

Alpine Space projects in the Policy Cycle

➔ Background Information

In mid-2009 the Alpine Space Programme carried out a critical reflection on the overall programme performance and its future strategy with focus on efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of project results. Amongst other initiatives, a group of external evaluators was commissioned with an Impact Assessment.

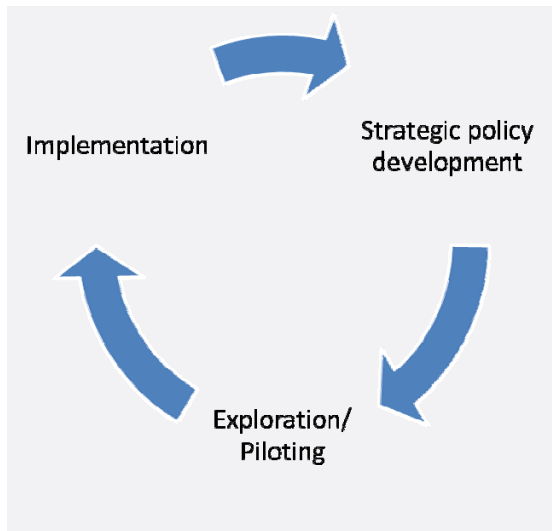
The research and analysis revealed that a differentiation between various types of projects is required in order to better understand what kind of impacts can be expected from transnational projects in the Alpine Space Programme. The study showed that the potential impacts depend on the position of the project in the policy cycle.

With the aim of supporting projects in anticipating and achieving their envisaged impacts, this factsheet describes the three types of Alpine Space projects identified, their corresponding position in the policy cycle, and their potential impacts. **This categorisation will not lead to any changes in the project selection criteria.**

➔ Guidance

1 Alpine Space projects in the policy cycle

Policy making is not a project but a process that is ideally looked at as of cyclical nature. The policy cycle represents the development of a policy item, from its inception (policy formulation) to implementation. Because the context is continually changing, policies have to be reviewed and reshaped occasionally on the basis of the impact they produced.



The following typology was elaborated in a bottom-up approach based on the analysis of projects co-funded by the Alpine Space Programme. This typology differentiates projects according to their objectives and nature of their activities, and thus on their position in the policy cycle. Three project types were identified:

- Type 1: Projects related to strategic policy development,
- Type 2: Projects related to explorative and piloting actions,
- Type 3: Projects related to policy implementation.

1.1 Projects with a focus on strategic policy development

These projects focus on rather general analytical and research activities. Their aims are strategic and include long-term rather broad impacts. Results expected from this type of projects relate to policy analysis, agenda setting and strategy development.

1.2 Projects with a focus on explorative and piloting activities

These projects work in a defined thematic strategy and have a focus on the development of new tools or methodologies (e.g. problem-specific models or scenarios) and their testing. They focus on increasing and developing knowledge and know-how, as well as on gathering and exchanging experience at a transnational level in specific thematic fields. Successful pilot activities (implemented in close cooperation with stakeholders/beneficiaries) are crucial for these projects when it comes to the application and testing of know-how and experience. Results expected from this type of projects are very specific to the thematic field and still represent an important input towards a mature policy.

1.3 Projects with a focus on policy implementation

These projects aim to improve and develop existing policies with instruments ready for implementation. In this case, projects provide additional tools or improve/harmonise existing ones through their transnational approach. At this stage of the policy cycle, projects are developing (together with policy makers) the existing legal framework and other planning instruments at a transnational level. Results expected from these projects are very concrete and also support future policy development.

2 Positioning projects in their policy context

The projects should be aware of the policy context in their field of activities. When developing a project idea it might be helpful to reflect on the following questions:

What is the policy background and status? How is the profile of policy development and what are the (project) challenges? Are there already achieved agreements (on national or transnational level)? Being aware of all this will directly influence the factors such as the set up of the partnership, the structure of the project and the type of the transnational problem that is tackled (political, financial, technical).

The structure of the partnership and its consistency must be carefully assessed. Which is the institutional role of the partners in the specific policy field addressed? What is the relevance of the partnership and the ability and know-how of the partners to perform joint transnational actions and achieve the expected results? These are questions projects must ask themselves.

Projects will usually address one phase of the policy cycle mainly. In many cases even two phases will be covered (e.g. from strategy policy development to piloting), however, covering the three phases of the policy cycle within a three years project is not realistic.

Depending on the type of project, its position in the policy cycle and on which phase of this cycle it aims to impact, different types of tasks and activities can be fulfilled/set and different conditions should be met in order to successfully contribute to the respective phases of the policy cycle.

Project type/ position in policy cycle	Tasks and activities	Conditions for policy development
1. Strategic policy development	<i>Policy agenda setting:</i> - Research - Lessons for decision makers on necessary activities	- Involvement of policy makers - Involvement of researchers (e.g. universities, education, training and technological and scientific research centres) - Involvement of the business community (e.g. organisations representing enterprises and especially SMEs) - Participation of civil society - Politically active networks/project partnerships (e.g. NGOs and NPOs in

		<p>the fields of environment, water management, natural resources management and hazards control management)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness rising
2. Exploration/piloting	<p><i>Policy formulation/testing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selection of policy - Consensus building - Integrated approaches - Concrete pilot activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership and common political understanding - Identification of needs and political will - Specific know-how and competence in the project partnership - Relevant stakeholders involved assessing usefulness and applicability of project activities - Participation of civil society - Clearly aligned information and dissemination activities
3. Policy implementation	<p><i>Joint planning:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated regulations - Implementation tools/solutions - Transnational agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear policy framework - Involvement of key stakeholders and policy makers - Specific know-how and competence of the project partnership - Politically active networks/project partnerships

Reference Documents

Alpine Space Impact Assessment Report