure strategies across borders and their integration into regional and local planning.

Developing methodologies and tools on transnational biodiversity management and GBI- infrastructure that foster digitalization and new information systems, specifically in the field of data harmonization and data accessibility.

Elaborating policy frameworks and strategies to deal with wilderness areas and macro-regional scale ecological connectivity priority areas in an integrated approach as well as tools to manage these areas and to valorise them in the context of sustainable tourism.

Developing strategies and solutions to cope with the impacts of energy management, hydro power, and energy grids on ecosystems and biodiversity.

The proposed indicative actions are clear and they provide the ground for appropriate project proposals.\*

I totally agree    I tend to agree    I tend to disagree    I totally disagree

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## Priority 2 - SO: Promoting energy efficiency measures

*Specific objective:*

**Promoting energy efficiency measures**

### Your opinion

Below the questions, you will find the current draft of the Interreg programme for this specific objective. Please read it carefully and let us know what you think about it. it.

I rate the relevance of this specific objective for the next seven years as:\*

Very high    High    Low    Very low

The thematic focus of this specific objective is clear.\*

I totally agree    I tend to agree    I tend to disagree    I totally disagree

## Draft of the Interreg programme for this specific objective

The European Union aims at becoming the first climate-neutral continent by 2050 with no net greenhouse gases in 2050 and economic growth decoupled from resource use. The ambitions with respect to carbon-neutrality have been reflected in undertaking various measures in the Alpine region in the last years. However, in order to reach the global and European targets, the efforts will have to be increased in the next years.

Energy efficiency measures – measures to use less energy but to perform the same tasks or services – are necessary in order to achieve these goals. Energy efficiency measures reduce the amount of energy needed and lower greenhouse gas emissions, thereby contributing to carbon neutrality. Energy efficiency in the long run also lowers costs for households as well as the economy and society due to the total reduction of energy needed for the production of warmth, electricity, transport etc.

The two sectors currently showing the highest per capita end-use of energy in Europe are road transport and the building sector. Road transport is one of the sectors that is highly relevant in the Alpine region. Although progresses towards energy efficiency have been made throughout the Alpine region and in different sectors, high levels of final energy consumption are still observable in certain areas, Road transport, next to the residential or the tourism and leisure sector, remains one of them. Efficiency concepts alone most probably will not be sufficient to manage the transition to a carbon neutral or even a post carbon society. Innovative steps should go beyond efficiency and foster integrated, sufficiency-oriented concepts of well-being and post-carbon lifestyles. This should be coupled with the use of renewable energy sources broadly available within the Alpine region (e.g. water, wind, solar power,...).

The promotion of energy efficiency measures is highly important to tackle climate change, as well as to implement circular economy-approaches. In this context, this SO should be seen as a “supporting objective” to SO iv “Promoting climate change adaption” and SO vi “Promoting the transition to a circular economy”. The interventions in this SO should be complementary but not overlapping with these SO’s.

*The following areas seem to be of particular relevance for the implementation of this specific objective within the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021 – 2027:*

Due to their topography and geography as well their joint traditions, societal set-up and state of economic development, the Alpine region poses a particularly suitable laboratory for the elaboration and testing of innovative, cooperative approaches in the field of energy efficiency and the road towards sufficiency. Energy efficiency is knitted tightly to the need for economic development and competitiveness. Decoupling economic growth from resource consumption remains a challenge and hence is needed to be addressed in conjunction with energy efficiency targets and the further transition to low energy consumption and circular economy approaches.

To go a step further, the Alpine Space Programme 2021-2027 will contribute to establishing a paradigm shift to focus on developing post-carbon and sufficiency oriented solutions in the transnational context of the Alpine region, e.g. in the following fields:

- Building/housing/residential sector (see connection to the focus of SO vi – circular economy with a focus on existing buildings);

- Green/clean/soft mobility and transport e.g. connected to tourism and leisure time activities as well as specifically public passenger and freight transport (see connection to SO vi – circular economy)
- Land-use-policies and energy-spatial planning solutions to support efficient use of energy (see connection to the focus of SO iv – risk prevention and SO vii – enhancing biodiversity).

Which are the most relevant types of action that the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027 should support? Please select up to 3 of those you deem most relevant.\*

Supporting innovative solutions as well as concrete pilot actions that foster sufficiency-oriented-post-carbon lifestyles as well as cross-sectorial approaches for different types of territories, e.g. in the planning/ building/ housing/ residential/ tourism /mobility & transport/ energy sector(s) that take into account the sustainable implementation of new energy-resources (e.g. GNV, hydrogen, bio GNV, electric mobility).

Supporting the exchange of knowledge, good practices and R&D activities focusing on the transition from energy efficiency to sufficiency oriented approaches and to support the transition towards a post carbon economy and society in the Alpine region considering Multi-Energy-System-Integration and the sustainable use of renewables.

Improving skills and competences for policy makers, stakeholders at different policy levels as well as energy communities to support the transition from efficiency to sufficiency and post-carbon oriented approaches, e.g. in the planning/ building/ housing/ residential/ tourism/ mobility & transport/ energy sector(s) also taking into account renewable energy sources.

Developing 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.

Supporting knowledge transfer as well as communication measures in order to raise awareness among different policy levels and the citizens/consumers using approaches like behaviour economics and political framing in order to foster the paradigm shift towards sufficiency- and post-carbon approaches.

Fostering integrated energy data collection, accounting, energy-management solutions and standard systems with a focus on transnationally connecting existing networks and solutions.

The proposed indicative actions are clear and they provide the ground for appropriate project proposals.\*

I totally agree    I tend to agree         I tend to disagree         I totally disagree

*Specific objective:*

**Promoting the transition to a circular economy**

**Your opinion**

Below the questions, you will find the current draft of the Interreg programme for this specific objective. Please read it carefully and let us know what you think about it.

I rate the relevance of this specific objective for the next seven years as:\*

Very high     High    Low    Very low

The thematic focus of this specific objective is clear.\*

I totally agree    I tend to agree    I tend to disagree    I totally disagree

## Draft of the Interreg programme for this specific objective

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 and attempt to close the resource loop. The principles of avoiding “waste” and trying to keep resources in use for as long as possible are relevant for the entire production-cycle. In this regard, circular economy is a far broader approach than just recycling or waste management. It strongly supports sustainable development, the mindful use of resources, climate-neutrality and both climate change mitigation and adaptation. Concerning the situation with COVID 19, circular economy is also widely assumed to be a suitable approach to tackle the crisis, strengthen resilience and support a “sustainable restart” of the social and economic system.

*Regarding the concept of circular economy, the following directions seem particularly relevant for the implementation of this specific objectives within the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027:*

The Alpine region is characterized by a high potential for natural resources. The exploitation and processing is mostly linked to highly material intensive sectors. Circular-economy-approaches will show great impact and foster the reduction of the overall material use as well as the implementation of innovative solutions. The Alpine Space Programme 2021-2027 will take a step further and link the circular economy approach with green economy-concepts as well as bio-economy. Examples of areas supported might be:

- “Cradle to cradle building”-concepts as advance of “sustainable building” (concerning key sectors such as construction and housing, energy, incl. renewable energy);
- (Trans-)regional material cycles and value-chains regarding resource efficient exploitation, processing and production, transport and use, recycling or up-cycling (e.g. production of sustainable materials and goods, sustainable handicraft and manufacturing, sustainable timber processing, building materials processing, recycling of batteries...), also taking into account sharing approaches and renewables (e.g. bioenergy from agricultural and food waste).

Further sectors with great importance for the Alpine region are tourism, leisure time activities and related sectors (e.g. food production, mobility). Here the Alpine Space Programme 2021-2027 will support the development of concepts regarding closed material cycles in Alpine tourism, mobility and related sectors. This might be achieved by:

- Fostering the use of high quality biological, indigenous and regional products (“food to fork-approach”);
- Reducing the total use and consumption of materials and resources in tourism and leisure time activities, including mobility;
- Fostering approaches in waste recycling (e.g. “plastic free” Alpine region, reducing food waste,...) and valorisation of waste (e.g. wood and agri-food chains, urban waste).

Furthermore, consumer- and social innovation oriented processes play an important role. To support the transformation towards circular economy, green economy and bio-economy as well as more eco-sufficiency, consumers and their behaviour have to be addressed. The existing awareness of consumers, stakeholders and citizens should be strengthened and joint solutions towards circular economy-approaches considering behaviour economics should be developed.

Regarding the different territorial types, circular economy-approaches strengthen the economic development in rural as well as in urban regions:

- The concept poses specific opportunities for rural and mountainous regions with high potentials of renewables with regard to their sustainable valorisation as well as the exploration of the opportunities of bio-economy.
- Additionally, regional material cycle solutions are particularly appropriate for mountainous areas with constricted transport routes. These solutions can have additional positive environmental impacts like a reduction of pollution and CO2 emissions due to reduced transport needs.
- Alpine cities and towns might be specifically well suited to embark on innovative waste management solutions, taking into account digitalization (e.g. “smart solutions”).

This specific objective (PO2, SO vi "Promoting the transition to a circular economy") will represent a focus of the future Alpine Space Programme 2021-2027. It has strong inter-linkages with PO2, SO i "Promoting energy efficiency". Further important framework documents that strongly support circular economy are the new “Industrial Strategy and Circular Economy Action Plan”, the “Farm to Fork Strategy for sustainable food” and proposals for a pollution-free Europe prepared by the European Commission.

Which are the most relevant types of action that the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027 should support? Please select up to 3 of those you deem most relevant.\*

Setting-up 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 above mentioned and implement innovative (pilot)projects.

Improving 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.

Developing and implementing "transnational value chains"-concepts 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.

Exchanging good practices and implementing pilot projects supporting inter-regional circular economy approaches that promote bio-economy ,the use of indigenous biological and regional products and that support waste reduction specifically in the above mentioned key sectors (including e.g. refurbishment activities, enhancing supply chains, ...).

Supporting measures of communication, capacity building and awareness raising for stakeholders at different policy and implementation levels (e.g. including SMEs etc.)as well as citizens/consumers using approaches like behaviour economics and political framing concerning the concept of “circular economy”, “green economy” as well as “bio-economy” to support a better understanding for the needed transformation processes.

Supporting the development of clusters specialized in circular and green economy-approaches as well as circular bio-economy fostering research, innovation, implementation and cooperation particularly in the in the above mentioned key sectors.

The proposed indicative actions are clear and they provide the ground for appropriate project proposals.\*

I totally agree    I tend to agree                       I tend to disagree                       I totally disagree



## Priority 3 - SO: Enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

*Specific objective:*

Enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

### Your opinion

Below the questions, you will find the current draft of the Interreg programme for this specific objective. Please read it carefully and let us know what you think about it.

I rate the relevance of this specific objective for the next seven years as:\*

Very high     High     Low     Very low

The thematic focus of this specific objective is clear.\*

I totally agree     I tend to agree     I tend to disagree     I totally disagree

### Draft of the Interreg programme for this specific objective

Cooperation on innovation capacities is a transversal activity that can strengthen programme`s impact in particular thematic fields by increasing innovation potential of Alpine actors. Enhancing research and innovation capacities in the Alpine region should effectively be fostered by cooperation between actors and stakeholders in different regions.

However, it should be ensured that its implementation takes place according to the present needs and lessons learnt from the past. Traditional approaches that focus on cooperation between private actors and academia can have even stronger impact with embedment of policy-makers. Creating a stronger link to innovation policies can safeguard provision of policy solutions to strengthen actors` capacity to innovate and jointly develop and implement innovative solutions. Better alignment and coordination of policy-making in the transnational context is necessary in order to help regions overcome barriers in cooperation on innovation and uptake of advanced technologies. This will lead to establishing and strengthening existing synergies and functional links, reducing polarisation between urban and rural regions, for example by diffusing innovation services, capacities and linking key actors.

At the same time, the programme should further ensure involvement of diverse actors from research, innovation, academia, private sectors and civil society. Its focus should be not only result-oriented innovation seeking particular solutions, but also innovation with regards to processes. This can be done not in the least by encouraging an open and inclusive culture, contributing to bottom-up development of joint solutions by involving wide a range of actors (including also citizens, students of all ages next to academic and economic actors). Next to innovation in particular fields, this approach should also support social innovation and its application in relevant fields, such as SGIs. Clusters and innovation hubs can continue to benefit from transnational cooperation leading to internationalisation, exchange and sharing of good practices and better diffusion of innovation support services in all Alpine regions.

It is important to observe that the innovativeness of solutions sought in the programme refers not only to the objective of making business actors more competitive, or even to making other actors, such as public bodies and other organisations, more capable of applying innovative solutions and technologies.

In the context of Priorities 1 and 2 (Priority 1: Climate resilient and green Alpine region; Priority 2: Carbon neutral & resource sensitive Alpine region) innovation also means the “green” character of activities, impacts of projects as well as methods and practices of project management. Project partners are strongly encouraged to consider expected and unexpected impacts of their projects on the environment and sustainability, to seek mitigation of possible adverse effects of the implementation of innovations and technologies, to strengthen any possible positive effects and, whenever possible, to incorporate mechanisms or practices that will unleash such positive effects.

*Regarding these considerations the following orientations seem particularly relevant for the implementation of this specific objective within the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027:*

Activities can address a range joint challenges which are either persistent or emerging, such as those linked to the COVID-19 health crisis. The interventions under this SO should be complementary but not overlapping with activities in other SOs. Thus, an effective implementation of joint policy solutions shall directly and indirectly, with relation not just to their objective but also the process, lead to an improved transnational framework condition for innovation and uptake of advanced technologies. Pursuing these topics should consider above-mentioned principles such as creating links with the policy level, fostering process innovations and greening practices, open and inclusive culture and social innovation and links to policy level and greening aspects.

From this perspective, activities under this SO should be thematically focused on the topics of Priorities 1 and 2 (Priority 1: Climate resilient and green Alpine region; Priority 2: Carbon neutral & resource sensitive Alpine region). Next to these priorities, if deemed relevant in the mountainous Alpine context, other topics (such as access and provision to SGIs, including health care and medical innovations, sustainable tourism and social innovation) have particular relevance and can be addressed. These thematic fields have also increased relevance due to dangers of health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the same time, cooperation should focus on reducing innovation disparities between different regions and diffusing innovation support services, including clusters and innovation hubs and linking relevant actors.

Which are the most relevant types of action that the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027 should support? Please select up to 3 of those you deem most relevant.\*

[ ] Developing or supporting common strategies, actions plans and other solutions (e.g. policy instruments and management tools) as well as pilot projects or activities to support innovation and uptake of advanced technologies considering involvement of policy-level and open and inclusive culture, and place particular focus on thematic foci such as Priorities 1 and 2, SGI, health and medicine, and sustainable tourism that can be addressed through social innovation. For example:

- Shaping an innovation ecosystem that builds on the natural resources of the area, and supporting the development of new sustainable value chains (or better integration of existing ones) with involvement of all relevant actors, including individuals and social stakeholders, promoting and exploring solutions for eco-innovation and green economy as a trigger for regional development;
- Addressing innovation gaps in non-urban areas, reinforcing urban-rural linkages in the field of innovation, support 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, focusing particularly on urban-rural links;
- Supporting innovation models which better address topics of highest relevance in the Alpine region and involve greening practices; ideas for “greening” of transnational innovation activities and entrepreneurship in all sectors, processes and ecosystems in the Alpine region, solutions for identifying and mitigating adverse environmental impacts;
- Promoting and exploring application of social innovation to SGIs, health and medical innovations, sustainable tourism with particular consideration of bottom-up and open and inclusive approaches such as co-creation and living labs.

Supporting the coordination between innovation activities and policies and other policy domains of highest relevance in the Alpine region P1 and P2 as well as other topics of particular relevance.

Implementing networking activities, networking tools, advisory services and exchange platforms to support the innovation potential in areas of highest relevance in the Alpine region.

Develop common data collection, indicators and monitoring systems harmonized across borders, ensure the update and sustainability of data collection and monitoring systems.

The proposed indicative actions are clear and they provide the ground for appropriate project proposals.\*

I totally agree    I tend to agree         I tend to disagree         I totally disagree

*Specific objective:*

**Reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies and governments**

## Your opinion

Below the questions, you will find the current draft of the Interreg programme for this specific objective. Please read it carefully and let us know what you think about it.

I rate the relevance of this specific objective for the next seven years as:\*

Very high     High    Low    Very low

The thematic focus of this specific objective is clear.\*

I totally agree    I tend to agree         I tend to disagree         I totally disagree

## Draft of the Interreg programme for this specific objective

Digitalisation offers opportunities to address joint challenges which are particularly prominent in mountainous areas such as the Alpine region. New digital tools can be developed to mitigate the impacts of accessibility problems and remoteness coupled with negative demographic situations in many regions. Such increased flexibility can be particularly attractive in the context of territorial specificity of the Alps as well as its ambition to become climate resilient, carbon neutral, green and resource sensitive. Due to the emergence of COVID-19, the need to support digital transition in these fields in all regions is even more pronounced.

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. However, in order to fully unlock its potential, cybersecurity and privacy risks need to be appropriately addressed along implementation of digital solutions. Active role of policy makers in developing standards and raising awareness of citizens, as well as responsibility of economic actors should be emphasised in this regard.

Next to increased social sustainability and social innovation, digitalisation also provides opportunities for businesses. Strengthening sustainable economic development in terms of new working structures,

product and service provision, innovativeness as well as improved information flows are only a few examples. Digitalisation also facilitates implementation of greening practices by businesses. Principles that should be pursued in these activities are the inclusion of appropriate groups, such as policy-makers or civil society, as well as safeguarding that any activities have a positive environmental impact.

*Regarding these considerations the following orientations seem particularly relevant for the implementation of this specific objective within the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027:*

There are diverse ways in which territorial cooperation can bring about the benefits of digitalisation which are relevant to the Alpine region. Projects can explore new and flexible opportunities for working and provision of products and services, new working conditions and working structures, new production-processes, focus on individualised products and services. Activities can also focus on customised solutions and services, focus on production processes and services with low material input and high service component, or the sharing and creative economy. The programme can empower different actors to develop, experiment and implement such solutions in various contexts via transnational cooperation. Sharing of practices and joint experimentation with new approaches can inspire and be applied. This can also involve advanced innovative digital solutions such as AI, machine learning, IoT, Alpine-wide interoperability of data for private and public purposes. This requires involvement of different actors as well as, importantly, presence of civil society as well as policy-making in order to ensure the uptake of solutions.

A particular focus on digital divide and regions that are lagging in terms of digital innovation in territorial cooperation will ensure the cohesion of the Alpine region. It is particularly important that activities tackle the digital divide between less and more advanced regions as well as between fluent users and people without sufficient knowledge and/or physical access to information and communication technologies. This constitutes a general policy challenge to digital transformation that affects all age and social groups as well as urban, intermediate or rural regions. It is essential to ensure that policy actors are well-equipped to address these joint needs. In order to ensure ultimate effectiveness in implementing digital solutions, the involvement of policy-level in such activities should also be geared towards ensuring their safety in cyberspace and protection of privacy.

Which are the most relevant types of action that the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027 should support? Please select up to 3 of those you deem most relevant.\*

[ ] Developing or supporting pilot projects or activities as well as common strategies, actions plans and other solutions (e.g. policy instruments and management tools) to support reaping the benefits of digitalisation in different fields to bring about socially and environmentally sustainable change. For example:

- Developing and testing solutions that better address the response to sustainable development efforts, and to contribute to solutions for climate resilience, resource sensitivity, green and carbon neutrality;
- Developing and testing solutions to support 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, to be applicable in general and not only in times of health crises;
- Developing and testing solutions to support e-learning, new working structures (home-office and other forms of flexible working) in order to provide more attractive living possibilities in remote areas;
- Developing and testing solutions to support business development opportunities, product and service development, strengthening of regional value chains and regional marketing;
- Contributing to elaboration and implementation of Smart Villages and Smart Cities concepts;
- Implementing pilot projects or other activities to accompany SMEs in their digital transformation, with the overarching aim to increase environmental sustainability (e.g. using digitalisation to showcase carbon positive integrated solutions that reduce their carbon footprint and increase competitiveness).

[ ] Promoting 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 in the following policy issues

- Developing and testing solutions and policies to mitigate digitalisation-related security risks such as cyber security, privacy, data-protection;
- Developing and testing solutions and policies to closing the digital divide between regions (including explore synergies between rural and urban areas through digital solutions), as well as between more and less fluent users.

Implement activities to facilitate networking activities, networking tools, advisory services and exchange platforms:

- 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.

Developing common data collection, indicators and monitoring systems harmonized across borders, ensure the update and sustainability of data collection and monitoring systems.

The proposed indicative actions are clear and they provide the ground for appropriate project proposals.\*

I totally agree    I tend to agree         I tend to disagree         I totally disagree

## Further remarks

Which of the following approaches do you consider most appropriate to bring the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027 closer to the citizens?\*

	Very high	High	Low	Very low
<b>Awareness raising measures</b> (e.g. social media campaigns to foster waste recycling in communities or circular economy approaches in tourism)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Participatory approaches</b> (e.g. workshops with local stakeholders when developing concepts for new digital services)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Pilot projects</b> ( e.g. in risk management to better make use of nature based solutions or to develop sufficiency-oriented approaches in the housing sector)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Integrating operational and policy stakeholders</b> ( e.g. involve social, sectoral and business support organisations in the development of e-health services or digital innovation hubs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Integrating local stakeholders and citizens</b> ( e.g. involve local stakeholders and citizens in the development of concepts for reducing waste or implementing risk management measures)	( )	( )	( )	( )
<b>Integrated territorial approaches</b> ( e.g. develop Green/Blue infrastructure networks that bring benefits to rural and urban areas, or foster territorially integrated value chains to reduce transport needs)	( )	( )	( )	( )

Do you have any further remarks on the draft or any idea you want to share with us?\*

Yes

No

I want to share comments regarding the following section(s):\*

Overall programme strategy

Policy objectives

Specific objective and actions: Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience

Specific objective and actions: Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution

Specific objective and actions: Promoting energy efficiency measures

Specific objective and actions: Promoting the transition to a circular economy

Specific objective and actions: Enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

Specific objective and actions: Reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies and governments

Other

Comments on overall programme strategy\*

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Comments on policy objectives\*

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Comments on: Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience\*

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Comments on: Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution\*

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Comments on: Promoting energy efficiency measures\*

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Comments on: Promoting the transition to a circular economy\*

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Comments on: Enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies\*

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Comments on: Reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies and governments\*

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Other comments\*

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What is your opinion on the changes introduced in the further elaborated draft of the Interreg Alpine Space programme 2021-2027 since the online consultation of May/June 2020?\*

Positive       Neutral       Negative

Comments:

The SEA - strategic environmental assessment - is a requirement for any programme developed by a public authority. It aims at investigating the positive and negative significant environmental impacts that are likely to occur when implementing such programmes.

For Interreg Alpine Space, the SEA is a key step in shaping the new programme as we aim at being at the forefront of the transition to a unique, carbon neutral and climate resilient European territory: the Alpine region.

We thus invite you, and especially environmental experts, to provide your opinion on the draft environmental report. You can download and check the whole document [here](#).

## Your opinion

Would you suggest additional data sources and/or thematic aspects to be considered based on the state of the Alpine Space's environment and the likely future development without the programme?\*

Yes

No

Comments\*

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Are there significant environmental impacts (positive or negative) not yet mentioned in the environmental report with relevance to the priorities and specific objectives subject to this SEA?\*

Yes

No

Comments

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Would you like to contribute alternative formulations or alternative wording/small-scale changes in thematic aspects regarding the actions of the programme with particular relevance for the environmental assessment?\*

Yes

No

Comments

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Do you see any cumulative effects (both positive and negative) with other funding programmes and/or major strategies for the programme territory relevant for environmental issues worth mentioning in the SEA report?\*

Yes

No

Comments

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Thank you for taking part in our consultation!  
You will receive a short email of confirmation including a PDF of your contribution.

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