# Final Report

# Evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the operational implementation of the communication strategy

September 2025

**LAND SALZBURG**

Interreg — Co-funded by the European Union

**Alpine Space**

# Contents

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## List of Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Meaning |
|---|---|
| ACP | Alpine Space Contact Point |
| ANCT | France's National Agency for Territorial Cohesion |
| ASP | Interreg Alpine Space Programme |
| EC | European Commission |
| EDIC | Europe Direct Information Centre |
| EU | European Union |
| EUSALP | EU Strategy for the Alpine Region |
| EUSurvey | European Commission's official survey tool |
| FTE | Full-time equivalent |
| GDPR | General Data Protection Regulation |
| IVY | Interreg Volunteer Youth |
| JS | Joint Secretariat |
| JEMS | Joint Electronic Monitoring System |
| KPI | Key Performance Indicator |
| MA | Managing Authority |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NCP | National Contact Point |
| NWE | North-West-Europe |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |

# Executive Summary

This evaluation assesses how effectively and efficiently the Interreg Alpine Space Programme (ASP) has implemented its 2021–2027 Communication Strategy, and what should be adjusted for the remainder of the programming period and beyond. It follows the mandate set in the Interreg and Common Provisions Regulations and was designed to inform strategic decisions by the Managing Authority, Joint Secretariat (JS) and Programme Committee.

The evaluation used a mixed-methods design combining desk research, web, social and newsletter analytics, semi-structured interviews and focus groups with the Joint Secretariat, Alpine Space Contact Points, project beneficiaries, EU Strategy for the Alpine Space (EUSALP)/Alpine Convention peers and other Interreg programmes, together with a multilingual citizen survey (n≈220). This triangulation allowed for the capture of quantitative trends and cross-check them against practitioner perspectives.

Overall, ASP's communication system is solid and delivers on most objectives. With a lean team (~1.5 FTE) and a limited budget (~€650k for 2021–2027), the Joint Secretariat keeps channels coherent, and information flows are reliable; newsletters - including the national German and French editions - are trusted and consistently outperform public-sector benchmarks, and the website serves as the central hub for project applicants and beneficiaries. Stakeholders recognise helpful onboarding, clear guidance and constructive JS–project relations.

At the same time, several structural issues hinder impact. The website's rigid templates limit dynamic, multimedia and multilingual presentation of project results; dissemination is fragmented and overly descriptive, underusing citizen-facing and thematic storytelling; geographic and language imbalances persist (with notably less reach in Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and Slovenia); confusion between ASP, EUSALP and the Alpine Convention dilutes brand recognition; and capitalisation is not yet systematic, so strong results are not consistently packaged for transfer and policy uptake. Survey evidence confirms that citizens value EU-funded results but do not always attribute them to ASP.

Some improvements have already begun to take shape during the evaluation. In particular, the relaunch of a joint brochure by ASP, EUSALP and the Alpine Convention to clarify roles and reduce brand confusion signals a pragmatic, improvement-oriented culture.

**Suggested Priority Actions for 2025–2027**

- **Make capitalisation practical and visible**: organise results around a small number of thematic clusters (e.g., *Circular economy & industrial transformation*; *Climate resilience of snow-dependent tourism*); publish plain-language "how to adopt" notes; run a light, recurring *Capitalisation Hour*; and maintain an adoption log (tracking adoptions, Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), policy references, evidence links, time-to-adoption).
- **Refresh audience-led communication**: define messages by audience; introduce recurring story formats (e.g., *Transition/Innovation Spotlight*); strengthen multilingual practice for locally relevant posts on social media; flagship pages on the website; and rebalance content geographically.
- **Improve digital tools & templates**: Set up a central register of project social accounts and contacts to track activity and coordinate promotion (cf. Annex 6). Use native scheduling systems completed by a cost effective monitoring tool like Metricool for monthly insights. For projects, provide a shared hashtag/content calendar, branded Canva templates, and basic analytics guides and access.
- **Invest in hands-on capacity building**: add a communications onboarding block for every new project; offer short, applied trainings (storytelling, short-video, analytics, responsible AI) on a regular basis done either by in-house staff or external service-providers; and foster peer exchanges highlighting replicable practices.
- **Anchor monitoring in outcomes**: retain core KPIs for the website/social media/newsletter, but add uptake-oriented indicators (documented adoptions, policy references, co-publications in local channels, non-EN reach) and pilot a light Objectives and Key Results (OKR) framework with quarterly key results that prove change to facilitate annual communications planning.

For the 2028+ period, the programme should establish a clearer architecture that explicitly links capitalisation, communication and monitoring. This entails adopting a concise capitalisation strategy that sets out the pathway from solution givers to solution takers, secures  light but protected resources for transferring good practices and policy results, and formalises policy bridges with EUSALP and the Alpine Convention. Recommendations also include refreshing the communication strategy so it is more audience-targeted and multilingual, and managing delivery with a lean KPI-plus-OKR system that makes communication planning more strategic and evidences adoption of results and policy recommendations. Where thematic clusters demonstrate sustained demand, they could be evolved into thematic communities with targeted policy dialogue, and a post-2027 symbol refresh can be considered while retaining the overall Interreg/ASP logo.

**Key message**

ASP already supports projects that embody leadership in green and digital transition in the Alpine transition. The next step is to make adoption visible: showing who takes up which results, under what conditions, and with what effect. This shift from visibility to demonstrable influence will strengthen ASP's impact for both citizens and policymakers across the region.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose and scope of the evaluation

This evaluation was commissioned by the Interreg Alpine Space Programme as part of its 2021–2027 evaluation plan, in accordance with Article 35 of the Interreg Regulation (EU 2021/1059) and Article 18 of the Common Provisions Regulation (EU 2021/1060). Its purpose was to assess the **effectiveness and efficiency of the operational implementation of the communication strategy**, which was adopted in October 2022.

The evaluation addressed the overarching guiding question: *What is the progress in the implementation of the communication strategy and the achievement of its communication objectives?*

Specifically, it examined whether the strategy was:

- Effective in fulfilling expectations and meeting its objectives;
- Efficient in terms of cost-effectiveness and proportionality of resources to results;
- Adapted to the diverse audiences and territories of the Alpine region;
- Supported by meaningful and measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The scope of the evaluation was both retrospective and forward-looking: it reviewed achievements and challenges since 2022 while also providing **evidence-based recommendations** to guide adjustments during the remaining programming period (2025–2027) and to inform preparations for the post-2027 strategy.

## 1.2 Evaluation methodology and timeline

The evaluation followed a **mixed-methods approach**, combining quantitative and qualitative evidence to reflect the complexity of communication in a transnational, multilingual context. The approach was agreed on at the kick-off meeting on 28 May 2025 and built around three core principles:

- **Evidence-based analysis:** systematic desk research of programme documents, monitoring data, an existing survey among project beneficiaries and communication outputs, supported by social media and web analytics.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** semi-structured interviews and focus groups with programme staff, project partners, Alpine Space Contact

Points, EUSALP and external stakeholders; ensuring a diversity of perspectives across territories.

- **Context sensitivity:** inclusion of a multilingual online citizen survey and benchmarking with other Interreg programmes, with the objective of capturing awareness and perceptions beyond the core Interreg community.

This triangulated methodology ensured that findings were robust and inclusive, while also responsive to feedback received by programme staff and representatives of the Programme Committee gathered during the Interim Meeting in July 2025, which emphasised the importance of capitalisation, in-person events, onboarding practices, and citizen outreach.

At the same time, the evaluation team remained mindful of methodological challenges. In particular, the **citizen survey results were subject to a degree of bias**, as many respondents still had a direct or indirect link to projects or programme stakeholders. Nevertheless, the survey provided valuable insights into how the programme can be better promoted among non-expert audiences, which tools were underutilised, and where outreach efforts could be strengthened.

Innovative tools also played a role in the evaluation. Artificial intelligence was used selectively to support data analysis, for example by cross-referencing focus group protocols with survey results. All AI-assisted findings were systematically counterchecked by the evaluation team to ensure accuracy and reliability.

The evaluation was implemented in three phases:

- **Inception phase (May–June 2025):** The process was launched at the kick-off meeting on 28 May 2025. The inception report set out the methodology, indicators, work plan, and initial stakeholder mapping.
- **Data collection & interim reporting (June–July 2025):** Desk research, interviews, focus groups, and the multilingual citizen survey were carried out. The interim report, delivered on 18 July 2025, presented preliminary findings and "quick fix" recommendations, which were subsequently discussed with programme stakeholders at the Interim Meeting on 29 July 2025.
- **Final analysis & reporting (August–October 2025):** Findings were consolidated, some additional interviews were conducted, full survey results integrated, and conclusions and recommendations formulated. A draft final report was delivered in late September, and the final version was prepared in October 2025, ahead of its discussion at the Programme Committee meeting on 13–14 November 2025.

## 1.3 Recap of the communication strategy and KPIs

The Alpine Space Communication Strategy, approved in October 2022, provides the framework for programme and project communication in the current programming period 2021 - 2027. It was structured around three main objectives:

1. **Build capacities** for effective implementation and communication at programme and project level.
2. **Bring the programme and its achievements closer to citizens.**
3. **Position the programme at the forefront of the transition towards an innovative, climate-neutral Alpine Region.**

To monitor progress, the strategy defined a set of **11 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** covering outputs, outtakes, and outcomes. These indicators span from quantitative measures such as website visits, event participation, and social media reach to more qualitative dimensions such as beneficiary satisfaction and citizens' perceptions of European cooperation.

| Obj. | Indicator (taken from communication strategy) | Type | Data source (tool) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | Survey on the available communication tools / programme content (do you know about it / do you use it) | Outcome | Survey to programme bodies (PC, JS, MA, ACP) |
| 1.2 | Satisfaction survey of applicants and beneficiaries on the support by programme bodies (JS, MA, ACP) for project implementation | Outtake | Event feedback questionnaire / surveys (indicator is the satisfaction rate) |
| 1.2 | Number of visits on the website page of the programme manual | Output | Website analytics |
| 1.3 | Average number of visits per month of project websites | Outcome | Website analytics |
| 2.1 | Average number of visits on the website page dedicated to calls and funding ("How to apply") | Outcome | Website analytics |
| 2.1 | Cumulated number of participants in national and transnational information events about calls per year | Outcome | Attendance/participant lists (in-person & online) |

| Obj. | Indicator (taken from communication strategy) | Type | Data source (tool) |
|------|-----------------------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| 2.2 | Number of projects declaring an influence on public policies | Outcome | Survey to lead partners at project closure |
| 2.2 | Percentage of local, regional or national public authorities in the audience of major programme events | Outcome | Attendance lists (share of public authorities) |
| 2.3 | Average number of visits per month on the website's project and output library | Outcome | Website analytics |
| 3.1 | Percentage of co-funded projects adopting a sustainable practices charter | Outtake | Survey to lead partners (adoption rate) |
| 3.2 | Percentage of respondents considering the programme as sustainable | Outtake | Surveys at major programme events and on social media (perception rate) |

However, the evaluation confirmed that **most KPIs remain concentrated at the output level**. While they provide useful data on communication activities (e.g., number of events organised, participants reached, or digital engagement), they say relatively little about the actual results and impacts of the communication strategy — such as strengthened partner capacities, visibility in the Alpine macro-region, or improved awareness of the programme among citizens.

This imbalance highlights a broader methodological challenge: **outputs can be measured reliably, but the strategy has fewer tools to capture outtakes and outcomes** such as behavioural change, policy uptake, or long-term visibility effects. These limitations reduce the extent to which the current KPIs can demonstrate progress towards the three strategic communication objectives.

In this final report, Chapter 3 will therefore propose a **reflection on alternative KPIs and measurement approaches for the future**. This will include options for deepening the assessment of outcomes and impacts — for instance by linking communication monitoring more closely to capitalisation, stakeholder influence, and citizen engagement.

## 1.4 Use and audience of the final report

The **primary audience** of this evaluation report is the Managing Authority (Land Salzburg)**,** the Joint Secretariat, and the Programme Committee. The findings and recommendations are intended to support decision-making on communication priorities, resource allocation, and possible adjustments to the current communication strategy.

The **secondary audience** includes project beneficiaries, Alpine Space Contact Points, and partner institutions such as EUSALP, the Alpine Convention, the European Commission, and Interact. These actors may draw on the report's insights to strengthen coordination, improve project-level communication, and align outreach efforts across Alpine cooperation actors.

To make the report practical and easy to use, its **structure is designed to guide the reader through thematic areas of communication**. The analysis is organised primarily by the three communication objectives, including different sub-topics such as capitalisation or specific target audiences, complemented by a chapter on KPI revision. Each chapter includes:

- an analysis of the main findings,
- a clear distinction between what works well and where there is room for improvement, and
- a list of key recommendations.

In addition, a **separate chapter consolidates all recommendations**, presenting them by topic and by timeframe (short-term "quick fixes" versus medium- and long-term measures). This layered approach is intended to **facilitate navigation** and make the evaluation report a hands-on tool for programme stakeholders**,** ensuring that recommendations can be quickly identified and applied in practice.

Finally, the report also includes a **concise executive summary**, highlighting overarching findings and a set of priority measures for easy uptake. Beyond immediate operational use, the evaluation provides **strategic learning for the post-2027 period**, offering insights into citizen engagement, multilingual outreach, and capitalisation practices. It also contributes to knowledge sharing within the broader Interreg community by generating lessons applicable to other transnational programmes.

## 2. Evaluation Findings

The **Interreg Alpine Space Programme** was approved by the European Commission on 5 May 2022 with the mission to be "*at the forefront of the transition to a unique, carbon-neutral and climate-resilient European territory: the Alpine region.*" In addition, the programme manual underlines that ASP should be regarded as "*an enabler, a long-term partner, and a source of inspiration for a better quality of life in the Alpine region through cooperation.*"

This evaluation confirms that ASP has already achieved much of this vision, particularly in its role as an enabler and trusted long-term partner. However, the ambition of being "at the forefront" of Europe's transition still leaves **room for improvement in terms of visibility, recognition, and capitalisation**. Ensuring that project results are more systematically communicated and taken up by decision-makers remains a central challenge for the programme.

The following chapters present the evaluation findings in light of this mission. The analysis is organised according to the structure introduced in Chapter 1 and complemented by cross-cutting themes such as capitalisation, KPI revision, digital tools, and survey results. Each section highlights **successes and challenges**, while concluding with **concrete recommendations** aimed at strengthening the programme's communication effectiveness for the remainder of the programming period and beyond.

### 2.2 Objective 1: Build capacities for communication and implementation

A central aim of the communication strategy has been to strengthen the capacities of both the programme bodies and project beneficiaries to communicate effectively and implement activities with greater visibility and impact. The following sections examine **internal communication within the programme structures** and the **communication capacities of project beneficiaries**, highlighting achievements as well as areas where further support is needed.

### 2.2.1 Internal Communication and Resources at the Programme Level

Effective internal communication is essential for the successful implementation of the Alpine Space Programme's communication strategy. At programme level, this concerns not only the interaction within the Joint Secretariat (JS) and Managing Authority (MA), but also the coordination with project beneficiaries and the Alpine Space Contact Points as well as macro-regional partners such as EUSALP.

**Resources and structures**

ASP allocated **€650,000 to communication for the 2021–2027 period**, equivalent to the European Commission's recommendation of at least 0.3% of the total programme budget. The indicative financial plan foresees €20,000 for basic activities, €130,000 for website and digital channels, €100,000 for publications and campaigns, €350,000 for events, and a €50,000 reserve. A significant share of this budget was spent on the 25th anniversary celebrations, which generated strong visibility but left fewer resources for subsequent years.

Communication tasks are managed by a **small core team of around 1.5 full-time equivalents (FTE)**, supported intermittently by interns and Interreg volunteers. One staff member focuses exclusively on communication management, while another combines communication with broader programme management tasks. This lean staffing model means that the JS team is responsible for a **broad portfolio of tasks**, including website management, social media planning, partner support, event communication, reporting, and coordination with EUSALP and the Alpine Convention.

To complement internal resources, the programme makes limited use of external providers. The most consistent collaboration is with the contractor for website hosting and maintenance. While this ensures consistency across Interreg platforms, it has also sometimes created challenges due to the website's limited flexibility and slow adaptability. In addition, the programme occasionally contracts graphic designers for specific outputs, such as the new brochure explaining the relationship between the Interreg Alpine Space Programme, EUSALP, and the Alpine Convention. So far, **training and capacity-building activities have been delivered in-house** by the JS team, although staff themselves noted that outsourcing certain tasks — such as training, simple video production for social media or specialised content creation — could provide valuable relief and greater professionalism in periods of high workload.

**Comparative perspective**

When compared with other transnational Interreg programmes, Alpine Space operates with relatively modest resources. While it complies with the minimum 0.3% budget allocation, other programmes dedicate proportionally more or have stronger staffing structures, and some rely more systematically on outsourcing. A note of caution: sometimes communication activities are partly embedded in other budget lines (e.g. event management), which makes direct comparisons more complex.

Nevertheless, a comparison with other transnational Interreg programmes helps to contextualise the resources available for communication in ASP.

While each programme operates under different conditions in terms of geography, budget size, and governance, the figures illustrate how Alpine Space positions itself relative to its peers in terms of budget allocation, staffing, and the use of external service providers.

**Table 1. Communication resources across selected Interreg programmes**

| Programme | Indicative communication budget | % of total programme budget | Communication staff | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Alpine Space** | €650,000 (2021–2027) [source: ASP Programme Manual] | 0.3% | ~1.5 FTE + interns/volunteers | Budget partly used for one-off anniversary event |
| **North Sea** | €700,000 (2021–2027)[1] | 0.64% | 3 person-of which 2 part-time | Higher proportional allocation than ASP |
| **Euro-MED** | €900,000 (2021–2027)[2] | ≈0.3% | 3 FTE + 1 IT manager | Larger programme (14 countries, ≈€281m ERDF) |
| **Central Europe** | At least 0.3% of total budget; according to practice around "just under €1 million"[3] | Minimum ≈0.3%, in practice more towards 0,46% | 5 staff involved in communications, only one full-time | Exact FTE not published; staffing capacity clearly higher than Alpine Space but also larger programme territory and overall budget |

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[1] Interreg North Sea Programme Manual 2021 - 2027

[2] Interreg Euro-MED Communication Strategy 2021 - 2027

[3] Interreg Central Europe Programme Manual 2021 – 2027 and interview with Central Europe JS communication staff

**Strengths**

Interviews highlighted several strengths in internal communication and coordination. Despite limited resources, the JS communication staff demonstrate a **high level of teamwork and cohesion,** which enables them to manage a wide range of responsibilities efficiently. A clear distribution of tasks, supported by regular weekly and monthly exchanges, helps to streamline workflows and ensure that responsibilities are shared in a flexible manner. This collaborative spirit contributes to maintaining operational effectiveness even under tight resource conditions.

Another positive aspect is the **direct interaction with project beneficiaries**, which is highly valued by both programme and project staff. These exchanges allow for the transfer of good practices, create opportunities for learning, and foster a sense of partnership between the programme and its projects. They also contribute to refining communication approaches and preparing more solid strategies for future programming periods.

Overall, these positive dynamics provide a **solid internal foundation** and reinforce the constructive relationship between the programme and its beneficiaries. They also highlight the capacity of the JS team to act not only as coordinators but also as facilitators of dialogue and learning across the programme.

**Challenges**

Despite these positive dynamics, internal communication at programme level faces several limitations. The most significant concern is the **limited availability of resources**. With only 1.5 full-time equivalents dedicated to communication, supplemented by interns and volunteers, the team is required to manage a wide and complex portfolio of tasks. Team cohesion and flexibility compensate for this to some extent, but the restricted human resources inevitably limit the programme's ability to plan strategically, develop innovative approaches, and strengthen capitalisation activities.

Another constraint is the **dependence on external service providers**, particularly for the website. The contracted provider ensures continuity, but the arrangement reduces the team's agility. Adjustments to digital tools often involve lengthy processes, leaving the programme less able to respond quickly to emerging needs. Occasional outsourcing of graphic design has been helpful, but the overall use of external providers remains fragmented and has not yet been developed into a strategic complement to internal resources.

**Budgetary trade-offs** also affect internal communication. The decision to allocate a significant portion of the budget to the 25th anniversary event yielded important visibility but left fewer resources for other activities in

subsequent years. Given the comparatively modest size of the communication budget, such one-off investments inevitably reduce the flexibility available to sustain a balanced range of activities over time.

Finally, coordination with macro-regional partners such as EUSALP and the Alpine Convention presents both opportunities and challenges. For external audiences, there is sometimes a lack of clarity about the distinct roles of ASP, EUSALP and the Alpine Convention which can dilute visibility and messaging. At the same time, the rotating presidencies and dispersed governance structures of macro-regional initiatives make it difficult to establish fully stable communication routines. While cooperation between the three actors has already taken shape and is currently working well under the Austrian EUSALP Presidency, there remains **room for improvement in strengthening internal coordination and clarifying complementary roles**, in order to build stronger synergies and ensure more consistent communication within the Alpine ecosystem.

**Recommendations**

Based on the analysis of resources, strengths, and challenges at programme level, several measures could be taken to further strengthen internal communication and ensure that limited resources are used as effectively as possible.

- **Ensure adequate and sustainable staffing**: Explore options to stabilise human resources for communication, reducing reliance on interns and volunteers for core tasks. This would strengthen continuity, allow for more strategic planning, and reduce risks linked to capacity bottlenecks.
- **Use external providers more strategically**: Complement the small in-house team with external expertise for specific tasks such as video production, campaign design, or training. This would broaden the range of outputs, increase professionalism, and enable internal staff to focus on coordination and strategic tasks.
- **Clarify and strengthen coordination with macro-regional partners**: Continue working regularly with the teams of EUSALP and the Alpine Convention to improve role clarity and consistency in communication. A joint roadmap/calendar or light cooperation protocol could help strengthen synergies and ensure coherent messaging within the Alpine governance ecosystem (e.g., for the distribution of the joint brochure which is currently under development; inclusion of young people through the Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention or the EUSALP Youth Council...).

**Key message:** The Alpine Space Programme's communication team demonstrates strong teamwork and adaptability but operates with leaner resources and less outsourcing than most comparable Interreg

programmes. As one staff member put it: *"We're a small communications team, but we make it work through teamwork and flexibility."*

### 2.2.2 The Alpine Space Contact Points

The Alpine Space Contact Points (ACPs) play a vital role in linking the programme with national stakeholders and potential beneficiaries. They act as multipliers of information, ensure that applicants understand programme rules, and provide tailored guidance in national languages. Effective communication between the JS and the ACP network is therefore central to the broader capacity-building objective.

**Strengths**

Communication between the JS and the ACPs is generally smooth and well structured. Regular coordination meetings and targeted mailings ensure that ACPs are kept informed about programme developments and calls. The provision of ready-to-use materials — such as templates or campaign resources — was also highlighted as useful for supporting their outreach tasks.

Beyond these exchanges, ACPs themselves are **active multipliers**, using their own communication channels to disseminate Alpine Space information in national contexts. This includes personal LinkedIn profiles, institutional websites, and, in some cases, national or regional social media accounts. This diversity of channels allows the programme's messages to reach broader and more tailored audiences, while at the same time benefiting from the trust and networks that ACPs already have in their national environments.

**Challenges**

Despite these strengths, there is scope to further strengthen the role of ACPs in programme communication. The regular meetings with the JS are valued, but they focus primarily on implementation and procedural issues. Several ACPs indicated that they would welcome **dedicated spaces for exchange on communication practices**, allowing them to learn from one another's national outreach strategies, compare what works well, and jointly identify ways to amplify project results.

ACPs also underlined that the **internal flow of information works very well in preparation for calls**, when they receive clear updates and guidance to support applicants. However, once projects are approved, they receive less systematic information about project implementation and results, which limits their ability to act as multipliers. This is a lost opportunity, since ACPs are well placed to disseminate project achievements through their own networks and channels.

The citizen survey confirms this gap: while nearly two-thirds of respondents had heard of the programme, a significant share had not, and only a small minority considered EU projects very visible in their region. Awareness is therefore still concentrated among insiders, while broader public visibility remains modest. Citizens expressed a clear appetite for more storytelling, local events, and tangible examples of project benefits. Stronger involvement of ACPs in communication planning, coupled with systematic sharing of project results, could help bridge this gap by connecting programme outputs more directly to national and local audiences.

**Recommendations**

To make better use of the ACP network as a multiplier of programme and project communication, several improvements could be considered. First, the JS could provide ACPs with **more systematic information about project results**, not only during the application phase but also once projects are running. This would enable ACPs to actively share outcomes with their national audiences and strengthen programme visibility beyond the immediate project community.

Second, the programme could create **dedicated spaces for peer exchange** among ACPs on communication practices. While regular online "e-coffee" meetings already exist and on-site national events are valued for networking, there is no systematic annual gathering of ACPs. Introducing thematic webinars or short workshops where ACPs present their outreach activities and learn from one another would help circulate good practices across the network rather than leaving them isolated in individual countries.

Third, joint **campaigns or toolkits** tailored for national audiences could help ACPs amplify communication efforts more effectively. These would allow consistent branding while leaving room for contextualisation in national languages and settings.

Finally, greater **recognition of ACP-led initiatives** — for example, through showcasing innovative outreach campaigns in newsletters or internal meetings — would motivate the network and emphasize the importance of their role. By systematically mobilising the ACPs, the programme could reach broader citizen audiences, as the citizen survey results suggest is both needed and expected.

**Key message**

Communication with the ACPs is functioning well and keeps them closely connected to the programme, especially in the preparation of calls. Yet their potential as multipliers of project results remains underused. By sharing outcomes more systematically and involving them more directly in communication planning, the programme could significantly **expand its**

**visibility at national level and reach wider audiences**. As one ACP noted in an interview: "*Internal communication between contact points and the Joint Secretariat is well developed and effective; I feel well connected to what's happening.*" Building on this strong foundation, the next step is to **empower ACPs to become more active ambassadors of project achievements in their national contexts**.

### 2.2.3 Communication Capacities of Project Beneficiaries

Project-level communication is placed at the nexus between programme support and public-facing results. The programme provides guidance, templates, onboarding, capacity-building and ongoing advice, while projects are responsible for translating technical work into content that citizens, stakeholders, and decision-makers can understand and act on. Overall, the evaluation finds a constructive relationship and strong appreciation for JS support; while at the same time, capacities remain uneven across projects, with gaps that relate to digital tools, skills, time, and clarity of expectations.

**Website**

The programme website serves as the **central hub for applicants, beneficiaries, and project partners**, consolidating all programme- and project-related information in one place. Between December 2022 and June 2025, it recorded around 360,869 page views and nearly 61,000 active users, with an average engagement time of three minutes. Implementation resources were among the most visited pages — the programme manual (12,020 views), the Joint Electronic Monitoring System (JEMS) (9,319 views), and lifecycle guidance — confirming their value as essential working tools.

Traffic was driven primarily by **organic search (58% of sessions)**, followed by direct visits and referrals from external platforms such as LinkedIn and Interreg.eu. Organic search users tended to be more engaged, viewing multiple pages per session, while traffic from LinkedIn and EU programme platforms also showed strong quality. By contrast, **organic social media accounted for only 3.7% of sessions** and tended to produce shorter engagement times, indicating that the connection between social posts and website content could be strengthened.

Since the 2021–2027 period, projects no longer maintain independent websites; instead, each has a **dedicated space integrated into the programme website**. This "one-stop shop" model has clear advantages: it is more resource-efficient, ensures a consistent visual identity across projects, and centralises access to information for external audiences. The analytics confirm that users frequently access project pages via the

programme site, and that the project dashboard is one of the most intensively used sections, with long engagement times (average 5m 24s).

At the same time, the approach also comes with disadvantages. For projects, the integrated templates allow only limited flexibility in how results are presented. Many partners reported frustration that they cannot easily upload videos, interactive visuals, or multilingual content, and that **the rigid structure makes it difficult to highlight results in a user-friendly way**. Several communication officers also noted that **project factsheets remain overly technical** and hard to navigate for non-expert audiences. The lack of flexibility risks reducing the accessibility of project achievements for citizens and wider stakeholder groups.

Performance also varies significantly across project webpages. While some projects clearly exceed the indicative benchmark of 1,000 visits per year, many fall below this target and show relatively short engagement times. This suggests that, although the centralised approach guarantees a baseline presence, not all project spaces are sufficiently visible or engaging to wider audiences. Interviews confirmed that projects would like more control and, in particular, better access and guidance on how to use analytics for their microsites.

Finally, both project partners and JS staff acknowledged that the **reliance on an external provider** for website management limits agility. Requested changes often take time to implement, delaying improvements to templates or navigation. While the one-stop shop model has established a coherent identity and greater efficiency, its current design and governance make it harder for projects to fully showcase their results in dynamic and accessible ways.

**KPI performance related to the website**

The performance of project-related communication can be assessed against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) defined in the Alpine Space Communication Strategy (2021–2027**)** and carried forward in the Evaluation Plan**.** These indicators were designed to capture primarily **output-level achievements**, such as visits to key webpages, but provide limited insights into actual results or impacts in terms of awareness, visibility, or behavioural change. When analysing the website visits, internal visits (of JS and program officers for example) are also included. In this regard, actual numbers of external visits might be lower.

- **Indicator 1.2 – Programme Manual visits**. The Communication Strategy set a **target of 500 visits per month**. Between December 2022 and June 2025, the page averaged around **387 visits per month**, falling short of the benchmark. Given that many stakeholders already know the programme and may not need to return frequently to this

page, the target of 500 visits may have been overly ambitious; a benchmark closer to 350 would likely be more realistic. Moreover, Google Analytics shows no significant spikes in traffic around call deadlines, suggesting that applicants access the manual steadily rather than in short bursts. This underperformance therefore points less to a lack of relevance than to a need for more realistic target-setting, complemented by clearer signposting on the website and stronger integration with onboarding formats.

- **Indicator 1.3 – Project websites**. The benchmark set in the communication strategy was an average of **1,000 visits per year per project website**. Performance has been uneven. A few projects, such as BeyondSnow, exceeded expectations with more than **3,000 visits per year**, while many others fell well below the benchmark. In several cases, short engagement times also indicate that content was either hard to find or insufficiently engaging for users. This highlights not only the variability of project-level capacities, but also the structural limitations of the one-stop-shop project spaces hosted within the programme website, which offer consistency and efficiency but restrict flexibility for tailored communication.

- **Indicator 2.1** tracks the average number of visits to the "*How to Apply*" page, which serves as the main entry point for funding opportunities. The baseline was set at 2,800 visits per month (January 2022), with a target of 2,500 visits per month during calls. Between 2022 and 2025, the page attracted a total of 14,800 visits, with clear spikes whenever calls were open — for example, 5,968 visits between January and June 2024, and 3,846 between May and July 2025. While the overall averages fell slightly below the target, these peaks demonstrate the page's central importance and the strong interest in funding opportunities when they are relevant.

Overall, the KPI framework confirms a baseline of activity and usage, but it remains at the level of quantitative outputs. The indicators say relatively little about whether communication has effectively improved **capacities, visibility, or outreach to citizens**. This limitation will be addressed in Chapter 3 of this report, which proposes alternative KPIs and complementary methods to better capture results and impacts in the future.

**Social media**

Although social media is not the core tool for building communication capacities, it indirectly supports Objective 1 by amplifying the visibility of project outcomes and by showcasing stories that can engage audiences beyond the technical and policy community.

**Programme-level social media management**

The programme's social media presence relies heavily on content generated by projects, particularly success stories, event announcements, and updates that lend themselves to wider promotion. Coordination of this content is largely done **manually** and is **reactive** at present. The JS team tracks project activity informally — often with the support of interns — and shares selected content via the programme's own accounts. This approach helps maintain a steady stream of posts, but it **lacks systematic planning**. Posts are typically scheduled on a week-to-week basis, and there is **no central database of project accounts or hashtags** that would enable more proactive cross-promotion. Moreover, without a monitoring tool in place, the team cannot systematically analyse performance across platforms to identify what types of content resonate most with audiences. As a result, valuable opportunities to reinforce visibility and create synergies across projects are sometimes missed.[4]

**Project-level practices**

At project level, social media usage varies widely. Some projects create their own dedicated accounts, while others rely on the existing accounts of partner organisations, which may have limited reach beyond specific professional or territorial networks. An analysis of current projects shows that **LinkedIn is by far the most widely used platform**, with 25 of the 39 projects listed as active on the Alpine Space website maintaining an active account. This reflects the professional orientation of many projects and their focus on reaching institutional stakeholders. By contrast, channels with greater potential to reach the general public — such as Facebook (9 projects), YouTube (8 projects), and Instagram (6 projects) — are used far less frequently, and only three projects are active on Twitter/X. Notably, almost one-third of projects (12 out of 39) do not use social media at all, relying solely on websites or offline communication.

Projects with dedicated communication staff tend to manage social media more effectively, producing regular updates and visuals, while projects without specialised support often struggle to sustain activity, leading to irregular posting, uneven quality, and limited engagement. Even where accounts are maintained, social media is often used primarily as an information channel — to announce events, share press releases, or publish deliverables — rather than as a space for storytelling, dialogue, or citizen outreach. The BeyondSnow project, which has built a following of around 600 on Instagram, stands out as an exception, but most other project accounts have fewer than 100 followers.

Survey and interview feedback confirmed that social media is recognised as important, but many partners lack the time, skills, or confidence to use it strategically. As one lead partner put it: "*Our project is well known among*

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[4] Annex 6 provides an example of such as tracking system of project social media accounts.

*research institutions, but reaching citizens has been a challenge; we lack the right channels."*

**Areas for improvement**

A stronger programme-level framework would make project-level efforts more effective and consistent. A shared mapping of project accounts and an approved hashtag register would facilitate cross-promotion and help unify visibility across the Alpine region (cf. suggested template of project accounts can be found in the annex 6). The provision of simple templates and toolkits (e.g., Canva for branded posts, sample content calendars, suggested story formats) would reduce the burden on non-specialist staff, while basic coaching on analytics would help projects understand what types of content work and how to adapt their strategies.

There is also an opportunity to set minimum requirements for project-level social media use, for instance ensuring that each project either maintains at least one active channel, preferably a page on LinkedIn, or provides citizen-friendly content for amplification via programme accounts. Clearer expectations of this kind would reduce inconsistencies and avoid duplication of efforts through under-resourced accounts. Since growing visibility on platforms such as Instagram takes time and dedicated resources, relying on the programme's established channels for amplification can be more effective. Systematically linking project content back to the Alpine Space website would further improve coherence and strengthen the visibility of results.

For the JS itself, **moving from a reactive to a more proactive model** — for example, by using native scheduling tools (Meta Business Suite, LinkedIn scheduler) and introducing a light monitoring tool (e.g., Metricool, Hootsuite) — would provide the basis for monthly insights and more structured campaign planning.

**Summary**

Overall, social media plays an important role in both programme- and project-level communication, but its potential has not been fully harnessed. At programme level, the absence of systematic planning and monitoring reduces efficiency. At project level, uneven capacities, low follower bases, and reliance on partner accounts limit the consistency and reach of messaging. Strengthening the connection between programme and project efforts, setting minimum standards, and supporting projects with practical tools and training would help social media evolve from a reactive channel into a more strategic instrument for visibility and citizen outreach.

**Newsletter**

The newsletter has proven to be one of the programme's most effective and trusted communication tools. It plays a central role in supporting applicants and beneficiaries by providing reliable, timely, and action-oriented information. Campaigns linked to funding opportunities, terms of reference, and information sessions consistently perform well. For example, the Call 3 opening (May 2024) and related terms of reference (April 2024) newsletters achieved **open rates of over 60%** and **click rates above 10%**, significantly exceeding public-sector benchmarks (where averages are often closer to 25% open and 3–5% click rates). Targeted mailings, such as follow-up messages to information session participants or invitations to national info days, performed even more strongly, with open rates approaching 70% and click-through rates of up to 55%. These exceptional figures underline the **high level of trust stakeholders place in the newsletter as the primary channel for official programme information**.

**Scope vis-à-vis Objective 1**

In relation to Objective 1 ("Build capacities for effective implementation and communication at programme and project level"), the newsletter currently delivers above all on the **implementation side**. It provides practical guidance for navigating procedures, ensures deadlines and requirements are clearly communicated, and directs stakeholders to key support tools such as JEMS, frequently asked questions, or the partner search platform. German and French language editions have also been well received, confirming the added value of multilingual editions for capacity-building.

However, the newsletter is not yet used systematically as a tool to **build communication capacities among project partners**. While it excels at conveying procedural information, its potential as a vehicle for strengthening storytelling skills, encouraging cross-project synergies, or showcasing good practices by theme remains unexplored (which is also relevant with respect to Objective 2 and Objective 3 - capitalisation of project results).

**Opportunities for further development**

Interviews and survey responses pointed to several ways in which the newsletter could evolve into a stronger instrument for communication capacity-building:

- **Peer learning and good practices.** Including a short feature such as "*Project of the Month*" or "*Best Communication Practice*" would showcase effective examples and provide inspiration for other projects when used in a dedicated newsletter for projects.
- **Interactivity.** Introducing light-touch interactive elements — such as one-click polls, short feedback questions, or links to communication toolkits — would make the newsletter more engaging and turn it into a two-way tool rather than a static broadcast.
- **Thematic clustering.** Newsletters could highlight groups of projects working on similar themes (e.g., green mobility, youth engagement, cultural heritage), helping beneficiaries see synergies across the portfolio and positioning projects within broader policy debates.
- **Visual storytelling.** Adding more infographics, short videos, or social media-ready visuals could make newsletter content easier to repurpose and more appealing to wider audiences.

The newsletter is already a **high-performing and trusted channel** for implementation support – no matter if it is sent out every month or every two months - with engagement rates far above average benchmarks. Its untapped potential lies in leveraging it not only as a procedural tool, but also as a **capacity-building instrument** that encourages peer learning, thematic connections, and stronger communication practices among projects.

**Strengths**

Looking at the different digital tools and guidance provided, the evaluation highlighted several strengths in the way the JS supports project communication. A key strength lies in the **high utility of core implementation resources**. Website analytics confirm that pages dedicated to the programme manual, JEMS, and lifecycle guidance are heavily consulted, underlining their importance as everyday working tools for applicants and beneficiaries.

Another strength is the **clarity and usability of guidance** provided. Branding assets, templates, and communication guidelines are widely used and help to maintain a consistent Alpine Space identity across diverse projects. Partners recognise these tools as practical and supportive in shaping their communication outputs.

The **programme newsletter** also stands out as a particularly effective channel. With open and click rates far above public-sector benchmarks, it is trusted by stakeholders as the primary source of reliable and action-oriented programme information. In this sense, it not only disseminates critical updates but also strengthens partners' confidence that they are well-guided through complex procedures.

**In-person events** add another important dimension. A milestone was the 25th anniversary celebration in Salzburg in May 2025, which was highly appreciated by both programme and project stakeholders, as well as Alpine Space Contact Points. The event was praised for its visibility, organisation, and sense of community, and participant surveys confirmed that **networking opportunities** during such events are particularly valued by beneficiaries.

**Capacity-building activities** such as the "Get Started" and "Lead Applicant" seminars**,** as well as **ad-hoc training opportunities**, provide an additional layer of support. Partners consistently appreciated these formats, both for clarifying expectations and for **enabling networking** among beneficiaries. Respondents also indicated that they would welcome more structured peer learning to share approaches and success stories across projects.

Finally, the evaluation identified **examples of good practices** at project level. Initiatives that either dedicated staff time to communication or integrated external expertise, such as design agencies, demonstrated higher quality and visibility. These cases confirm that targeted investment in communication resources can generate tangible benefits for project outreach and impact.

Overall, these strengths demonstrate that the programme has established a solid foundation of tools, channels, and support mechanisms that are valued by project partners, and which contribute positively to the implementation of the communication strategy.

**Challenges**

At the same time, the evaluation also identified several challenges that limit the overall effectiveness and consistency of project communication.

A key issue is the **uneven communication capacity across projects**. Many consortia lack a dedicated communicator, and communication tasks are often assigned to technical staff with limited time and expertise. This leads to varying levels of quality, continuity, and creativity in outreach.

The **website structure** presents another constraint. While the integration of project pages into the central programme website provides efficiency and a one-stop shop for users, the rigid template restricts projects from presenting results in a dynamic, multilingual, or media-rich way. Project factsheets are often perceived as too technical, making it difficult to reach broader audiences.

**Social media coordination** also remains fragmented. At programme level, content curation is reactive and managed without systematic planning or monitoring. At project level, approaches differ widely: some create their

own accounts, while others rely on partner channels, leading to inconsistent reach and visibility. Without a shared mapping of accounts, hashtags, or systematic cross-promotion, opportunities for scaling up results are frequently missed.

Training formats, while appreciated, are not yet sufficient to meet partners' needs. **Written guidance alone is not enough** for non-specialist staff who are expected to handle communication. Projects consistently asked for more hands-on support in areas such as storytelling, video production, and social media analytics.

Finally, projects face **structural budget and time constraints**. Communication costs must be covered under general staff or external expertise categories, which are capped and compete with other priorities. As a result, many projects cannot allocate sufficient time or resources to communication, limiting their ability to plan strategically, experiment with richer formats, or sustain visibility after the project ends.

Taken together, these challenges indicate that **while the programme has built a strong support framework, project-level communication remains uneven**. Structural constraints, limited flexibility of tools, and resource gaps prevent many projects from fully realising their communication potential.

**Recommendations**

Building on the strengths identified and addressing the persistent challenges, several measures could further strengthen the communication capacities of project beneficiaries. These recommendations aim to make tools more flexible, provide partners with the skills and data they need, and create incentives for higher-quality communication across the programme.

**Website & content experience**

- Redesign project factsheet navigation and allow for more flexible modules (video blocks, interactive visuals, multilingual content).
- Ensure that each project has a basic analytics dashboard (page views, dwell time, downloads) and a short guide on interpreting it.
- Complement KPIs with quality signals (engagement time, returning users, bounce, downloads) to move beyond sheer visits.

**Social media**

- Create a shared register of project accounts and approved hashtags for the programme; offer Canva templates and content calendar models to projects.
- Deliver introductory analytics coaching and peer learning sessions where high-performing projects share practical tips.

- For the JS: adopt native schedulers and a light monitoring tool to produce monthly insights and plan proactive cross-promotion.

**Training & onboarding**

- Add a communications onboarding slot to "Get Started" seminars specifically for project communications staff (or designated leads).
- Offer hands-on micro-trainings (storytelling, smartphone video, image rights, accessibility, basic SEO, responsible use of AI), with short 'how-to' videos and checklists. One training per quarter would be ideal.
- Having **facilitated spaces for exchange and peer learning among projects** within the same priorities or themes would provide **opportunities to share and create synergies**. One project reached out on their own initiative to another similar thematic project to share synergies, but in general the projects would like to see more facilitated spaces from the Programme's end.
- **Networking opportunities** were repeatedly mentioned in the previous surveys (Lead Applicant and Get Started seminars, 2024) as highly valued, and participants would like to see more of these opportunities..

**Good practice & incentives**

- **Showcasing best practices.** Establish a regular "*project of the month*" or "*best practice*" feature on the website and in the newsletter. Highlighting strong and replicable approaches would not only give recognition to high-performing projects but also provide concrete inspiration for others.
- **Ensuring dedicated communication capacity.** Encourage projects to explicitly allocate time to communication tasks within their teams (e.g., 25–50% of a staff role), or to contract an external provider or partner organisation with communication expertise. This would help prevent situations where communication is handled only as a secondary responsibility by technical staff, which often leads to lower visibility and inconsistent outreach.
- **Embedding communication roles in applications.** Consider going further by recommending, or even requiring, that each project designate a communication officer (internal or external) as part of the application process. This would ensure that communication activities are not only planned but also adequately resourced and implemented by staff with the necessary time and skills.

**Provider model & future-proofing**

- In provider discussions, advocate for modular, media-ready templates and quicker change cycles in the next phase.
- Consider light outsourcing for training and video production at programme level to raise the baseline quality and reduce the burden on non-specialists.

**Key message**

**Project beneficiaries value the programme's guidance and channels, but capacities remain uneven**. Practical skills support, clearer expectations, and modest improvements to web and social tooling would unlock more consistent, higher-quality communication of results across the Alpine region. As one project partner put it: "*We need more training in practical communication skills — storytelling, social media, video — not just guidelines.*"

> **Good practices**
> - The **WATERWISE** project employed a dedicated communications manager, ensuring strong strategy and implementation.
> - **AlpTextyles** collaborated with a communications design agency as a project partner, raising visibility and improving quality.
> - One project used low-cost simultaneous interpretation at an event to reach local audiences in their own language; a replicable, public-friendly practice.

## 2.3 Objective 2: Bring the programme closer to citizens

This objective focuses on moving beyond institutional and project circles to connect more directly with Alpine citizens. Communication is not only about meeting visibility requirements; it is about **showing how transnational cooperation improves everyday life in the Alpine region**. The evaluation therefore combined qualitative evidence (interviews and focus groups with project partners, JS staff, ACPs, youth representatives) with quantitative insights (citizen survey, web and social analytics, newsletter performance) to assess what is working and where barriers persist.

The JS already deploys several channels and formats with a citizen-facing dimension. The **programme website** provides project pages and an output library accessible to wider audiences, while the **newsletter**, including editions in German and French, features project stories in a more localised format. **Social media channels** (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) are used to highlight project updates, awareness days, youth engagement, and

opportunities for involvement. **On-site events**, such as the 25th anniversary celebration in Salzburg, generated visibility and helped to build a sense of community. In addition, **the Alpine Space Contact Points** disseminate programme messages through their own institutional and personal channels, and youth structures such as the **EUSALP Youth Council** and **Alpine Convention Youth Parliament** have been engaged on an ad-hoc basis to share experiences with their peers.

Nevertheless, despite this solid baseline, **several barriers continue to limit the programme's ability to connect with citizens more broadly.** Stakeholders consistently pointed to three main issues:

- **Language:** most programme-level content is in English, which reduces accessibility for citizens who expect information in their national language.
- **Tone & format:** communication often remains technical and text-heavy, making it harder for non-specialists to see the concrete relevance of results.
- **Visibility & balance** outreach is uneven across countries and channels (e.g. Switzerland, Slovenia, and Liechtenstein are underrepresented), which reinforces the perception that programme activities are not equally visible across the Alpine Region.

Project partners, ACPs, and youth representatives expressed a clear appetite for **citizen-focused storytelling** (plain language, strong visuals, relatable benefits) and for **capacity-building** to create such content.

### 2.3.1 Survey insights: citizens' perceptions (Sept 2025)

The multilingual citizen survey conducted between June and September 2025 among **a total of 223 persons** (minimum target were 100 persons) offers important insights into how the Alpine Space Programme is perceived beyond the core community of project partners and institutional stakeholders. While the survey sample must be interpreted with caution — since many respondents were reached through programme or project channels including the ACPs and therefore already had some awareness of Interreg — the findings reveal both strengths and persistent gaps in visibility and recognition.
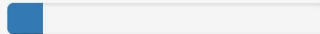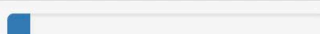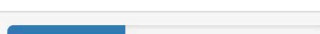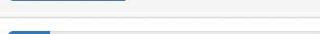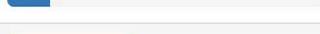
**Awareness and use**

Most respondents reported recognising the Alpine Space logo and associating it with European cooperation. Around half had visited the programme website, confirming its role as a central reference point, while fewer than one in four reported engaging with the programme's social media channels. This discrepancy points to a preference–use gap: while

many citizens say they would like to receive updates via social media, in practice they are not yet connecting with Alpine Space's official accounts.

- 64.13% of respondents have heard of the Alpine Space Programme, mainly through **projects and local authorities**.
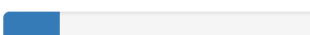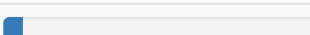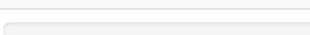
If you know the Alpine Space Programme, how did you hear about it?

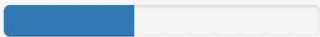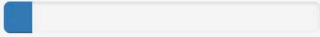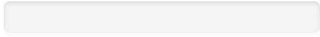| | | Answers | Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|
| Social media | | 25 | 11.21 % |
| Local event | | 15 | 6.73 % |
| Local media | | 16 | 7.17 % |
| Local authority | | 37 | 16.59 % |
| Project | | 83 | 37.22 % |
| Other | | 30 | 13.45 % |
| No Answer | | 86 | 38.57 % |

**Meaning and identity**

The programme's **logo** functions well for insiders, as it is consistently associated with EU cooperation and Alpine collaboration. However, the **programme symbol** is less intuitive. While some respondents interpreted it positively (as mountains, paths, or symbols of growth and sustainability), many saw it as abstract or bureaucratic, with several comparing it to a financial chart. The inclusion of the "2021–2027" timeline was criticised for making the symbol feel temporary or time-bound rather than a lasting emblem of cooperation. Recognition of the programme's logo was high (75.78%), but nearly half of respondents **had never seen its symbol.**

Have you ever seen this logo (shown above)?

| | | Answers | Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | | 169 | 75.78 % |
| No | | 40 | 17.94 % |
| Not sure | | 14 | 6.28 % |
| No Answer | | 0 | 0.00 % |
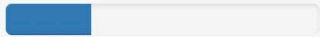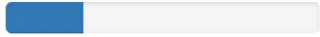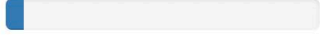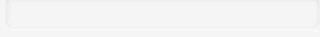
**Have you ever seen this symbol? (shown above)**

|  |  | Answers | Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes |  | 92 | 41.26 % |
| No |  | 111 | 49.78 % |
| Not sure |  | 20 | 8.97 % |
| No Answer |  | 0 | 0.00 % |

## Preferred channels
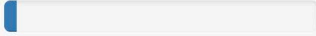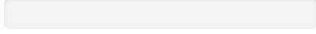
When asked how they would like to hear about projects, respondents prioritised **social media** (62%), **local press** (47%), **community events** (47%), and **municipal websites** (27%). Flyers and posters (25%) were also considered relevant, especially in smaller communities. These preferences suggest that while digital outreach is essential, traditional local channels and in-person engagement remain crucial for building visibility at citizen level.

**What is the best way for you to receive information about projects in your area?**
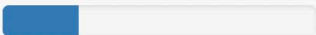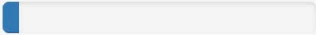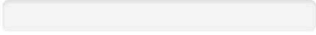
|  |  | Answers | Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|
| Local press |  | 104 | 46.64 % |
| Social media |  | 137 | 61.43 % |
| Municipality website |  | 61 | 27.35 % |
| Posters/flyers |  | 55 | 24.66 % |
| Community events |  | 105 | 47.09 % |
| Other |  | 13 | 5.83 % |
| No Answer |  | 0 | 0.00 % |

50% of the respondents have visited the ASP website, but only 24% have visited its social media channels, most often LinkedIn.
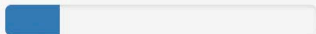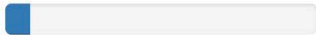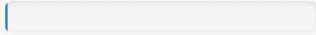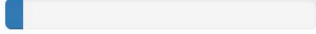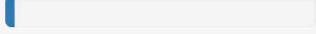
**Have you ever visited the Alpine Space Programme's website?**

| | | Answers | Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | | 113 | 50.67 % |
| No | | 101 | 45.29 % |
| Not sure | | 9 | 4.04 % |
| No Answer | | 0 | 0.00 % |

**Have you ever visited the Alpine Space Programme's social media channels?**

| | | Answers | Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | | 54 | 24.22 % |
| No | | 157 | 70.40 % |
| Not sure | | 12 | 5.38 % |
| No Answer | | 0 | 0.00 % |
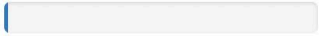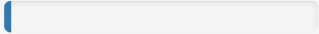
**If yes, which social media channel?**

| | | Answers | Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|
| LinkedIn | | 39 | 17.49 % |
| Facebook | | 18 | 8.07 % |
| X | | 2 | 0.90 % |
| Instagram | | 13 | 5.83 % |
| YouTube | | 7 | 3.14 % |
| No Answer | | 171 | 76.68 % |

## Content expectations

Across the questionnaire, respondents expressed a clear demand for communication that is more accessible and engaging. They called for **plainer language**, **real-life stories**, and a stronger focus on **tangible benefits**, such as jobs created, services improved, or community events organised. Several respondents emphasised that projects should be presented "in a nutshell," with less technical detail and more emphasis on what changes locally because of Alpine cooperation.

**How could EU-funded projects be more visible in your region?**

| | | Answers | Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|
| Clearer communication | | 103 | 46.19 % |
| Real-life stories or testimonials | | 116 | 52.02 % |
| Events in my area | | 134 | 60.09 % |
| School or community involvement | | 124 | 55.61 % |
| Practical benefits (e.g. services, products, jobs) | | 130 | 58.30 % |
| Nothing in particular | | 3 | 1.35 % |
| Other | | 5 | 2.24 % |
| No Answer | | 0 | 0.00 % |

## Geography and language

The survey confirmed **geographic imbalances** also visible in web and social media analytics. Italy was strongly represented in responses (with Lombardy alone accounting for 28% of all answers), while Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and Slovenia were underrepresented. Language accessibility was also a key concern. Most respondents preferred information in their **national language**, with bilingual combinations (e.g., German + English, Italian + English, French + English) seen as particularly effective. **English alone was rarely considered sufficient for public-facing communication**.
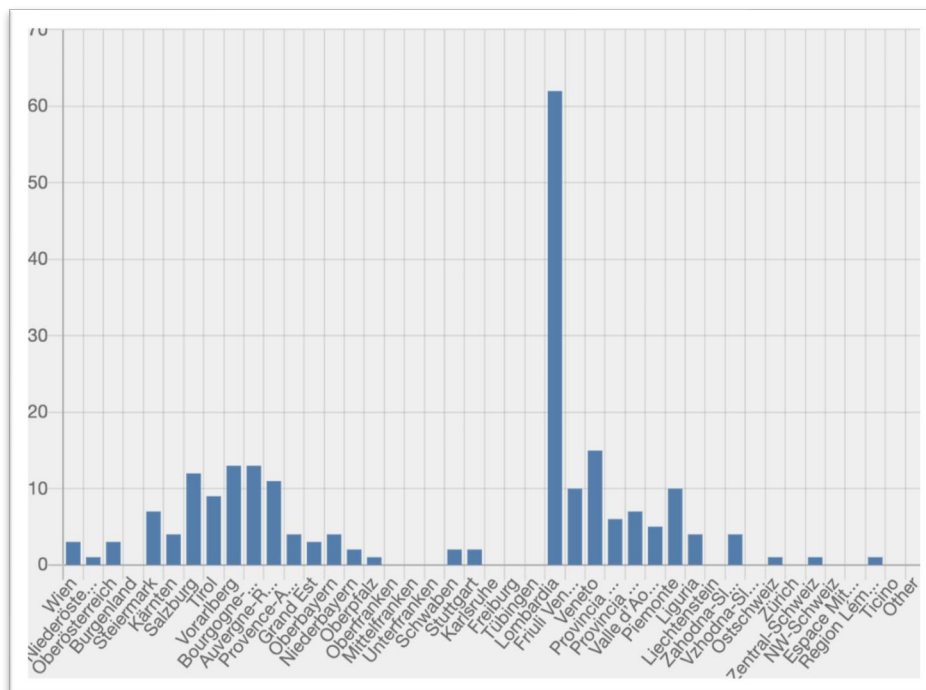


Graph: Survey respondents according to different Alpine Regions.
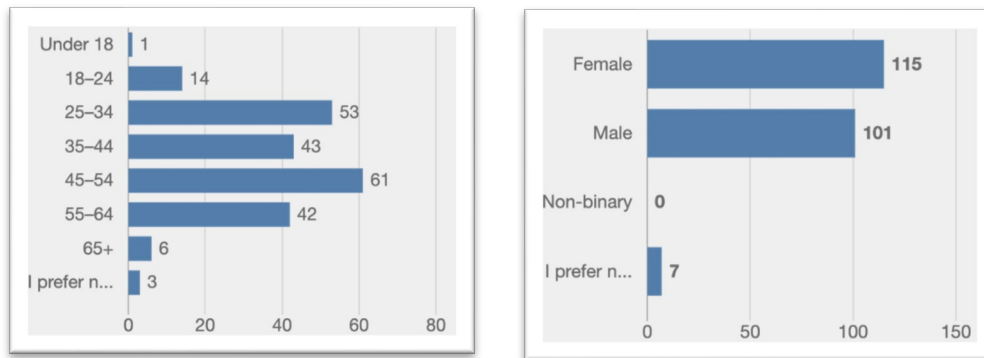
Graphs: Age groups and gender of the survey respondents

## Perceived impact

Responses revealed a divide between audiences already aware of the programme vs. those who are not. Those already familiar with Alpine Space were overwhelmingly positive, describing EU projects as enablers of innovation, cross-border collaboration, and climate action. Typical comments highlighted the value of networking, access to funding, and the sense of "being stronger together." By contrast, respondents with no prior awareness of the programme often perceived EU cooperation as distant, bureaucratic, or irrelevant to daily life. Some felt that results were visible only to public authorities or specific groups (e.g., farmers), but not to ordinary citizens.

**Overall, how do you feel about the impact of EU-funded projects in your region?**

| | | Answers | Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|
| Very positive | | 40 | 17.94 % |
| Positive | | 108 | 48.43 % |
| Neutral | | 57 | 25.56 % |
| Negative | | 4 | 1.79 % |
| Very negative | | 2 | 0.90 % |
| I don't have an opinion | | 12 | 5.38 % |
| No Answer | | 0 | 0.00 % |

Graph: The majority of survey respondents had a very positive (17.94%) or positive (48.43%) view of the impact of EU-funded projects in their region.

**Implications**

The survey confirms that the challenge for Alpine Space is not the absence of meaningful results, but the way they are communicated. Citizens want concrete, relatable stories that show how cooperation improves their lives and communities. To meet this demand, the programme will need to **translate results into plain language**, **embed storytelling into digital and local outreach**, and ensure **multilingual accessibility** across channels. Equally important is rebalancing visibility across the Alpine region, so that countries and communities beyond the current strongholds (notably Italy) feel equally connected to Alpine cooperation.

> **Good practices — Citizen engagement approaches through projects and programmes**
>
> - **AlpTextyles**: commissioned a plain-language handbook and a short "in a nutshell" video; organised a research day and mapped audiences early to tailor messages.
> - **Forest EcoValue**: worked through local living labs and local media; participatory processes to involve civil society.
> - **TranStat**: maintained direct contact with local communities and press across nine territories, ensuring ongoing updates and local coverage.
> - **The Interact programme** organises the **campaign "Interreg Cooperation Day"** every year in September with cultural and sports events that highlight the results of Interreg projects.

2.3.2 Digital tools for citizen outreach

**Website**

The programme website remains the central information hub for citizens and stakeholders, serving as the primary channel for presenting Alpine Space activities, project results and opportunities for engagement. It provides both institutional visibility and practical resources for end-users. Beyond offering static information, the website plays a key role in communicating the programme's identity and ensuring accessibility of content to wider audiences. In the context of Objective 2 – improving communication with citizens – the website is particularly important as it represents the most direct and easily measurable interface between the programme and the general public.

**Strengths**

In this sense, the website serves not only as a technical tool for applicants and beneficiaries but also as the main public window into Alpine Space cooperation. As mentioned before, the integration of project spaces within the programme site in a "one-stop shop" model ensures consistency, efficiency, and steady traffic to project-related sections. Pages dedicated to implementation resources, such as the programme manual and JEMS, are among the most visited, confirming their role as essential reference points. Certain project pages stand out as particularly effective in attracting and engaging audiences.

The availability of **national newsletters and sub-pages** in German and French further supports accessibility, enabling citizens to engage with content in their own language. Together, these elements demonstrate that the website can serve as an effective tool for communication beyond the immediate project community, especially when content is tailored to citizens' interests.

**Challenges**

Despite these strengths, the website faces persistent barriers in reaching wider audiences. User data shows clear geographic imbalances: Italy accounts for a disproportionately large share of new users, while Switzerland and Liechtenstein remain underrepresented. Engagement times also vary across countries, with Austrian and Slovenian users spending more time on the site than Swiss users, suggesting uneven relevance and accessibility.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Feedback from partners and ACPs highlights structural website limits: navigation is not intuitive, and rigid templates restrict dynamic, multilingual presentation of results. This reduces the site's potential to connect Alpine cooperation with citizens.

With respect to **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**, it is important to point to **Indicator 2.3** which measures traffic to the *project and output library*, intended to showcase the programme's achievements to wider audiences. The baseline was 300 visits per month, with a target of 1,000. In practice, the library averaged around 500 visits per month between 2022 and 2025. This makes it the second most visited section of the website after the homepage, but still well below the target. The result suggests that although there is consistent interest in projects, users struggle to locate or engage with results in their current format, which often remains too technical or difficult to navigate for non-expert audiences.

Taken together the observations on the KPIs concerning Objective 1 and 2, these results underline a broader trend: while the website succeeds in

attracting attention during funding calls and in providing technical guidance, it has yet to realise its potential as a citizen-facing platform for showcasing project results and communicating impacts in accessible, engaging ways.

**Recommendations**

To strengthen the citizen-facing function of the website, several measures could be considered:

- Encourage projects to provide **citizen-facing summaries** in plain language, complemented by images, infographics, and short videos that answer the question "what changes locally?" or "How do ASP projects improve people's lives in the Alps?".
- Develop **thematic storytelling hubs** that cluster project results around relatable themes such as climate resilience, youth engagement, or sustainable mobility.
- Improve **navigation and search functions** with filters by topic, region, and impact, making it easier for users to find content relevant to their interests.
- Advocate for **greater template flexibility** in future provider discussions, allowing for multilingual, media-rich formats that bring project results to life.
- Actively **promote high-performing project pages** through newsletters and social media to showcase what works well and provide inspiration for others.
- Expand monitoring beyond visit counts, incorporating **engagement indicators** such as dwell time, returning users, and downloads to better capture the citizen dimension of outreach.

**Key message**

The programme website provides a solid foundation for bringing Alpine Space achievements closer to citizens, but its full potential remains untapped. Clearer storytelling, citizen-focused thematic summaries, and more flexible templates would make project results more visible, relatable, and engaging across the Alpine region. As one project partner observed: "*Managing our microsite is very frustrating — it's hard to organise content logically or make it visually appealing.*" This frustration highlights the need for a more agile and user-friendly approach if the website is to serve as a true bridge between Alpine cooperation and its citizens.

**Social Media**

Social media channels are an essential complement to the programme website in reaching citizens and engaging audiences beyond traditional stakeholders. They provide visibility for project results, highlight success

stories, and allow for more dynamic communication. Within the framework of Objective 2 – improving communication with citizens – social media plays a key role in broadening outreach, creating a sense of community, and making the programme more approachable and relatable to the *general public.*

**Strengths**

Social media is one of the programme's most versatile tools for expanding visibility beyond the immediate Interreg community. The Interreg Alpine Space Programme maintains active accounts on **Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn** and **YouTube** which together provide a broad mix of audiences.

Facebook reaches a balanced gender distribution, with strong performance for practical opportunities such as job calls or partner searches. Instagram, though smaller in follower numbers, has proven particularly relevant for younger audiences, with engagement rates close to 8% and strong resonance around youth-related and environmental content. LinkedIn, with over 4,000 followers, is the programme's largest platform and effectively connects with professionals, policymakers, and researchers across Europe.
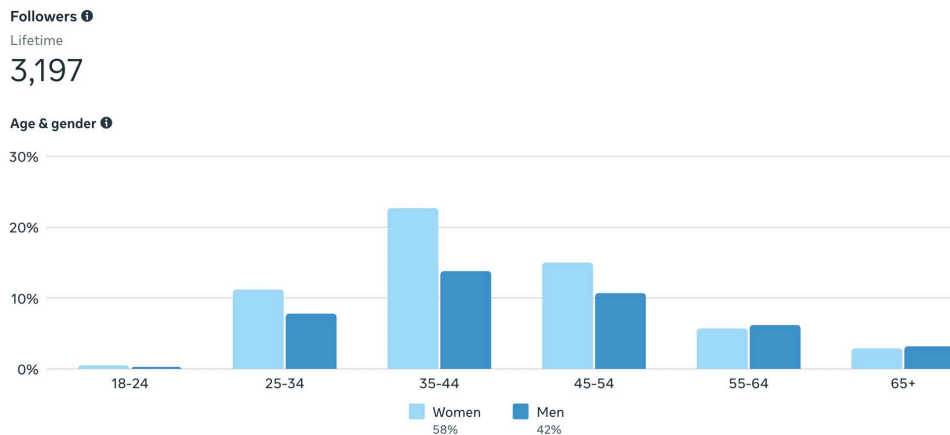


Graph: Facebook followers by age and gender
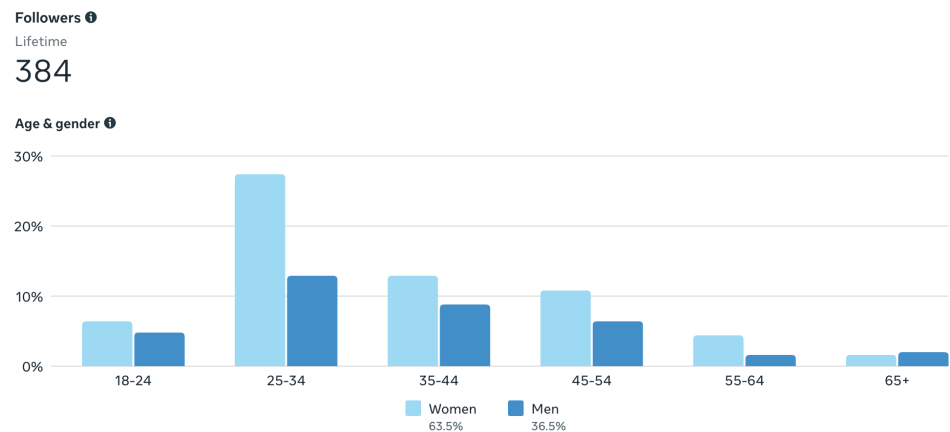


Graph: Instagram followers by age and gender

Programme branding across platforms is coherent and professional, reinforcing recognition and credibility. Posting has become more regular since 2025, with Facebook maintaining a steady rhythm of 10–15 posts per month. Posts tied to international awareness days (e.g., Zero Waste Day, World Day for Glaciers, EU Green Week) and milestone events such as the 25th anniversary celebration in Salzburg have generated above-average engagement, showing that **audiences respond well when content links to broader narratives or timely opportunities**.

At project level, many partners use **LinkedIn** to reach professional stakeholders and have started to tag and cross-post programme content. This demonstrates an emerging culture of cooperation, with programme and projects reinforcing each other's messages online.

**Greater Milan Metropolitan Area, Italy** · 180 (4.3%)

**Greater Munich Metropolitan Area, Germany** · 178 (4.2%)

**Greater Turin Metropolitan Area, Italy** · 154 (3.7%)

**Brussels Metropolitan Area, Belgium** · 147 (3.5%)

**Vienna, Austria** · 108 (2.6%)

**Greater Rome Metropolitan Area, Italy** · 91 (2.2%)

**Greater Paris Metropolitan Region, France** · 89 (2.1%)

**Greater Trento Metropolitan Area, Italy** · 87 (2.1%)
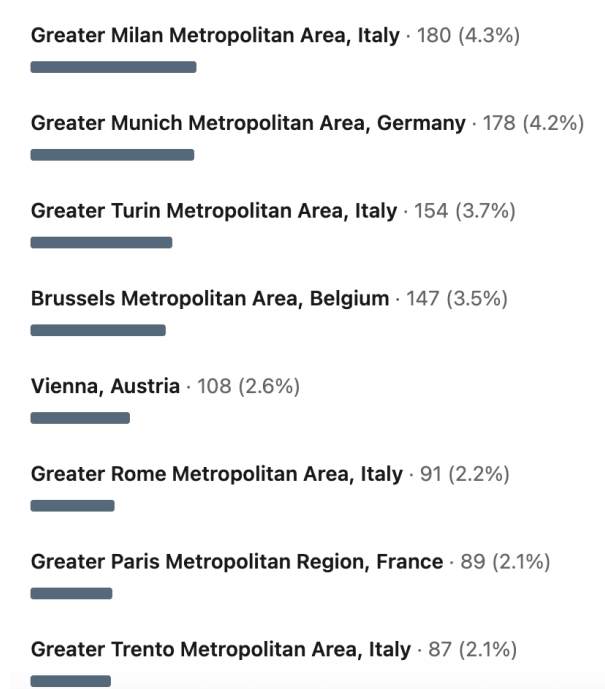
Graph: ASP LinkedIn followers are mostly located in urban hubs

The **Alpine Space X account** currently has 2,948 followers and follows 682 accounts. After a period of sporadic activity in early 2024, the last post was published on 7 November 2024, and the account has remained inactive since then. This shift reflects both resource prioritisation and changing platform dynamics.

The Alpine Space Programme's **YouTube channel** currently functions more as a video repository than as a standalone engagement tool. With 156 subscribers, 108 videos, and around 1,776 views in the past year, its reach remains modest, though both views and subscribers have grown slightly. Content spans tutorials, project stories, and institutional highlights, but discoverability is limited, with most traffic coming from external referrals rather than YouTube search. Demographics suggest untapped potential to

reach younger audiences, as all declared viewers fall in the 18–24 age group. To move beyond its archival role, the channel would benefit from an updated description and keyword-rich playlists, the production of short storytelling formats (including YouTube Shorts), and the integration of citizen voices. Systematic use of analytics on watch time, growth, and thematic resonance could also help position YouTube as a complementary channel for visibility and citizen engagement rather than just storage.

**Challenges**

Despite these positive elements, social media remains underexploited as a channel for citizen outreach. One of the most striking issues is the **geographic imbalance** of audiences.

Nearly half **of Facebook and Instagram followers** are based in Italy, while Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and Slovenia are underrepresented — a pattern also visible in website traffic and the citizen survey. Several factors explain this imbalance. Italy, the largest Alpine Space country by population, hosts a high number of funded projects, and Italian partners are particularly active in sharing programme content, creating a multiplier effect. The Italian ACP confirmed that promotion currently relies mainly on national websites and mailing lists, though plans exist to establish dedicated Alpine Space Italy social media channels (especially on LinkedIn). As these channels have not yet been launched, current visibility largely reflects the proactive efforts of individual partners rather than coordinated national-level promotion.

By contrast, Switzerland's non-EU status and Liechtenstein's small size limit their footprint, while Slovenia faces a more structural challenge. Communication there is centralised at the Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development, which covers all strands of cohesion policy together. As a result, Alpine Space news competes with other Interreg and EU initiatives and does not stand out as a distinct brand. Once projects are approved, most exchanges shift directly to the Joint Secretariat, further reducing opportunities to showcase results nationally. Although a Slovenian-language newsletter reaches readers regularly, the absence of dedicated ASP channels and citizen-friendly content contributes to the lower visibility observed in the analytics.

**Top countries**

Italy

47.3%

Slovenia

8.3%

France

7.7%

Austria

6.7%

Germany

5.4%

Switzerland

2.7%
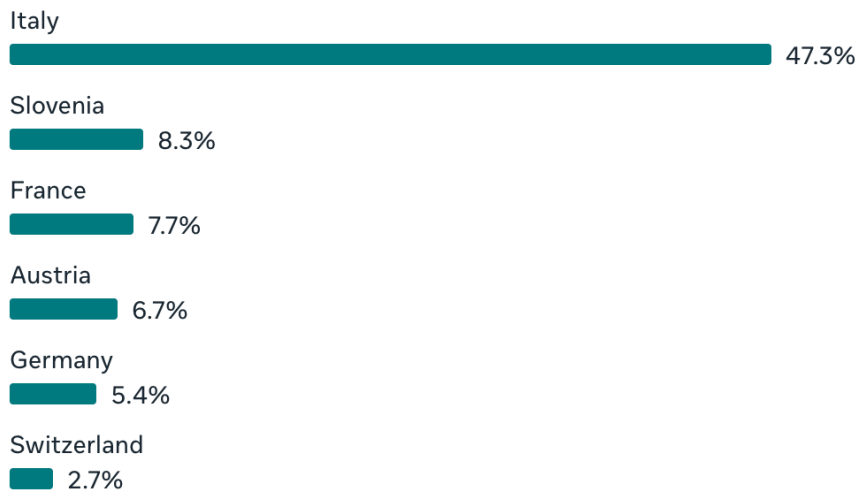
Graph: Facebook followers of the ACP page per country

**Top countries**

Italy

43.5%

Austria

12.5%

Germany

12%

France

7.8%

Switzerland

4.7%

Spain

1.6%

United Kingdom

1.6%

Slovenia

1.6%
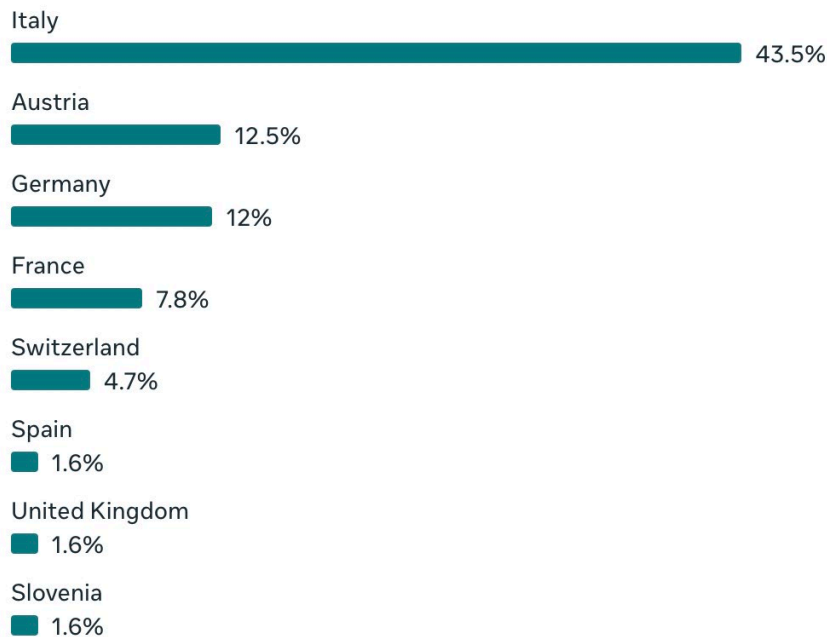
Graph: Instagram followers by country

The **tone and style** of posts also limit engagement. Across Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, content remains largely institutional and descriptive, focusing on calls, events, or deliverables rather than on people, places, or tangible benefits for Alpine communities. Posts are seldom adapted to the specific style and audiences of each platform, and the absence of storytelling or personal voices makes it harder to capture citizens' interest and connect with their everyday lives.

**Multilingual content** is also underutilised. Most posts are published exclusively in English, despite survey findings showing that citizens strongly prefer information in their national languages or bilingual formats.

Finally, **monitoring and planning at programme level** are still relatively limited, relying mainly on manual coordination and without systematic scheduling or performance dashboards. This makes it difficult to identify what types of posts resonate best with audiences or to develop proactive campaigns with stronger thematic focus.

**Recommendations**

To unlock the full potential of social media in bringing the programme closer to citizens, several improvements are recommended, ranging from platform-specific content strategies to stronger geographic balance, more inclusive language use, and better support for projects:

- **Differentiate content by platform**:
    - **Facebook:** Use the channel to emphasise the *local relevance* of cooperation by spotlighting project stories from different Alpine regions. Pair short videos or photo-based posts with bilingual captions (e.g., EN + DE, EN + IT) to make content more accessible for citizens across the programme area. **Facebook** is better suited for *older citizens and practical opportunities* (jobs, calls, events).
    - **Instagram:** Strengthen the programme's outreach to younger audiences by making fuller use of dynamic formats such as reels and carousels. Posts should highlight people and communities, and discoverability can be improved through consistent use of geo-tags and thematic hashtags.
    - **LinkedIn:** Consolidate the platform's professional profile by framing project results as lessons learned or policy-relevant insights. Make greater use of LinkedIn-native formats such as carousels and tagged institutional networks to support capitalisation and connect results with policymakers and professional audiences.
- **Rebalance outreach geographically** by highlighting stories and content from underrepresented countries (Switzerland, Slovenia, Liechtenstein) and tailoring campaigns to their audiences.
- A more systematic but pragmatic approach to **multilingual content** could help expand inclusivity without overstretching resources. English should remain the baseline language across all channels to ensure coherence and international reach. Instead of translating every post into five languages, the programme could prioritise *selected, locally relevant content* - for example, events, project launches, or citizen stories - and publish these in English plus the relevant national language (German, French, Italian, or Slovene). This

approach would make communication more accessible in underrepresented areas while keeping overall workloads manageable. Channel-specific practices can further refine this approach. On LinkedIn, where audiences expect tailored professional content, bilingual posting (English + national language) works well. On Facebook, automatic translation already covers many needs, though key updates could still be published bilingually to avoid misunderstandings. On Instagram, where visuals dominate, English captions should remain standard, complemented by occasional bilingual posts when the national language adds authenticity and resonance. Providing ready-to-use tools - such as Canva templates and a multilingual content calendar - would also help ACPs and projects adapt and amplify posts in their own contexts, reducing duplication of effort. Importantly, multilingual posts do not necessarily entail significant additional workload, as **AI-based translation tools such as DeepL or the EU's machine translation service** can be used to generate accurate, ready-to-adapt text.

- **Support projects** with templates, a shared register of hashtags, and training in analytics and platform-specific strategies. Encourage projects with small or no social media accounts to supply citizen-friendly content for amplification via programme channels.
- **Strengthen monitoring and planning** by adopting scheduling tools (Meta Business Suite, LinkedIn Scheduler) and light monitoring software (e.g., Metricool, Hootsuite) to analyse performance trends and build proactive campaign calendars.

**Key message**

Social media gives the Alpine Space Programme direct access to citizens, but its potential is not yet fully realised. Posts remain too institutional, geographic reach is uneven, and citizen-facing storytelling is rare. With more differentiated, multilingual, and people-centred content, the programme could transform social media into a genuine driver of visibility and engagement across the Alpine Region. As one staff member noted: *"Interreg is very unknown in my social circles… even among people who studied European politics. We need to focus more on reaching regular citizens and the less professional side."*

### 2.3.3 Youth outreach

The **EUSALP Youth Council** and the **Alpine Convention Youth Parliament** represent credible multipliers with established audiences, particularly among younger citizens who are otherwise difficult to reach. Both groups already run their own communication channels — notably Instagram, where the Youth Council's account (@youth.shaping.eusalp) has around 2,000 followers, more than the official Interreg account. This demonstrates clear

potential to amplify Alpine cooperation messages if these groups are systematically engaged.

Interviews revealed, however, that most members had **limited prior awareness of Interreg or EUSALP** before joining these youth structures. Even while serving as members, they admitted struggling to explain the complex political and institutional frameworks to their peers. This points to both a challenge and an opportunity: youth groups can play an important bridging role, but only if the programme equips them with the right tools and content.

Currently, youth representatives and volunteers sometimes act as multipliers on their own initiative by reposting programme content or sharing personal impressions from events. Yet there is no structured approach to guide or support their involvement. Establishing a more formalised role for **Interreg volunteers and interns as youth ambassadors** could help the programme strengthen its outreach. By empowering them with citizen-friendly storytelling formats, visual content, and training, the Alpine Space Programme can ensure its messages are conveyed in a relatable voice — reaching younger audiences that traditional communication tools often fail to capture.

**Recommendations**

- **Invite youth representatives or Interreg Volunteers to co-create behind-the-scenes content** (short reels, Instagram stories, field visit updates) that the programme can repost to broaden reach.
- **Provide micro-briefs** in plain language (short blurbs, 15–30 second scripts, visuals) to make it easier for youth members to explain and disseminate programme achievements.
- **Involve youth in capitalisation activities**, for example by producing "youth take" summaries of project results that translate technical outputs into accessible messages.
- Explore **direct outreach in educational settings**, such as guest talks in universities or collaborations with youth associations, to raise awareness of European cooperation among students who are future stakeholders and multipliers (e.g., in the framework of Interreg Cooperation Day.

**Good practices – Youth as multipliers**

The **EUSALP Youth Council** has built a strong online presence, with its Instagram channel (@youth.shaping.eusalp) reaching around 2,000 followers — more than the official Interreg Alpine Space account. Posts highlight youth participation in events, workshops, and campaigns, often using informal formats such as reels and stories. This lighter, more personal tone resonates strongly with peers and achieves higher engagement than many institutional updates.

Similarly, members of the **Alpine Convention Youth Parliament** noted that they frequently share Alpine cooperation content within their personal networks, particularly via Instagram stories or LinkedIn posts. Although this is not a formal part of their mandate, it shows that motivated young multipliers can extend the programme's visibility organically.

These examples confirm that **youth groups can be powerful amplifiers** of Alpine cooperation if equipped with accessible content and explicitly invited to act as communication partners.

**Key Message**

Alpine Space has built a credible foundation for citizen outreach, but **impact depends on *how* results are showcased**. Plain-language, multilingual stories—tied to places, people and everyday benefits—will do more to bring cooperation closer to citizens than additional technical updates. Or, in a partner's words: "*I would love to reach citizens and the wider public… it's very important to show that we can achieve a lot if we work together.*"

**Summary**

The evaluation finds that while the Alpine Space Programme has taken **meaningful steps to reach beyond institutional circles**, its ambition to **bring achievements closer to citizens** is only partially realised. Informed audiences — project partners, stakeholders, and engaged citizens — value the programme highly, linking it to innovation, sustainability, and European cooperation. Flagship initiatives such as BeyondSnow, AlpTextyles, TranStat, and Waterwise confirm that when results are presented in accessible formats, they resonate strongly with local communities.

At the same time, outreach remains constrained by three cross-cutting barriers: **most communication is still in English** rather than national languages; **materials often adopt a technical, descriptive tone**; and **visibility**

**is uneven across the Alpine region**, with Switzerland, Slovenia, and Liechtenstein underrepresented. This creates a divide in perception: insiders see Alpine Space as impactful and relevant, while many citizens perceive EU cooperation as distant or bureaucratic.

Good practices — including multilingual national newsletters, youth engagement initiatives, and citizen-focused events — demonstrate that **inclusive approaches work when applied**, but they remain isolated rather than systematic. Digital tools also show potential: social media, the website, and the newsletter are established channels with strong reach, but they are underused for **storytelling, local voices, and citizen-facing narratives**.

To bridge this gap, Alpine Space will need to invest more consistently in **multilingual, narrative-driven, and localised communication**. Citizens are looking for **tangible stories** — on climate adaptation, mobility, or community benefits — in formats they can easily understand and in languages they use daily. **Closer coordination with projects**, equipping **youth and ACPs as multipliers**, and consolidating promising practices into a structured strategy would allow the programme to **move beyond the "Interreg bubble"** and strengthen its visibility and trust among citizens across the Alpine region.

## 2.4 Objective 3: Position the programme as a leader in transition

The Interreg Alpine Space Programme funds projects that align closely with climate transition priorities - climate adaptation, biodiversity, circular economy, green mobility, and innovation. Yet, the programme's **communication as a transition leader** remains uneven: strong project-level achievements are not consistently packaged into visible, programme-level narratives that resonate with citizens and policy audiences. This chapter reviews where ASP already communicates leadership in climate transition efficiently, where gaps persist, and what could concretely raise its profile as a frontrunner for an **innovative, climate-neutral Alpine region**.

### 2.4.1 Programme positioning & identity

The Alpine Space Programme is well placed to present itself as a driver of the green and digital transition in the Alps. Its project portfolio already covers themes that matter for citizens and policymakers alike, including climate resilience, biodiversity, circular economy, sustainable mobility, and tourism. What is still needed is a clearer, programme-level story that connects individual project results into a recognisable narrative of Alpine leadership and makes that leadership visible across channels and audiences.

**Strengths**

**Strong thematic alignment** is evident: the current portfolio is closely aligned with ASP priorities (e.g., sustainable tourism, climate adaptation, biodiversity, circular economy). This gives the programme credible raw material for transition narratives, with concrete pilots, tools and partnerships that can be reframed as "what leadership looks like" in the Alps.

**Evidence of influence** emerges from several projects that already practise policy-facing communication — from structured dialogues with authorities to targeted capitalisation events — producing tangible outputs that could be profiled as transferable Alpine models. This demonstrates that ASP does more than fund activities; it helps generate approaches with the potential to inform policy and practice beyond single territories.

**Challenges**

Storytelling across projects remains somewhat fragmented, with communication often technical and reported in isolation, not organised according to common themes or groups of projects. This makes it harder for external audiences to see how individual achievements add up, but it also highlights the opportunity to build stronger links and a more compelling collective narrative for the Alpine Region.

**Brand clarity** remains a challenge, with persistent confusion between ASP, EUSALP and the Alpine Convention blurring roles and weakening brand recognition. Without a sharper identity, ASP's leadership positioning risks dissolving into broader "Alpine cooperation" messaging.

**The capitalisation gap** is evident, as there is no systematic mechanism to cluster, repackage and amplify project outcomes across themes. As a result, promising results often remain project-bound instead of feeding into programme-level storylines that speak to citizens and decision-makers (cf. section below on capitalisation).

While ASP clearly positions itself as a cooperation programme serving the Alpine macro-region, its communication does not yet fully emphasize the distinct **added value of transnational cooperation**. Strengthening this angle would align the programme more closely with the joint messaging developed by all transnational Interreg programmes under Interact's leadership (cf. the joint brochure), underlining that transnational cooperation builds solidarity beyond borders, drives synergies, and delivers change for Europe's green and digital transition. Consistently highlighting this dimension across channels, would help audiences understand not only *what* the programme funds but why transnational cooperation matters for Europe's cohesion and resilience

**Recommendations**

- **Run thematic campaigns:** Launch 2–3 umbrella narratives per year— e.g., Circular Alps**,** Climate-Ready Alps**,** Digital Alps - that group multiple projects under one clear premise, supported by plain-language claims, proof points (facts, maps, quotes), and simple visuals. Use fixed assets (tagline, graphic motif, hashtag) so the theme becomes recognisable over time. This could also mean participating actively in the Interreg Cooperation Day organised by Interact for all European Territorial Cooperation programmes around 21 September each year.
- **Create a "Voices from the Alps" mini-series.** Publish short, human-centred pieces (90–120 words or 30–45-second video/reel) pairing a **citizen or practitioner story** with a **policy takeaway** ("what others can replicate"). Distribute across the website, the newsletter, and social media posts to make the transition tangible.
- **Improve coordination with EUSALP/Alpine Convention.** Institutionalise brief, regular check-ins to ensure alignment between the three communication officers involved (agenda: shared campaign calendar, message alignment, division of tasks). Use the joint brochure (currently under development) as a reference map of roles and agree on a simple rule of thumb regarding who takes the lead on each message (programme funding/results vs. macro-regional strategy vs. convention framework).
- **Run capitalisation sprints:** For each campaign theme, organise a short, time-boxed process (e.g., 3–4 weeks) to extract **lessons and "transfer packages"** from several projects: what has worked, for whom, under what conditions, and how to replicate these. Turn these into **reusable story blocks** (one-pagers, carousels, short clips) that can feed all channels.

**Key message**

The Alpine Space Programme already has the projects and results to claim its place as a leader in transition; what is missing is a **coherent, recognisable narrative** that consistently shows its added value across the Alps. As one team member put it, *"Communication can really be the spark to make changes."* This underscores the potential of stronger, more cohesive storytelling to **transform visibility into influence**.

## 2.4.2 Capitalisation

In current Interact/Interreg usage, *capitalisation* is broadly accepted as the **transfer and re-use of knowledge generated by Interreg projects**, enabled through structured processes that support uptake so that results have a lasting effect on programme areas. Interact's 2025 consultation note adds that programmes operationalise this via governance approaches, dedicated

calls and visibility actions, and stresses capitalisation as a way to optimise scarce public funding and build legacy from past investments[5].

The term capitalisation itself **appears in the 2021–2027 Interreg Regulation**, in the recital describing the interregional strand's role in the "*identification, transfer and capitalisation of good practices*" - a signal that the concept has entered the policy lexicon for this period[6].

The Interreg Alpine Space Programme's Input Paper for a capitalisation call (2025) aligns with this uptake focus, defining capitalisation as a strategic approach to ensure the long-term impact and sustainability of project results by facilitating their uptake and integration into policies, while showcasing the value of Alpine-wide cooperation. It also operationalises this through the pairing of **solution givers** (owners of mature outputs) with **solution takers** (organisations ready to adopt them), anchoring capitalisation in concrete transfer paths rather than generic dissemination.

**Different capitalisation methodologies**

Interreg programmes apply capitalisation through complementary lenses - visibility, knowledge, transfer and policy/impact. However, in practice capitalisation can mean many different things, depending on the maturity of the programme. Some Interreg programmes began experimenting with the concept in 2014–2020 or even earlier. The most frequent methodologies and approaches include:

**Basic level — make results searchable/ easy to find and comparable (visibility + knowledge)**

- Structured libraries and catalogues that validate and classify results for re-use.
- Thematic overviews and mappings that synthesise findings across projects.

**Intermediate — cluster and call for transfer (transfer lens)**

- Capitalisation calls to extend/transfer results (replication, adaptation, geographic scaling).
- Thematic clustering (e.g., living labs, joint synthesis) as a bridge from knowledge to transfer.
- Giver–taker pairings, peer reviews, replication guides and light pilots with evidence of uptake.

**Advanced — communities and policy embedding (policy/impact lens)**

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[5] Interact post 2027 consultation report on capitalisation (January 2025)
[6] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R1059

- Thematic communities/governance projects combining synthesis, transfer services and policy dialogue.
- Programme "platforms" treated as strategic/operations of strategic importance to consolidate outcomes for authorities.
- Policy learning services, targeted briefs and mainstreaming into strategies, standards or funding streams.

### Capitalisation approaches in different Interreg programmes[7]

| Ladder tier | Typical formats | Concrete programme examples | Selection & delivery | Outputs to expect |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Basic** (visibility + knowledge) | Validated libraries, catalogues; light mappings/overviews | Multiple programmes use curated libraries/catalogues; Danube strategy uses thematic clustering/mapping as a stepping-stone | No call; internal curation; quality check before listing; add *offer–demand* tags to entries | Identifiable / Easy to identify, comparable outputs with brief **reuse notes** and **policy relevance** fields |
| **Intermediate** (transfer) | **Capitalisation calls** to replicate/adapt outputs; **thematic clusters** with transfer tasks | Interact benchmark shows ~15 calls: Central Europe, Northwest Europe (NEW), ADRION, Italia–Croatia, etc. (mix of dissemination→transfer; open vs. restricted) | Add **open vs. restricted** and **1- vs. 2-step**; require **giver–taker pairs**, demand evidence (letters/MoUs), small pilots, peer reviews, evidence logs | **Transfer packages**, **pilot adoptions**, synthesis/policy notes, uptake evidence |
| **Advanced** (policy/impact) | **Thematic Communities** + **policy dialogue tracks**; multi-year missions; optional platform/academy | **Euro-MED**: Thematic Community Projects + Institutional Dialogue Projects under missions; "Results Amplification | Competitive governance projects with clear policy gateways; mainstreaming tasks; structured stakeholder roadmaps; | Policy briefs, mainstreaming MoUs/charters, adoption in strategies/funding streams; skills/content hub (academy) |

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[7] Sources: Different Interact documents, focus group interviews and the report "Capitalisation et valorisation des réalisations Interreg", document post-ateliers des 22 et 23 octobre 2024 preparé par Pascal Chazaud

| Ladder tier | Typical formats | Concrete programme examples | Selection & delivery | Outputs to expect |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Strategy" clarifies roles & policy interfaces | academy/portal as enabler |  |

**Capitalisation and communication**

Capitalisation and communication are **complementary but not the same**. Interact's guide is explicit: visibility and dissemination are necessary, yet they are not the main purpose of capitalisation, which is the organised **re-use and uptake** of results. Still, communication is a **key enabler** of that uptake and should be planned together with capitalisation efforts from the outset.

In practice, strong programmes **embed capitalisation in their communication setup**. Interact's new communication guides (2024–25) ask programmes to (i) guide project partners via trainings/helpdesks and written guidance, (ii) promote programme achievements with flagship selection and storytelling, and (iii) use journalism-style techniques to show real-world impact - all of which directly support transfer and re-use. Euro-MED goes further structurally: its **Thematic Community Projects** and **Institutional Dialogue Projects** combine synthesis, transfer services and policy dialogue over several years; an architecture where communication tasks are woven into capitalisation workflows rather than added at the end. At national level, France's **National Agency for Territorial Cohesion** (**ANCT)** complements programme communication by opening channels to non-Interreg audiences (ministries, agencies, national initiatives), explicitly to harness/promote and disseminate Interreg results beyond the usual circle - again, serving as a communications lever for uptake.

**Capitalisation and ASP – state of play**

The Interreg Alpine Space Programme has already put several **capitalisation measures** in place and is now developing a dedicated **capitalisation call** to move from visibility to tangible uptake. To date, programme-level actions include the interactive output library on the website, support for small "rolling-out" projects, and an emphasis on uptake capacity in project selection and appraisal.

At the Programme Committee Meeting in Aosta (Italy) in April 2025, delegates agreed in principle to open a one-step call under **Priority 4**, with

a limited budget and a steered format. Between May and July 2025, the JS consulted delegations and observers to refine the approach. Feedback converged on prioritising Objective 2 - boosting dissemination and transfer with clear pairings of solution givers and solution takers - and narrowing the scope to a small number of topics.

On scope, refined clustering points to two focus areas with the strongest relevance and complementarity: **Circular economy & industrial transformation** and **Climate resilience of snow-dependent mountain tourism**. A third area - reduction of climate-induced risks - was mapped but considered less mature for this call.

Two timeline options are therefore on the table. The baseline scenario foresees publication by the end of 2025, opening in early 2026, submissions mid-2026, decisions in autumn 2026, and the project kick-off by early 2027 for roughly 24 months. An accelerated variant would expedite opening and kick-off by several weeks. Final terms of reference are expected at the next Programme Committee in **November 2025**. It is important to keep in mind that the situation described here reflects the situation as of **September 2025** and may further evolve after the meeting of the Programme Committee.

**What ASP has done vs. what is planned**

**Finalised / Completed (2021–2025)**

- Programme-level foundations: interactive output library; support for small "rolling-out" projects; and selection logic that scores the uptake potential of classic projects.
- Scoping and governance: Programme Committee agreement to prepare a dedicated call; exchanges with peer programmes to shape options and ensure feasibility.

**Planned in this period (subject to PC decision in November 2025)**

- Objective and model: focus on dissemination and transfer using a giver–taker partnership model, optionally supported by facilitators (communication/capacity-building), and a steered application phase to ensure policy relevance.
- Thematic scope: two topics (circular economy/industrial transformation; climate resilience of snow-dependent tourism) anchored in shortlisted, mature outputs ready for replication/adoption.
- Process and timing: one-step call with low administrative burden; clear expectations in ToR (partner profiles, minimum adoption targets, territorial balance); tentative calendar aligned with the baseline scenario above.

**Looking ahead (post-2027 orientation).**

- This call is positioned as a bridge to the next period: if clusters show demand and deliver adoptions, they can evolve into more advanced formats (e.g., communities/policy dialogues), while the current period remains focused on practical transfer and measurable uptake.

**Recommendations**

To position the programme as a transition leader, communication should enable capitalisation by focusing on replication and adoption of results rather than visibility alone.

What ASP can do now, within this programming period means:

- Capitalisation could be **more closely integrated into the EUSALP governance structure.** The current collaboration under the Austrian Presidency has shown the benefits of closer alignment between EUSALP Action Groups and ASP in identifying transferable results and shaping joint narratives. To systemise this good practice, future Presidencies could designate a communication or capitalisation officer responsible for continuity across terms, maintaining regular exchanges and ensuring that project outcomes feed into macro-regional policy processes and vice-versa.
- Make the two **thematic clusters** visible and actionable across channels. Create simple **landing pages** for *Circular economy & industrial transformation* and *Climate resilience of snow-dependent tourism*; each curating a small set of **flagship outputs** (four to six) with a plain-language summary and a one-page How to adopt note that spells out audience, steps, resources and a named contact.
- Reflect these clusters in the **newsletter** through a monthly Transition Spotlight and mirror them on social media with bilingual captions and consistent hashtags. To generate fresh, adoption-ready content, run short **capitalisation sprints** (three to four weeks) with selected projects to extract two or three adoption briefs and a concise slide deck per cluster; publish these on the landing pages and repurpose them for the newsletter and LinkedIn/Instagram carousels.
- Organise lightweight engagement by hosting a quarterly *Capitalisation Hour* (60 minutes, two giver–taker pairs and Q&A), record the sessions, and embed the videos on the cluster pages. Where possible, take advantage of an existing programme event to add a short in-person slot, or align with the capitalisation call to keep costs low.
- Strengthen dissemination through **taker channels** by asking ACPs to coordinate a light distribution list (municipal portals, agencies, clusters/chambers, sector media, national platforms) and by planning

co-publication with the adopting organisation whenever an uptake occurs.

- Underpin all this with a simple **adoption log** that notes adoptions, Memorandums of Understanding or strategy references, pilots started, and any before/after indicators available; use the log to prioritise what appears in the *Transition Spotlight* and to inform end-year summaries for the Programme Committee.
- As a small multiplier pilot, invite a handful of Interreg volunteers or EUSALP Youth Council members to co-create 30–45 second reels per adoption ("what has changed, and who benefits") that the programme can repost. Finally, align these actions with the forthcoming **capitalisation call**: pre-announce the giver–taker model with a one-page explainer and examples of eligible transfer activities; in the **ToR**, require at least one adoption brief and one *Capitalisation Hour* appearance per funded project while keeping the administrative burden light.

**What projects can do now**

- Design for adoption now. Each project could name at least one solution taker, produce a two-page adoption brief and a short replication checklist, and prepare a ≤45-second plain-language video that explains the problem, the solution and the expected benefit.
- Participation in one sprint and one *Capitalisation Hour* could be standard, with assets shared via ACPs for national dissemination. Communication should be tailored to decision-makers—policy briefs, how-to cards and concise service descriptions that state conditions for use and expected outcomes—rather than generic project recaps.

**Foundations for the next period (post-2027 orientation)**

- Consolidate today's practices into a light but dedicated **capitalisation strategy** that clearly distinguishes communication (visibility, outreach) from capitalisation (transfer, uptake, policy influence), sets objectives and target groups, and links explicitly to Objective 3 and Alpine governance structures.
- Continue **targeted capitalisation calls** that fund replication/adaptation of mature outputs and keep thematic clustering as the organising spine; where demand persists, evolve successful clusters into light **thematic communities** with regular policy touchpoints (e.g., via EUSALP Action Groups and Alpine Convention bodies).
- Resource proportionately by designating a **capitalisation focal point** in the JS and setting aside a modest, visible budget line (as a guide, up to ~0.5% of programme funds where feasible) to encourage / promote clusters, produce synthesis outputs and document uptake.
- Finally, monitor **uptake rather than visibility**, using a small, stable set of indicators such as number of adoptions, Memorandum of

Understanding or strategy references, new territories/sectors using a tool, time-to-adoption, and report them regularly to the Programme Committee and in public summaries.

**Key message**

Keep capitalisation practical and visible now - make clusters easy to find, show *how to adopt*, connect givers and takers through light events, and report on adoptions - while laying the strategic and governance groundwork for deeper capitalisation in the next period. This two-tier approach turns existing achievements into recognised leadership under Objective 3 and builds the culture needed to reach more mature levels over time.

As one peer put it in the focus groups, "*The difficult thing with capitalisation is defining what it really means. For us it's about sustainability of project results and synergies. Communication is very closely connected with this.*"

If ASP consistently documents and publicises adoptions through taker channels, the case for resourcing capitalisation becomes self-evident: visibility turns into **influence**, and influence into a shared culture of **uptake** across the Alpine region.

## 2.4.3 Sustainability communication: from intent to a shared framework

Sustainability is one of the pillars of the Alpine Space Programme's mission and a defining element of its contribution to the European Green Deal and climate-neutral transition. The **programme manual** explicitly establishes the ambition to "*support applicants and beneficiaries to reduce the carbon footprint of their activities (internal communication), and profile the Interreg Alpine Space as an environmentally friendly and responsible programme (external communication).*" Yet, this evaluation shows that while operational practices exist, the programme has not yet translated this intent into a **coherent, shared communication framework**. As a result, sustainability remains more of a background value than a visible narrative across programme and project communication.

**Strengths**

The Joint Secretariat has put several **operational practices** in place. Green event guidelines are systematically applied, internal measures to reduce the carbon footprint of daily operations are embedded, and training sessions on how to organise sustainable events have been delivered to project beneficiaries. These steps show that sustainability is taken seriously at the operational level and that the JS seeks to model good practice. Notably, sustainability has also entered the **KPI logic** of the communication strategy. The addition of a dedicated indicator signals intent to track how sustainability is communicated and to strengthen its role as a visible

programme dimension. This is a positive step towards making sustainability more measurable and accountable.

**Challenges**

Despite these advances, the programme currently lacks a **shared definition of "green communication."** Guidance is dispersed across different documents and channels, without a concise framework for how sustainability should be communicated externally. As a result, many projects treat sustainability as an intrinsic value rather than a core storytelling angle. Beneficiaries tend to highlight outputs and deliverables without consistently linking them to environmental benefits or climate impacts.

Another challenge lies in **monitoring and quality control.** While a sustainability KPI has been introduced, there is no systematic process to assess whether projects are effectively integrating sustainability into their communication or whether outputs reach citizens in accessible, non-technical language (e.g., no question on this was included in the 2024 survey among beneficiaries). This gap leaves sustainability underutilised as a leadership narrative, despite its centrality to the programme's identity.

**Recommendations**
To move from intent to visible leadership, ASP should:

- **Define a brief "Green Communication Framework."** A short, 2–3 page guidance note could suggest citizen-facing angles (e.g., "*what this project means for cleaner air in Alpine valleys*" or "*how this tool helps farmers adapt to extreme weather*"), basic do's and don'ts for projects (avoid acronyms like "CCS" unless explained; prioritise photos of people and places over technical diagrams), and establish minimum expectations for visuals (at least one image or infographic per story). Concrete examples from current projects, e.g., *BeyondSnow's plain-language explainer video* or *AlpTextyles' handbook for communities*, would make the framework actionable.
- **Provide a starter toolkit for projects:** Ready-to-use resources on how to put sustainability into practice during project implementation and how to communicate it to non-expert audiences. Examples could include:

    o Plain-language copy blocks (e.g., "This project helps Alpine towns cut waste and save energy by…").
    o A simple *"what changes locally?"* checklist (does this output save time, reduce risk, improve mobility, or protect nature?).
    o Micro-templates such as a Canva graphic ("Before–After: How our valley reduces flood risk").

- **Normalise visibility through a "Sustainability Spotlight."** Dedicating a recurring slot across programme channels would signal that sustainability is not occasional but integral to ASP's identity. Examples include a rotating homepage feature ("This month's sustainability story: How X-RISK-CC prepares Alpine villages for floods"), or a newsletter section highlighting one citizen-facing sustainability result in each edition.
- A monthly **social post/reel** using a simple recurring visual ("Sustainability in Action: [Project name] + [Impact]").

**Key message**

Sustainability is already part of ASP's practices, yet it often stays implicit rather than being communicated. As one project partner admitted, "*We do apply green measures, but we rarely talk about them – it feels more like a background assumption than a story we tell.*" A simple framework and practical tools would make these efforts visible and help position the Interreg Alpine Space Programme as a leader in the green transition.

### 2.4.4 Digital tools for leadership framing

Digital tools are central to how the Interreg Alpine Space Programme communicates its identity and positions itself as a transition leader. The website, social media channels, and newsletter are already well established, with clear evidence of reach and trust among stakeholders. Yet, as this evaluation shows, their current use tends to be descriptive and informational. To fully support Objective 3, these tools need to evolve into platforms that showcase thematic leadership, highlight replicable solutions, and frame Alpine Space as a frontrunner of climate and innovation transitions.

**Website**

The programme website is more than a repository of rules and project outputs; it is the main public window into Alpine cooperation. High-interest projects such as BeyondSnow, AlpTextyles, TranStat, and CEFoodCycle attract above-average engagement, while the special "25 Years" page demonstrated that when results are packaged into a narrative, users stay engaged longer and return more often. The site already hosts a wealth of content on climate, biodiversity, circular economy, and digitalisation, confirming its potential as a key tool for leadership framing.

At the same time, transition content is hard to discover unless users know exactly what to search for. Homepage navigation does not highlight sustainability themes, and filters in the project library are technical rather

than citizen-friendly. Outputs also remain text-heavy, with plain-language summaries and visuals appearing inconsistently across pages.

To address these gaps, the programme could develop a dedicated 'Sustainability & Innovation' landing page that curates flagship projects by theme and provides policy links as well as information on benefits for citizens. Introducing thematic filters such as "climate resilience," "circular economy," or "digital innovation" would make content easier to explore, while short videos, infographics, and case cards would translate technical outputs into accessible stories. Tracking engagement metrics such as dwell time, return visits, and downloads—not just page views—would also help capture whether Alpine Space is perceived as a leader.

## Social media

Social media remains a powerful but underexploited avenue for positioning Alpine Space as a frontrunner in the green transition. Each platform has its own strengths, but the evaluation shows that content often remains recap-style and descriptive, rather than framed around leadership and citizen benefits.

On **Facebook**, visibility is strong around milestones such as the 25th Anniversary and observance days like Zero Waste Day. Posts that use a challenge–solution–outcome narrative perform best, yet innovation content is still underrepresented, and visuals are often static. A stronger leadership format - such as recurring "Alps Leading the Green Transition" posts - could showcase how Alpine projects are pioneers in climate resilience or circular economy, with short videos and bilingual captions making content more engaging and accessible.

**Instagram** offers clear opportunities to connect with younger and more visually oriented audiences. Reels show particularly strong potential: one anniversary reel reached nearly 4,000 people organically, far above static posts. However, by mid-2025 only seven reels had been published, and carousels were rarely used despite their effectiveness in simplifying complex content. Future efforts should expand reels and carousels, tie every post to a tangible citizen benefit, and strengthen discoverability through geo-tags and thematic hashtags. Instagram can become the "visual engine" of leadership if it focuses on dynamic storytelling and citizen-centred narratives.

**LinkedIn** is already the programme's largest platform, with over 4,200 followers including policymakers, researchers, and project managers. It is well positioned for capitalisation but remains announcement-heavy. Posts rarely highlight transferable lessons or Alpine leadership in sustainability and innovation. By **shifting from "what happened" to "why it matters,"** launching branded series such as *Innovation from the Alps*, and using

native formats like carousels and short articles, the programme could build a stronger thought-leadership profile. Including expert quotes and partner testimonials would further strengthen credibility.

## Newsletter

The newsletter has proven to be a trusted channel, with open rates between 41 and 53 percent—well above public-sector benchmarks. National editions in German and French perform even better, achieving open rates of up to 60 percent, underlining the value of localised communication. Many editions feature projects linked to climate resilience (ADAPTNOW, X-RISK-CC), circular economy (AlpTextyles), or green hydrogen (AMETHyST), as well as EU-level campaigns and EUSALP priorities.

Despite this strong baseline, the newsletter still presents most stories as neutral progress updates rather than innovation spotlights or climate transition success stories. Visual storytelling is rare, and citizen benefits are not consistently highlighted. To unlock its strategic potential, the newsletter could introduce a recurring **"Transition Spotlight" tile** - a short, visual case showing the problem, solution, result, and replicability of one project. Stronger use of infographics, photos, and short clips would make content more engaging, while framing stories in terms of replicability would reinforce Alpine Space's role as a leader.

### Strengths

- The **website** already hosts a wide range of sustainability and innovation content; flagship projects achieve above-average engagement. The 25 Years anniversary page proved that narrative packaging can boost depth of engagement.
- **Social media** offers professional branding and a steady posting rhythm; awareness days, youth content, and milestone events attract strong visibility. Instagram reels in particular show outstanding potential for organic reach.
- The **newsletter** achieves high open rates (41–53%) and is trusted as a reliable channel. National editions in German and French perform well, ensuring linguistic inclusivity.

### Challenges

- **Website** navigation and filtering are overly technical; leadership themes (climate, circular economy, digitalisation) are hard to find unless users know what to search for. Outputs are often text-heavy, limiting citizen accessibility.
- **Social media** posts remain largely institutional or descriptive. Innovation and leadership framing are underexposed, dynamic formats (reels, infographics, carousels) underused, and geographic

coverage unbalanced (Italy dominates, while Switzerland/Slovenia/Liechtenstein are underrepresented).
- **Newsletter** content leans toward neutral progress updates; stories often lack clear citizen-facing benefits, replicability angles, or strong visuals.

**Recommendations**

- **Website**: Create a sustainability/innovation landing page; add intuitive theme filters (climate, circular, digital); repackage technical outputs into accessible formats (infographics, videos); track engagement KPIs beyond page views.
- **Social media**: Launch recurring leadership formats (e.g., *Innovation in Action*, *Alps Leading the Transition*); expand reels/carousels with clear citizen benefits; use geo-tags and bilingual captions; strengthen monitoring with scheduling and analytics tools. Position Alpine Space more clearly as a thought leader: share analytical posts, policy-relevant insights, and lessons learned on LinkedIn.
- **Newsletter**: Introduce a recurring "Transition Spotlight" tile to showcase flagship cases; foreground replicability and citizen impact; expand use of visuals; maintain and expand national/bilingual editions.

**Key message**

Alpine Space already has the **tools, content, and audiences** to establish itself as a leader of the green and digital transition. What is missing is consistent framing — turning informational updates into **narratives of leadership, innovation, and citizen impact** across all digital channels.
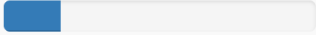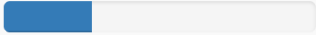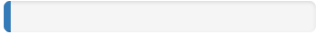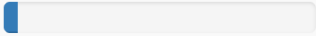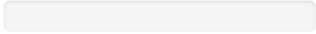
2.4.5 Survey insights: how citizens view ASP leadership in the green and digital transition

The citizen survey conducted in September 2025 provides valuable insights into how Alpine citizens perceive the programme's role in sustainability, innovation, and broader European transitions. While the findings need to be read with caution — since respondents were primarily reached through Alpine Space channels and are therefore more aware of the ASP / Interreg / EU initiatives than the average citizen — they reveal both the opportunities and gaps in how leadership is communicated.

**Sustainability perceptions**

65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that EU-funded projects contribute to making their region more sustainable or climate-resilient.
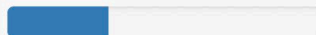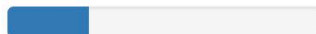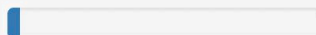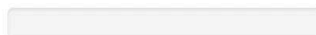
**How much do you agree with the following statement: "EU-funded projects have contributed to making our region more sustainable/climate-resilient**

| | | Answers | Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | | 41 | 18.39 % |
| Agree | | 104 | 46.64 % |
| Neutral | | 63 | 28.25 % |
| Disagree | | 5 | 2.24 % |
| Strongly disagree | | 10 | 4.48 % |
| No Answer | | 0 | 0.00 % |

## Areas of impact

Respondents identified climate change adaptation, biodiversity, and green mobility as the top benefits, with circular economy and innovation scoring lower.

**In your opinion, which of the following areas have benefitted most from these projects?**

| | | Answers | Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|
| Climate change adaptation | | 81 | 36.32 % |
| Green mobility | | 77 | 34.53 % |
| Innovation | | 57 | 25.56 % |
| Circular economy | | 42 | 18.83 % |
| Biodiversity | | 72 | 32.29 % |
| I don't have an opinion | | 58 | 26.01 % |
| Other | | 9 | 4.04 % |
| No Answer | | 0 | 0.00 % |

## Strengths

The survey confirms that EU-funded projects are broadly associated with positive impacts. **Two-thirds of respondents (65%) agreed or strongly agreed that EU-funded projects make their regions more sustainable or climate-resilient.** Citizens particularly recognised benefits in climate adaptation, biodiversity, and green mobility.

Participation footprints are substantial. 56.5% reported having attended an EU-funded event, used a service, or benefitted from a project output such

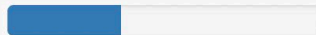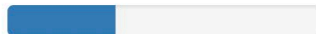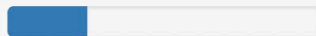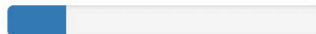as guidelines, training, or infrastructure—evidence that projects do reach communities directly and can make EU cooperation tangible at local level. Among respondents who were familiar with the Alpine Space Programme, participation examples were diverse and clearly linked to programme activities, including:

- **Large-scale events:** the 25th Anniversary celebration in Salzburg, capitalisation events, and youth camps.
- **Project-specific activities:** AlpTextyles community festivals, BeyondSnow events, X-RISK-CC workshops.
- **Practical outputs and services:** bike paths, public transport links (e.g. Micotra, Italy–Austria), mobility guidelines, Natura 2000 sites, tourism services.
- **Knowledge-based products:** guidelines, webinars, training, and conferences on climate adaptation or ecological connectivity.

**Challenges**

Despite these positive impressions, the **link between project benefits and the Alpine Space Programme remains weak**. Citizens may benefit from outputs (e.g., mobility services, local festivals, biodiversity guidelines) but often attribute them to the EU in general, to local authorities, or to other EU programmes (such as Erasmus+ or LIFE), rather than to ASP specifically.

A second challenge is thematic: **innovation, circular economy, and digitalisation are far less visible** than climate and sustainability. While citizens identify and value climate-related benefits, they are less aware of Alpine Space contributions to resource efficiency or digital solutions. This under-recognition narrows the programme's leadership profile.

Finally, **overall visibility remains low**. Only 8% of respondents considered EU-funded projects "very visible" in their region, while 35.43% said they were "not visible." This visibility gap risks reinforcing the perception that EU cooperation is distant, abstract, or only relevant for experts.
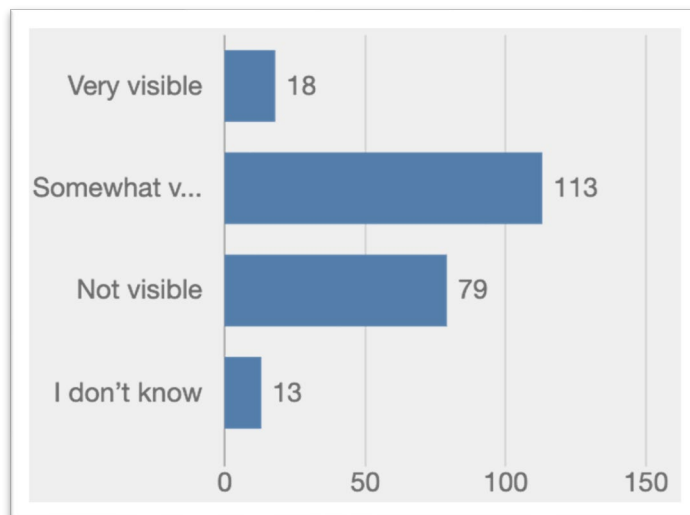
Graph: Showing the level of visibility of EU-funded projects in their region.

**The survey shows a paradox:** respondents perceive real benefits from projects and can sometimes name them, but Alpine Space itself is not strongly recognised as the driver behind these achievements. For informed stakeholders, the programme represents innovation, sustainability, and transnational cooperation. For broader citizens, however, Alpine Space risks blending into the wider EU brand or not being visible at all.

**Recommendations**
To translate existing benefits into recognised leadership, Alpine Space could take several steps:

- **Leverage flagship projects as Alpine models.** Package projects like BeyondSnow, AlpTextyles, TranStat, and Waterwise as demonstrators of Alpine transition leadership, highlighting concrete citizen benefits (safer mobility, greener tourism, biodiversity protection) and disseminating them in national languages.
- **Close the innovation gap.** Increase visibility of circular economy and digitalisation projects by translating their results into everyday examples (e.g., reduced waste in local communities, digital tools for farmers, energy-efficient housing).
- **Expand local presence.** Work with municipal websites, local newspapers, schools, and universities to embed project stories in trusted channels where citizens are most attentive. Talks at universities or collaborations with youth groups could further build awareness among future multipliers.

**Key message**

Citizens clearly see and value the **benefits of EU-funded projects**, but they do not always connect them to Alpine Space as the enabler. Leadership will

be recognised when tangible results are visible, relatable, and consistently branded as part of Alpine cooperation.

### 2.4.6 Overall conclusion for Objective 3

The Interreg Alpine Space Programme funds projects across climate adaptation, biodiversity, circular economy, mobility, and innovation. Citizens also experience these results: survey data show strong perceived benefits and high participation in EU-funded activities (events, services, outputs). However, the **programme-level story is still fragmented**. While ASP supports initiatives that position the Alpine Region at the forefront of the transition agenda, attribution to the programme is often weak, and overlaps with EUSALP and the Alpine Convention blur institutional roles. As a result, individual project achievements do not consistently translate into a recognisable leadership narrative for ASP.

**Capitalisation** is the catalyst that can turn visibility into influence. ASP has laid the foundations (output library, roll-out projects) and is now preparing a capitalisation call that prioritises transfer and uptake through solution giver–taker pairings, with two clear clusters—Circular economy & industrial transformation and Climate resilience of snow-dependent mountain tourism. In communication terms, the near-term task is practical and doable: make these clusters easy to find on the website, package a handful of flagship outputs per cluster with plain-language "how to adopt" notes, and run light, repeatable formats (e.g. a monthly Transition Spotlight or a short online Capitalisation Hour) that showcase concrete adoptions and guide interested "takers" to the right contacts.

Crucially, future communication must go beyond highlighting funds or functional outputs. Messages should link project results not only to regional or national development priorities, but also to the **overarching European strategic framework** - showing how Alpine cooperation contributes to Union-wide agendas such as the Green Deal, biodiversity strategies, or digital transition. This means shifting emphasis from "who implemented a project" or "how much money was invested" towards the values, durable results, and intangible benefits of cooperation: clean air and water, healthier living conditions, more transparent investment processes, stronger communities, and greater trust. Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat communication officers have a multiplier role in this translation task, helping project beneficiaries frame their work as part of Europe's collective transition.

Digital channels can reinforce this shift if used as pathways to adopt measures and practices, not just information boards. A curated **Sustainability & Innovation web hub** with thematic filters, (multilingual) social stories, and newsletter tiles that lay the foundations for replicability will help translate technical outputs into citizen-facing benefits. Small steps

on inclusion, balanced geographic coverage, and more systematic multilingual content will widen reach. **Youth multipliers** (Interreg volunteers, EUSALP Youth Council/Alpine Youth Parliament) can add authentic voices and help localise stories of implementation and adopted actions.

Looking ahead, if demand and capacity grow, ASP can help successful clusters evolve into **thematic communities** with regular policy touchpoints (e.g. via EUSALP/Alpine Convention) and, in the next programming period, consider more advanced structures. But culture change in Interreg is incremental. Starting small, proving adoption, and sharing evidence will build confidence among Programme Committee members and encourage projects to design for reuse, laying the groundwork for more mature formats later on.

**Key message**

ASP already funds the green transition; the task now is to showcase this in action - who adopted what, under which conditions, and with what outcome - while making visible how these achievements also advance the EU's broader strategies. Communication, as one person from the JS noted, "can be the spark to make changes." Treating it as an integral part of capitalisation will turn dispersed successes into a visible, trusted leadership narrative for citizens and policymakers across the Alpine region and Europe.

## 3. Key Performance Indicator Review

This chapter reviews the current KPI framework against the programme's communication objectives and proposes a revised, more strategic set of indicators for 2026 – 2027. The focus is on indicators that say something meaningful about **results** – not just activity – and that serve all three objectives: **Objective 1** (inform and support applicants, beneficiaries, and programme stakeholders), **Objective 2** (engage citizens and make Alpine cooperation tangible), and **Objective 3** (position ASP as a transition leader by enabling capitalisation, adoption, and reuse of results). The current framework comprises **11 KPIs** spanning these objectives – covering, for Objective 1, awareness/satisfaction of applicants and beneficiaries and the use of key guidance spaces (e.g., Programme Manual, project webs); for Objective 2, visits to "How to apply", the project/output library, event

participation and signs of policy influence; and for Objective 3, sustainability orientation (e.g., adoption of green practices and stakeholder perceptions). This chapter tests whether those KPIs capture real progress and outcomes, **revises the list** where needed, and **adds complementarity indicators** with **practical tracking methodologies** – including a method for the newly added sustainability KPI – to strengthen **result-focused monitoring.**

## 3.1 Assessment of existing KPIs (relevance, measurability, progress)

**What is officially tracked**

The current communication framework includes **11 KPIs** as set out in the Communication Strategy. These cover mostly output-oriented measures such as:

- Website visits (overall and for key pages like *How to Apply*, the Programme Manual, and the Project/Output Library).
- Social media followers (LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook).
- Social media engagement (likes, shares, comments).
- Number of programme events and participants.
- Satisfaction rate of applicants and beneficiaries with communication support.
- Share of project partners trained in communication.
- Percentage of co-funded projects adopting a sustainable practices charter.
- Awareness and perception of the programme as sustainable, innovative, or climate-relevant (survey-based).
- Number of projects declaring an influence on public policies.
- Percentage of public authorities in the audience of major programme events.
- Average monthly visits of project websites.

This set provides a solid baseline, but it is narrow: it mainly captures activity volumes and reach, while leaving out dimensions such as the **quality of engagement, geographic and linguistic balance, or the uptake of results**.

**Additional data collected outside the KPI framework**

Beyond the 11 formal KPIs, the JS has established a broader monitoring practice by collecting **web analytics, social media insights, newsletter statistics, and survey data**. These are not formally reported as KPIs, but they generate valuable evidence on communication performance:

- **Website analytics:** Between Dec 2022 and Jun 2025, the site recorded ~360,900 page views and ~61,000 active users, with an average

session of ~3 minutes. The Programme Manual page attracted ~12,020 views (~387/month, short of the 500/month benchmark), while *How to Apply* reliably spiked during calls (~14,800 total visits 2022–25). The Project/Output Library is the second most visited section (~500 visits/month), and individual projects such as *BeyondSnow* exceeded 3,000 visits/year, showing that topical, well-packaged content can achieve visibility.

- **Newsletter analytics:** Average open rates range between 41–53% (well above public-sector benchmarks), with national DE/FR editions reaching ~60%. Call-related mailings regularly surpass 60% opens / >10% CTR, and targeted follow-ups have achieved up to 70% opens / 55% CTR. These data confirm that newsletters are one of the most trusted programme channels, yet they are not part of the KPI set.
- **Social media insights:** LinkedIn has grown to >4,200 followers and is the strongest professional channel, well-suited for policy-facing and capitalisation content. Instagram shows high engagement (~8%) with episodic peaks (e.g. ~4,000 organic views for the 25th Anniversary reel). Facebook provides steady but geographically uneven reach.
- **Survey results:** Outcome-level evidence shows strong perceived impact: 65% of respondents agree that EU-funded projects make their region more sustainable/climate-resilient, and 56% report direct participation in outputs or events.

This data demonstrates that ASP has strong assets - newsletters, high-value webpages, and LinkedIn/Instagram reach - but insights are not systematically integrated into KPI reporting or used to guide strategic learning.

**Where the framework falls short**

Despite this baseline, current KPIs remain **output-heavy and result-light**. They show how much was published or visited, rather than what changed in awareness, understanding, or adoption. Interviewees also pointed to uneven channel coverage: social media monitoring is sporadic, newsletter analytics are not systematically reviewed beyond open/click rates, and richer website metrics (dwell time, bounce rate, returning visitors, downloads) are collected but underused. Several project beneficiaries asked for better access to audience insights, highlighting the need for more regular and practical feedback loops rather than annual summaries.

A second weakness is that the framework does not reveal **who is being reached and where**. It does not show whether communication is balanced across under-represented countries (Slovenia, Switzerland, Liechtenstein) or non-English audiences, even though partners emphasised the importance of bilingual/multilingual content. Nor does it capture whether results are disseminated through "taker" channels (municipal portals, national agencies, sectoral platforms), which is often where citizen-facing

uptake occurs. To make the data more actionable, the programme could add aggregated audience indicators such as country/region, language edition performance (EN/DE/FR/IT/SL newsletters), and platform-native demographics (age, gender, sector).

Finally, the framework underplays the programme's **leadership and capitalisation ambitions**. There is no systematic indicator for uptake (e.g. adoptions, Memorandums of Understanding, policy references, service launches) or for leadership framing (e.g. the share of stories that present a clear transfer path from solution giver → solution taker → outcome). This is a missed opportunity, especially with the upcoming capitalisation call. Simple measures such as an adoption log (with minimal evidence fields), a "How to adopt" note in relevant outputs, and a count of co-publications in taker channels would anchor outcome-level monitoring in daily practice.

## 3.2 Suggested additional KPIs

The current set of 11 KPIs provides a useful baseline and should be retained. However, care should be taken to ensure that all entries describe **real indicators** rather than the **tools** used to measure them. For example, the Communication Strategy currently lists "survey" as an indicator, when in practice the indicator is the *satisfaction rate* collected through that survey. Clarifying this distinction will strengthen the consistency of monitoring and avoid confusion.

To complement the existing set, we suggest introducing a small number of additional indicators. These align with the European Commission's communication evaluation logic model (input → activity → output → outcome → impact), thereby moving beyond activity counts to capture behavioural change, adoption, and territorial effects.

**Objective 1 — Inform & support applicants/beneficiaries**

*Website / guidance use*

- Engagement time on Programme Manual / How to Apply (average dwell time; bounce rate) — Outcome
- Returning vs. new users on implementation sections — Outcome
- Downloads of guidance assets (factsheets, templates, checklists) — Output

*Training & support*

- Training coverage (% of project partners attending core communication trainings per semester) — Output
- Training satisfaction rate (average rating ≥4/5) — Outcome

- Toolkit uptake (# downloads/use of templates; tracked quarterly) — Output

## Objective 2 — Engage citizens & make cooperation tangible

*Awareness & perception*

- % of citizens aware of ASP; % of stakeholders who view ASP as innovative/climate-relevant (periodic surveys/interviews) — Outcome

*Website & newsletter*

- Newsletter performance by language edition (open rate, click rate, unsubscribes for EN/DE/FR/IT/SL) — Outcome
- Section-level clicks (share of total clicks by story/tile) — Outcome
- Website engagement quality on storytelling content (dwell time, bounce rate, returning visitors) — Outcome
- Traffic by country & browser language (share per country; share non-EN) — Output

*Social media & reach equity*

- Impressions / reach (monthly; per platform) — Output
- Engagement rate (per platform) — Outcome
- Language inclusion (% posts with bilingual/multilingual captions, or in a language other than English) — Output
- Gender and age balance of audiences — Output
- Geographic distribution of followers (per country) — Output
- Top-performing posts per month — Output

## Objective 3 — Position ASP as a transition leader (capitalisation, adoption & reuse)

*Adoption & policy traction*

- Documented adoptions (# replications/service launches, with short adoption brief + evidence link) — Result/Impact
- Policy references / Memorandums of Understanding (# references in strategies, ordinances, MoUs citing ASP outputs) — Result/Impact
- New territories/sectors adopting a tool (count per semester) — Result/Impact
- Capitalisation touchpoints (# Capitalisation Hours held per quarter; attendees) — Output

Following the European Commission's communication evaluation logic model (**input → activity → output → outcome → impact**)[8], indicators are grouped to reflect not only what is produced and who is reached, but also what changes and what is ultimately taken up. In this section, **output** covers what we publish/do and who we reach, **outcome** captures short-term effects on audience behaviour and quality of use, and **result/impact** focuses on adoption, policy change, and territorial uptake - mirroring the EU's emphasis on moving beyond activity counts to demonstrable effects.

| Objective | Current KPIs (Communication Strategy, 2021–2027) | Suggested Additional KPIs (2025–2027) |
|---|---|---|
| **Obj. 1 – Inform & support applicants/beneficiaries** | - Website visits (overall and for key pages: Programme Manual, How to Apply, Project Library)<br>- Satisfaction rate of applicants/beneficiaries with communication support (via survey)<br>- Average monthly visits of project websites | - Engagement time on Programme Manual / How to Apply (dwell time, bounce rate)<br>- Returning vs. new users on implementation sections<br>- Downloads of guidance assets (factsheets, templates, checklists)<br>- Training coverage (% of partners attending)<br>- Training satisfaction (≥4/5)<br>- Toolkit uptake (# downloads/use of templates) |
| **Obj. 2 – Engage citizens & make cooperation tangible** | - Social media followers (LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook)<br>- Social media engagement (likes, shares, comments)<br>- Number of programme events and participants<br>- Awareness & perception of programme (survey-based) | - Newsletter performance by language edition (open/click/unsubscribes)<br>- Section-level newsletter clicks (by story/tile)<br>- Website engagement quality on storytelling content (dwell time, bounce, returning visitors)<br>- Traffic by country & browser language<br>- Social impressions/reach (per platform)<br>- Engagement rate (per platform) |

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[8] https://commission.europa.eu/publications/resources-evaluation-communication_en

| Objective | Current KPIs (Communication Strategy, 2021–2027) | Suggested Additional KPIs (2025–2027) |
|---|---|---|
| | | - Format mix (% reels, carousels, polls)<br>- Geographic balance in content (% posts from/about SI/CH/LI)<br>- Language inclusion (% bilingual/multilingual posts)<br>- Gender and age balance (social audiences)<br>- Geographic distribution of followers (per country)-Top-performing posts (per month) |
| **Obj. 3 – Position ASP as a transition leader (capitalisation, adoption & reuse)** | - % of co-funded projects adopting sustainable practices charter<br>- % of public authorities in the audience of major programme events<br>- # of projects declaring an influence on public policies | - Documented adoptions (# replications/service launches + evidence)<br>- Policy references / MoUs citing ASP outputs- New territories/sectors adopting a tool (per semester)<br>- Time-to-adoption (months from "flagship ready" to first adoption)<br>- Capitalisation touchpoints (# Capitalisation Hours; attendees) |

## 3.3 Suggested evaluation methodologies

Defining the right KPIs matters, but **how they are measured** and the respective lessons learned matters just as much. A solid monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approach should connect day-to-day tracking with periodic reflection, so the programme can show progress against Objectives 1–3, course-correct quickly, and evidence outcomes such as adoption and policy influence. Below is a practical, programme-ready methodology set that can be applied across channels and audiences in the remaining programming period and beyond. In the annex, a template for tracking social media performance has also been added.

**Web analytics**

Use **Google Analytics 4 to go beyond visit counts**. Track engaged time and bounce rates on guidance pages (Programme Manual, How to Apply) to see whether applicants are actually using content; monitor returning vs. new users on implementation sections to gauge ongoing support; and instrument file_download events on factsheets, templates and adoption briefs to understand which assets are re-used. Add country and browser-language breakdowns for equity (e.g., the share of non-EN traffic). Review monthly; annotate site changes so cause-and-effect can be read over time.

## Social media analytics

Rely on **Meta Business Suite and LinkedIn Analytics** to track monthly impressions, reach, and audience snapshots (e.g. age bands and gender on Instagram/Facebook; industry and seniority on LinkedIn). Note that these native tools do not calculate **engagement rates automatically**, so these need to be derived manually. If aggregation and easier calculation are needed, add a cost-friendly **tracking tool** such as Metricool or Hootsuite.

## Newsletter analytics

Track open rate, click-through rate, unsubscribes per send and by language edition (EN/DE/FR). Use link-level reports to compute section-level click share (which story drove action). For stakeholder learning, compare editions quarterly and capture one sentence on *why* a particular issue performed better.

## Event and training feedback

After each event or training, collect a three-question pulse (satisfaction on a 1–5 scale; one open question on usefulness; one on what to improve). Report **%** satisfied (≥4/5) and synthesise the top two lessons. For trainings, maintain a coverage rate (project beneficiaries trained) and a simple evidence log of materials used (e.g., templates downloaded after the session).

## Qualitative methods: interviews, focus groups

Pair metrics with **qualitative insight**. Short **interviews or focus groups** with beneficiaries and policy audiences once or twice a year will reveal barriers and language needs that are not evident in dashboards (e.g., what makes a "How to adopt" note credible).

## Surveys (citizens and stakeholders)

Run **another** short survey at the end of the programming period to track **awareness** and **perception** over time. Keep demographic questions voluntary (country, stakeholder role; gender option with "prefer not to say")

and report only aggregates. For citizens, keep the instrument compact and plain-language; for stakeholders, include one or two items on perceived transferability and usefulness of outputs. Translate into key languages to reduce sample bias.

**Outcome & uptake tracking (capitalisation)**

Establish a shared **adoption log** to capture adoptions, service launches, MoUs, policy references and new territories/sectors using a tool. Each entry includes a short description, the taker (organisation), the date, the location/sector, and an evidence link (ordinance, website, media). Add a "flagship ready" date to compute time-to-adoption. Validate entries every six months with project leads/ACPs. This one log underpins Objective 3 and feeds monthly stories (e.g., *Transition Spotlight*).

**Media and co-publication tracking**

Because citizen uptake often happens in **local channels**, maintain a small register of co-publications (stories first or jointly published on municipal/agency/national platforms). Capture the URL and, where possible, referral data and press clippings. Summarise quarterly: which partners amplify best and where gaps remain.

## 3.4 Beyond traditional KPIs: using OKRs to steer communication

OKRs—**Objectives and Key Results**—are a streamlined management framework that complements KPIs by making goals action-oriented, time-bound, and reviewable. An objective is a short, qualitative ambition ("what we want to achieve"), while key results are 3–4 **measurable outcomes** that prove progress this quarter or year ("how we will know we are getting there"). Unlike KPIs (which tend to be ongoing health metrics), OKRs are **temporary and targeted**: they set a clear direction, invite experimentation, and are scored at regular intervals to capture learning, not just compliance. In communication work, this helps teams move from **counting outputs** to **managing for outcomes** - which can result in better guidance uptake, broader citizen reach in local channels, or documented actions or practices adopted from capitalisation efforts.

The **Interreg Central Europe Programme** has made the shift to OKRs in the current programming period. Rather than a long, static plan, the programme sets annual communication OKRs and reviews them quarterly. The objectives are deliberately kept to a minimum and focused, and the key results are tied to the team's delivery rhythm with Joint Secretariat and NCP workflows. Crucially, missing a target is treated as useful feedback - an opportunity to adjust formats, audiences, or timing - rather than failure. This approach has three practical benefits:

1. it makes progress visible between formal strategy updates;
2. it aligns day-to-day delivery (training, web, social, newsletter) with clear outcomes; and
3. it builds a culture of iteration, where data and short debriefs routinely inform the next month's plan.

## How ASP could use OKRs

For the Interreg Alpine Space Programme, we recommend introducing a simple OKR structure to accompany the revised KPI set. KPIs remain the "vital signs" that track ongoing performance, while OKRs guide the way for direction and learning. Three annual Objectives could be set — one for each communication objective — with 3–4 Key results scored quarterly. Each objective should have a clear owner, a defined baseline and target, and be reviewed through a simple but regular routine (15–30 minutes monthly; 60–90 minutes quarterly) to assess progress, capture lessons, and agree on one adjustment for the next period.

## Illustrative OKRs for 2026

To illustrate how such a compact OKR structure could work in practice, the following examples outline possible Objectives and Key Results for 2026:

- **Objective 1 Key Results**
  1. Increase **engaged time** on *How to Apply* by **+20%** vs. 2025 median.
  2. Run **≥2 targeted webinars** for applicants with **≥75% satisfaction** and follow-up decks viewed **≥100 times**.

- **Objective 2 Key Results**
  1. Publish **12 monthly Transition Spotlights** (web + newsletter).
  2. Ensure **≥20%** of social posts are **bilingual/multilingual**; achieve **≥6 co-publications** on municipal/agency/national platforms.
  3. Raise **non-EN traffic share** to storytelling content in the newsletter or website by **+15%** (country/browser-language mix).

- **Objective 3 Key Results:**
  1. Document **≥6 adoptions per semester** (brief + evidence link) across the two clusters.
  2. Hold **≥1 Capitalisation Hour per quarte**r;
  3. Ensure **≥50%** of web/news items on clusters include a **"How to adopt"** call to action; achieve **median time-to-adoption ≤9 months** from "flagship ready."

OKRs will not add extra work if they are kept short and visible. They would give the Programme Committee and ACPs an important view of direction

and traction (e.g., "adoptions are on target; local co-publications lag - shift outreach to municipal channels"). They also institutionalise the behaviours that this evaluation highlights as success factors: **clear priorities**, **frequent learning**, and a focus on **uptake** rather than activity. In other words, KPIs will continue to show that communication is active, whereas OKRs will help prove it is effective; moving applicants quicker to usable guidance (Objective 1), making cooperation visible and relatable to citizens (Objective 2), and converting results into adoptions and policy references (Objective 3).

**Overall recommendations**

The recommendations below translate the evaluation into an optimised, **actionable system** that links KPIs, OKRs, and day-to-day monitoring. The aim is to move from counting activities to demonstrating outcomes and uptake - keeping measurement manageable**,** comparable, and directly aligned with Objectives 1–3 and the programme's capitalisation agenda.

### 1) Revise the ASP set of KPIs

The current KPI framework should be updated while keeping the four-layer structure (Output, Balance, Outcome, Result/Impact). As shown in the grid, the existing 11 KPIs can be retained but clarified so that indicators measure results rather than tools (e.g. replacing "survey" with "satisfaction rate"). To strengthen the framework, we recommend adding equity indicators (geography, language, representation) and uptake indicators (adoptions, policy references, new territories/sectors, time-to-adoption). This will ensure a balanced set of 5–7 core indicators per layer.

### 2) Define how to measure each KPI

Each key performance indicator should be accompanied by a clear definition and a simple formula showing how it is calculated. In addition, the documentation should specify the data source, the frequency of measurement, the person or team responsible for collecting and reporting the data, and a basic quality-assurance step to ensure consistency. Establishing this framework will make the indicators easier to interpret, reduce ambiguity, and ensure that results can be compared reliably over time.

### 3) Start a monitoring sheet or dashboard

Create and maintain a single **Communication KPI Dashboard,** for example in Excel or another accessible format (see example in the annex). This dashboard should bring together all indicators in one place, making it easier

to track progress and spot trends. Output and balance indicators (such as website visits, social media reach, or newsletter engagement) can be updated monthly, while outcome and impact indicators (such as satisfaction rates, awareness levels, or documented adoptions) can be reviewed quarterly. A single consolidated dashboard reduces duplication of effort, supports transparency, and provides programme bodies and stakeholders with a clear overview of communication performance at a glance.

### 4) Use native analytics first and add a simple additional monitoring tool

Rely on Google Analytics, Meta Business Suite, LinkedIn Analytics, and Mailchimp as primary data sources, and consider adding a tracking tool such as Metricool or Hootsuite if it helps to consolidate insights. These tools bring together metrics from different platforms in one place and can automatically calculate indicators such as engagement rates, saving time and making reporting more consistent.

### 5) Close the capitalisation loop in monitoring

Add KPIs to better monitor capitalisation activities and keep an **adoption log** (report on adoptions, MoUs/policy references, new territories/sectors, evidence links, time-to-adoption) including **co-publications** via municipal/agency/national channels.

### 6) Add OKRs for annual communication planning

Set **three annual objectives** (O1–O3) with **3–4 key results** each and revise quarterly for necessary adjustments and learnings.

### 7) Build in quick feedback loops

After events/trainings, run a **3-question pulse** (satisfaction ≥4/5, usefulness, improvement). Once or twice a year, add **mini focus groups or interviews** with project beneficiaries (e.g., the SUDOE programme has introduced yearly interviews instead of monitoring reports to track progress in the area of communications among project beneficiaries).

### 8) Review and reset

R**evise the OKRs once a year** and conduct a final revision of the KPIs in the final programme evaluation at the end of the programming period.

**Key message**

With a lean set of KPIs, a simple OKR cadence, ASP can move from **counting activities** to **demonstrating outcomes and uptake**. One shared monitoring template (cf. proposal in the annex), consistent methods, and an adoption log that captures real transfers (adoptions, policy references, new territories) will demonstrate - clearly and regularly - how communication supports Objectives 1–3 and the capitalisation agenda.

## 4. Recommendations

This chapter gathers all recommendations made throughout the evaluation into one practical overview. Many of these actions have already appeared in this document and the interim report. Some of the "quick fixes" that were mentioned in the annex of this previous report are already under way, e.g., the relaunch of the **joint brochure** with EUSALP and the Alpine Convention to clarify roles and reduce brand confusion. The goal here is ease of use: to provide one grid, grouped by topic, which describes **quick wins (0–12 months), medium-term (2026–27),** and **long-term (2028+)** steps so that the MA/JS, Programme Committee, ACPs and projects can plan accordingly with regard to resources and timing. While the recommendations are intended as guidance rather than obligations, their implementation will naturally depend on the engagement and capacities of various stakeholders, as some actions require coordination and shared effort across the wider dissemination network (ACPs, projects, EUSALP, AC, etc.).

| DIGITAL TOOLS AND TEMPLATES | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Give the programme and projects simple and shared tools to plan, publish, and learn.** | | |
| **Quick wins (0–12 months)** | **Medium-term (2026–27)** | **Long-term (2028+)** |
| For the **programme team**, maintain a central record of all project accounts and main contacts to see activity, spot inactive channels, and coordinate promotion.<br><br>Use **native schedulers** (Meta, LinkedIn) and pilot a metrics tracker (e.g., **Metricool**) for automatic monthly reports. | Offer short tutorials (on storytelling, reels, carousels, analytics); standardise campaign kits for Interreg Cooperation Day/Green Week. | Incorporate these workflows into the post-2027 strategy and procurement (templates-by-default; shared calendars as a service). |
| For the **projects**, provide a shared hashtag list and content calendar (e.g., key international days) alongside ready-to-use visuals and templates, enabling aligned branding and easier citizen outreach. | | |
| **Estimated Resources** | | |
| Current comms team, ≈2 hrs/week | Metricool dashboard: from 18€/month<br>Canva subscription: | Current Comms team |

| | from 110€ per year; Optional Capcut pro subscription per year around 100€. | |
| --- | --- | --- |

| WEBSITE | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Make outputs easy to find; improve engagement tracking and flexibility.** | | |
| **Quick wins (0–12 months)** | **Medium-term (2026–27)** | **Long-term (2028+)** |
| Add **thematic landing pages** and clearer paths to outputs; give projects a basic **analytics view** (pageviews, downloads). | Negotiate template flexibility with the provider (video, multilingual blocks) and improve filters (theme/region/benefit). | Plan a light redesign aligned with post-2027 objectives (sustainability/innovation hubs + richer analytics). |
| **Estimated Resources** | | |
| Current comms team + web admin, ≈2 hrs/week | Current comms team with IT provider | Comms + IT contractor (price depends on the complexity of website redesign but is usually the best moment for a new contract either with the same or a new contractor to reassess functionalities. |

| NEWSLETTER | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Keep what works; clarify audiences and formats.** | | |
| **Quick wins (0–12 months)** | **Medium-term (2026–27)** | **Long-term (2028+)** |
| Maintain DE/FR editions; add a monthly **Transition Spotlight** tile; test short, targeted mailings for events/calls. | Pilot **segmentation** (Citizen Digest vs Stakeholder Brief) and section-level link tracking. | |
| **Estimated Resources** | | |
| Approx. 1 hour per newsletter current comms staff | Approx. 1 hour per newsletter current comms staff | |

| CITIZEN OUTREACH & LOCAL ENGAGEMENT | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Make cooperation tangible locally and balance geography.** | | |
| **Quick wins (0–12 months)** | **Medium-term (2026–27)** | **Long-term (2028+)** |
| Use observance-day hooks tied to Alpine examples; increase stories from **under-represented** | Build partnerships with municipal/national channels for **co-** | Establish an annual "Alpine Cooperation Week" with local partners across the area. |

| countries (SI/CH/LI); activate youth multipliers. | publications; run 1–2 small local pilots/year. | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Organise events in universities and participate regularly in the Interreg Cooperation Day Campaign | |
| **Estimated Resources** | | |
| Coordination work between ASP comms staff/Interreg volunteers, EUSALP/Alpine Convention, approx. 4h per month | Coordination work approx. 4 days per year current comms staff/Interreg volunteers | More time intensive, but can be done by comms staff (in particular if more staff resources will be made available in the future |

| MULTILINGUAL COMMUNICATION | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Improve inclusivity without overwhelming the team.** | | |
| **Quick wins (0–12 months)** | **Medium-term (2026–27)** | **Long-term (2028+)** |
| Introduce **bilingual captions** on locally relevant posts; showcase national pages more prominently; translate flagship stories. | Produce occasional IT/SL specials tied to national info days; expand translated **project factsheets**. | Scope multilingual microsites for major campaigns (post-2027). |
| **Estimated Resources** | | |
| Free (eg, DeepL) or low-cost (DeepL Pro or other low-cost translation tools / plug-ins) | Free (eg, DeepL) or low-cost (DeepL Pro or other low-cost translation tools / plug-ins) for project factsheets | With the help of ACPs |

| CAPITALISATION & RESULT PACKAGING | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Shift from visibility to adoption and reuse.** | | |
| **Quick wins (0–12 months)** | **Medium-term (2026–27)** | **Long-term (2028+)** |
| Publish 2 cluster pages (Circular economy/industrial transformation; Snow-dependent tourism) with 4–6 **flagship outputs** each; run quarterly **Capitalisation Hour**; keep an **adoption log** (adoptions, MoUs, policy refs, evidence links). | Deliver the **capitalisation call** and require giver–taker stories + adoption briefs; produce short **policy notes** per cluster. | Where demand is proven, evolve clusters into light **thematic communities** with policy bridges (EUSALP/Alpine Convention). |
| | | Draft a thorough capitalisation strategy. |
| **Estimated Resources** | | |

| Mainly staff resources both comms and project officers, about 1,5 days per month, at the beginning a little more to establish new protocol | Policy notes could also be outsourced to external experts (e.g.. 20.000 Euro per year). Rest are internal resources comms and project officers. | Higher financial impact within the overall programm budget including decision on management (e,g, through a project or additional staff or external service-provider). Drafting of capitalisation strategy by external consultants (20.000). |
|---|---|---|

## TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

**Equip non-specialists with the tools/resources they need to communicate for the adoption of actions/measures/initiatives**

| Quick wins (0–12 months) | Medium-term (2026–27) | Long-term (2028+) |
|---|---|---|
| Short, applied trainings (e.g., on video production, social media; responsible AI); "communications onboarding" for new projects; shared **resource hub**. | Foster peer exchanges ("Best practice of the month") also among ACPs; access to project-level analytics; mentoring between projects and ACPs. | |

### Estimated Resources

| Contract with external service provider (e.g. reserve 20.000Euro per year for training); the rest is comms staff and project officer working hours to manage contract and adapt onboarding seminar; | Comms team, ACP's and projects | |
|---|---|---|

## PROGRAMME IDENTITY AND BRANDING

**Clarify roles; reinforce Alpine Space's distinct voice.**

| Quick wins (0–12 months) | Medium-term (2026–27) | Long-term (2028+) |
|---|---|---|
| Use the **joint brochure** and short messages to explain ASP vs EUSALP vs Alpine Convention; align co-branding. | Establish a light coordination protocol with EUSALP and Alpine Convention that remains valid across rotating Presidencies. Institutionalise quarterly comms check-ins with EUSALP/Alpine Convention; roll out shared assets for joint events. | Plan a **symbol refresh** (post-2027) that keeps the logo but removes "2021–2027". |

| | Integrate the common Interact transnational cooperation messages ("Building Solidarity – driving Synergies – Delivering Change) into all core communication outputs and refresh the messaging section of the post-2027 communication strategy to make the added value of transnational cooperation a visible and recurring theme. | |
|---|---|---|
| **Estimated Resources** | | |
| Approx. 8000 Euro for joint brochure already contracted; | Comms team and external designer if comms outputs need to be adapted | New brandbook design and tempaltes (external service-provider, approx.. 8.000€) |
| **ANALYTICS, KPI's & OKR's** | | |
| **Move from counting outputs to managing outcomes.** | | |
| **Quick wins (0–12 months)** | **Medium-term (2026–27)** | **Long-term (2028+)** |
| Launch one **shared dashboard** (monthly output/balance; quarterly outcome/impact); use GA4, Meta, LinkedIn, Mailchimp first; add **Metricool** if helpful. | Adopt a simple **OKR** structure per objective with quarterly reviews (e.g. adoptions/semester; % bilingual posts; dwell time on guidance). | Integrate KPIs/OKRs into post-2027 strategy and annual work plans; keep the **adoption log** as a standing dataset. |
| **Estimated Resources** | | |
| Comms staff hours (approx. 1 day per month) | Quarterly analysis 0,5 days and 1 day for planning new year staff hours comms team and coordination; Some extra time needed for internal training and uptake among the entire team. | Possibility to externalise evaluation plan and revise the overall KPI/OKR system for the upcoming programming period (20.000€). |
| **POLICY INFLUENCE & STORYTELLING** | | |
| **Showcase transfer stories and show policy relevance.** | | |
| **Quick wins (0–12 months)** | **Medium-term (2026–27)** | **Long-term (2028+)** |

| Use LinkedIn carousels/articles for **lessons + "How to adopt"**; add a policy corner in the newsletter. | Schedule briefings with EUSALP forums; produce 2–3 **policy briefs**/year from clusters. | Explore instruments with project partners to sustain mainstreaming. |
|---|---|---|
| **Estimated Resources** | | |
| Use of Canva (professional subscription 110Euro per year) and staff hours 1 – 2 hours per Carousel as part of social media management | A part of the policy briefs could be outsourced to external experts or be done by comms and project officer staff + help of graphic designer or use of Canva for layout. | 8000 – 12.000 Euro per year for design and events as a reference (could be more or less). |

## 5. Conclusion

The evaluation has shown that Interreg Alpine Space Programme already boasts many **good communication practices** and **reaches its target audiences** consistently. Applicants and beneficiaries are well served through the website and guidance pages, newsletters perform strongly (including national editions), and social channels provide a reliable baseline of visibility. Against the three objectives, the programme delivers on the **majority of its intended objectives**: Objective 1 is supported by clear information flows and trainings; Objective 2 has credible citizen outreach (youth channels, national-language editions, observance-day posts); and Objective 3 is underpinned by **substantive project achievements** that showcase what Alpine leadership looks like in practice. During the evaluation, several quick wins were already implemented - most notably the **relaunch of the joint brochure** with EUSALP and the Alpine Convention - signalling a pragmatic, improvement-oriented culture.

However, at present, programme-level storytelling remains **fragmented**, with occasional confusion between ASP, EUSALP and the Alpine Convention. **Capitalisation** is not yet systematic; many strong results are visible but not consistently **packaged for reuse/replication** by theme or channelled toward adopters and policy processes. Cooperation with EUSALP has meanwhile entered a promising phase under the Austrian Presidency, marked by regular exchanges, coordinated visibility efforts, and the development of joint materials such as the updated brochure. Building on this progress, ASP could strengthen long-term continuity by establishing a light coordination format that transcends individual Presidencies. Such a mechanism would safeguard alignment on shared themes and ensure that

the Alpine macro-regional narrative remains coherent and visible at European level.

Yet, to fully translate this renewed coherence into impact, citizen-facing communication must also evolve. Some content remains too institutional, and geographic or language balance is uneven. Monitoring focuses on outputs rather than **outcomes and uptake**, making it harder to evidence leadership beyond activity. In short: the substance is there; while the **narrative**, **transfer pathways**, and **result-focused monitoring** can be improved.

For the **2028+ programming period**, it will be important to establish a clearer architecture that links capitalisation, communication, and monitoring. The Joint Secretariat should develop a concise **capitalisation strategy** that explicitly describes transfer pathways **from solution givers to solution takers**, and formalises policy bridges with EUSALP and the Alpine Convention. The communication strategy should also be refreshed to become more audience-focused, setting out messages for key audiences including transnational messaging as a shared narrative element among all transnational Interreg programmes, defining thematic storylines (e.g., *climate-ready Alps*), ensuring multilingual inclusion, and providing reusable toolkits for projects. Management should be anchored in a lean **KPI + OKR** system: a small set of progress metrics (web, social, newsletter, balance) complemented by quarterly **key results** that evidence change - such as documented adoptions, co-publications in local channels, increased non-English reach, and the systematic use of "How to adopt" calls to action. Where thematic clusters demonstrate demand and traction, they could evolve into light thematic communities with targeted policy dialogues during 2028 and beyond.

This evaluation combined document review, analytics, interviews and focus groups, and a citizen survey. It was collaborative: the JS, ACPs and partners contributed candidly, and several suggestions were implemented during the process. Limitations remain (channel analytics inconsistencies, survey bias, decisions from the Programme Committee pending), but there is shared momentum to move from **counting activities** to **demonstrating outcomes and uptake**. As one team member put it, *"Communication can be the spark that makes changes."* And another colleague added, *"The difficult thing with capitalisation is defining what it really means... for us it's about sustainability of results and synergies."* With small, steady steps, for example, curated thematic cluster pages, a monthly **Transition Spotlight**, quarterly **Capitalisation Hours**, and a simple **adoption log**—ASP can refresh and update its communication strategy, and scale it confidently into the next programming period.

# Annexes

## Annex 1. List of background documents reviewed

The evaluation was based on a comprehensive review of programme documents, monitoring data, and external references. The following documentation was analysed during the desk research phase:

**Core Programme Documents**

Interreg Alpine Space Programme Communication Strategy (adopted October 2022)
Interreg Alpine Space Programme Manual (December 2024)
Evaluation Plan of the Interreg Alpine Space Programme (Annex 2)
Previous ASP evaluation report on programme communication (2018)

**Monitoring and Implementation Reports**

- Annual implementation and monitoring reports
- Communication monitoring database (JS)
- Raw data from the 2024 beneficiary survey
- Social media and website monitoring data

**Programme Communication Outputs**

- Programme newsletters, videos, brochures, and online campaigns
- Partner Search Platform
- Feedback reports from programme events:
    o Communication workshop
    o Lead applicant seminar
    o "Get Started" seminar
    o Communication training

**External References on Capitalisation**

- Capitalisation Management Guide by Interact
- Capitalisation Toolkit 2.0 – Overview and Structure (Infographic) by Interact
- Interreg projects' results: transfer and mainstreaming into public policies by Interact
- Benchmarking Capitalisation Calls by Interact
- Atelier CTE – Capitalisation Workshop Report (Document post atelier, 20 December 2024) by ANCT / French National Agency for Territorial Cohesion

- The new Interact Communication Guides for Capitalisation (CapCom 2024) by Interact.
- Post-2027 Consultation Report – Capitalisation by Interact
- Concept note on a call for capitalisation projects by ASP
- Input paper for 18th PC meeting on capitalisation call by ASP

**External and Comparative References**

- Reports and guidance documents on Interreg Cooperation Day by the Interact programme (Evaluation of 2024 edition, guidance for 2025)
- Commission Staff Working Document SWD (2021)198 final on performance, monitoring, and evaluation of cohesion policy instruments
- The Quality of Life in the Alps published by the Alpine Convention (2025)
- Input paper: *Interreg Alpine Space Programme – Let's take up the challenge: how to move to a green and innovative ASP?* (2021)
- European Commission "Harvesting Report on Post 2027 Interreg – results of stakeholder, citizen and programme consultations"
- Benchmarking documentation from other Interreg transnational programmes (MED, Central Europe, North-West Europe, North Sea)
- Evaluation of communication reference framework of the European Commission

## Annex 2. List of interviewees/focus groups and meetings with ASP Programme staff

**List of focus groups and guided interviews:**

- **Project representatives:**
  - 25 June 2025, Monica Tolotti (project co-lead), Elisa Leo (communication manager), WATERWISE
  - 26 June 2025, Andrea Galeota (lead partner), Sabrina Giraldin, Elena Tonjón (financial manager), Urška Spitzer (communication manager), Cradle-Alp
  - 27 June 2025, Alexandra Wolf (lead partner INNOBIOVC / RE-INCITE), Marta Buccaro (communication manager Forest EcoValue), Susanna Longo (lead partner Forest EcoValue), Forest EcoValue / INNOBIOVC / RE-INCITE
  - 1 July 2025, Katharina Zwettler (lead partner), Natael Fautrat (communication manager), HumanFactor
  - 2 July 2025, Cassiano Luminati (lead partner AlpTextyles), Alessandro Bevilacqua (communication manager AlpTextyles), Stefano Sala (communication manager TranStat), TranStat / AlpTextyles
  - 2 July 2025, Jure Trilar (lead partner), Annalisa Cevasco (communication manager), Giorgia Merletto (communication manager), SmartCommUnity
  - 30 July 2025, Anna Schliesselberger, Communication Manager and representative lead partner, FH Salzburg, CE Food Cycling Project

- **Alpine Space Contact Points (ACPs):**
  - 20 June 2025, Lucie Greffier, ACP France
  - 25 June 2025, Roberto de Marco, ACP Italy
  - 26 June 2025, Andreas Ortanderl (DE) and Sébastien Rieben (CH), ACPs Germany and Switzerland
  - 27 June 2025, Henrik Caduff, ACP Liechtenstein
  - 27 June 2025, Martina Bach, ACP Austria
  - 1 July 2025, Danijela Kos, ACP Slovenia

- **Programme communication staff:**
  - 30 June 2025, including Annika Zulauf, Francesca Barco, Communication Managers, Interreg Alpine Space Programme

- 10 July 2025, including Annika Zulauf, Francesca Barco, Communication Managers; Lune Bernstein and Agnese Brigatti - Interreg Volunteers, Interreg Alpine Space Programme
- 21 July 2025, focus group on capitalisation with JS Project Officers Alexis Truchet and Matteo de Costanzi

- **EUSALP**
  - 20 June 2025, Estelle Delin, Communication Officer, EUS ALP
  - 26 June 2025, Daniel Mondon, Ministry of the Economy of Baden-Württemberg and part of the Action Group 2 of the Alpine Space Strategy
  - 24 July 2025, Yannick Werner, Robin Mannhorst, Chiara Cortiana, EUSALP Youth Council

- **Other European Territorial Cooperation stakeholders:**
  - 2 June 2025, Rosa Escamilla Torregrosa, responsible for Interreg Cooperation Day, Interact
  - 12 June 2025, Matteo Salvai, Communication Officer, European Commission/DG REGIO and written exchanges by email with Maria Galewska, Senior Specialist Communications, DG REGIO
  - 16 June 2025, Eva Martínez, responsible for Interreg promotion and the network of transnational Interreg programmes, Interact
  - 9 July 2025, Frank Schneider, Head of Communication and Public Policy Unit, Central Europe Programme
  - 22 July 2025, Olga Mazzolini, Communication Manager Med Programme
  - 23 July 2025, Stephanie Wolff, Communication Manager, Alpine Convention

**Official meetings with representatives of the ASP Joint Secretariat and Managing Authorities**

**Kick-off meeting**: 28 May 2025, with the Joint Secretariat and Managing Authority, launching the evaluation and agreeing on scope, methodology, and deliverables

**Interim Meeting:** 29 July 2025

**Final validation meeting:** 7 October 2025

**Final validation by the Programme Committee:** November 2025

## Annex 3. Guiding questions for focus groups

This annex presents a consolidated catalogue of the questions used during the evaluation focus groups and interviews. The questions were originally prepared in advance of the meetings and further refined in the course of discussions with stakeholders. They are clustered by type of stakeholder to reflect the different roles, responsibilities, and perspectives within the Alpine Space Programme. The purpose of compiling them in this structured format is to provide transparency on the evaluation process, ensure comparability of responses across groups, and document the diversity of issues explored — ranging from strategic orientation and programme-level communication to project-level implementation, citizen engagement, and youth perspectives.

### 1. Key Representatives (Managing Authority, Joint Secretariat)

**Objective 1: Build capacities for effective implementation and communication**

- Who deals with communication: team setup and organisation?
- How do you support applicants and beneficiaries in project implementation and communication?
- What kind of capacity-building activities (seminars, trainings, templates) have you offered?
- Are project partners satisfied with the clarity of communication guidelines and tools?
- How much effort is invested in communicating with different target audiences?
- Have the simplified communication procedures (logos, templates, website) reduced the burden for beneficiaries?
- How could support to projects be improved (e.g. onboarding, helpdesk, training formats)?

**Objective 2: Bring the programme and its achievements closer to citizens**

- How do you raise awareness of the programme among citizens?
- Which tools/events/channels are most important for reaching citizens (social media, newsletter, website)? Frequency of use?
- Which channels/formats have been most effective in reaching beyond the "Interreg bubble"?
- How do you address multilingualism and local adaptation of content?

- How do you ensure that communication goes beyond beneficiaries and reaches the general public?
- What have been the main obstacles to connecting with citizens?
- Do you always work with the "usual suspects" or reach new audiences?
- What elements would you change for the next period to strengthen citizen outreach?

**Objective 3: Position the programme at the forefront of the transition towards an innovative, climate-neutral Alpine region**

- How do you support applicants/beneficiaries to reduce the carbon footprint of project activities?
- How do you profile the Alpine Space Programme as environmentally friendly and responsible?
- How do you communicate project contributions to climate resilience, innovation, and sustainability?
- What are the most visible achievements of ASP in terms of green transition?
- Do you coordinate with EUSALP and the Alpine Convention to present ASP's added value in this area?
- What more could be done to showcase ASP's leadership role at EU and macroregional level?

**Capitalisation**

- How do you organise your capitalisation work? Any improvements needed?
- How do you identify, cluster, and communicate project results at programme level?
- What mechanisms exist (or are missing) to ensure systematic capitalisation of results?
- How can synergies with EUSALP or the Alpine Convention support capitalisation?
- Which audiences should be prioritised for capitalisation (policy-makers, practitioners, citizens)?
- Have past capitalisation activities influenced policy or practice?

**Efficiency and Use of Resources**

- How would you assess the use of financial and human resources for communication?
- Was the budget realistic? Any shortcomings?
- Have simplified procedures reduced the administrative burden?

- Where are inefficiencies or bottlenecks?
- Which outputs/events/tools had the most visible impact?
- What worked well / what did not?
- What innovations should be tested in future?

**Monitoring, Indicators and Learning**

- How well does the communication strategy align with the programme's mission and evolving needs?
- Were communication priorities clear and actionable from the start?
- Would you change any indicators?
- How is monitoring applied?
- How has the strategy raised visibility and stakeholder engagement?
- Opportunities to improve coordination with NCPs/EUSALP?
- What elements would you change for the next period?

2.  **Alpine Space Contact Points (ACPs)**

**Themes: Role & Outreach, Local Adaptation & Tools, Support Needs, Lessons Learned**

- How do you see your role in bridging programme strategy and national outreach?
- How easy is it to disseminate programme-level communications nationally?
- What are the most common questions/misunderstandings from applicants?
- Are national language communications and subpages effective?
- Which tools, formats, or content are most useful?
- What is working well, and where are shortcomings?
- Do you work always with the same audiences?
- Are you using media platforms to share ASP content? What works / doesn't?
- What support (tools, templates, capacity building) is most useful?
- Would stronger coordination or peer learning with other NCPs be valuable?
- What changes would you suggest in how the programme communicates with you and your stakeholders?
- How do you support capitalisation of project results at national level?
- Are you able to connect project outcomes with national policy processes?
- What formats (e.g. thematic events, publications) are most effective to capitalise results nationally?
- How do you perceive your role in capitalising and disseminating results compared to EUSALP or the Alpine Convention?

**3. Project Beneficiaries**

**Themes: Strategic Planning, Implementation, Engagement, Visibility, Tools, Support, Lessons Learned**

- How did you develop your project's communication strategy?
- Did your strategy evolve? What triggered changes?
- Did the Application Form provide adequate guidance?
- What kind of support do you receive from the Secretariat? What's missing?
- Is this your first Alpine Space project? How did you learn about the calls?
- Do you use programme-provided tools?
- What helped your communication activities work well?
- What barriers did you face (time, tools, knowledge)?
- Have you adopted sustainable practices?
- Who are your main target audiences? Which were hardest to reach?
- How do you adapt to regional/language/cultural contexts?
- How visible is your project locally/regionally?
- How do you plan to bring results to policy level?
- What does "successful communication" mean to you?
- Can you give a concrete example of impactful communication?
- Which channels (social media, events, newsletters) worked best?
- Did you test new formats (videos, storytelling, podcasts)?
- Were branding guidelines/templates useful?
- How do you balance digital and face-to-face communication?
- Were communication requirements clear and manageable?
- Was language a barrier?
- What support from JS/MA/NCP was most useful?
- What additional training would you value?
- Would you join peer exchanges or joint campaigns?
- How have you disseminated results? Which channels were most effective?
- Did you collaborate with other projects/programmes?
- If starting again, what would you do differently?
- What advice would you give to new projects?
- Which communication channels worked best to increase visibility?
- Which social platforms were most effective?
- What would help you communicate results to a wider, non-specialist audience?
- Which innovations (videos, data visualisation, storytelling) have you tried or want to try?
- What synergies could be developed with EUSALP or other programmes?
- How do you plan to capitalise and disseminate your results beyond the project?

- Have you clustered results with other projects? If yes, how effective was it?
- Which audiences (citizens, policymakers, businesses) are you prioritising for capitalisation?
- Do you receive sufficient support from the JS/MA for capitalisation activities?
- How could the programme help you make your results more transferable and visible (e.g. factsheets, joint campaigns, thematic newsletters)?
- Do you see synergies with EUSALP or Alpine Convention activities for capitalisation?

3. **Thematic / Special Stakeholder Groups / Youth Council**

**Themes: Membership & Organisation, Awareness of Interreg/EUSALP/Alpine Convention, Communication Challenges, Youth Engagement & Policy Linkages**

- How did you become a member?
- How do you meet and organise work?
- How aware were you of Interreg/EUSALP before joining?
- What challenges do you face in explaining Interreg/ASP/EUSALP/Alpine Convention to peers?
- How do you see the role of the EUSALP Youth Council compared to the Alpine Convention Youth Parliament?
- Do you think EUSALP and the Alpine Convention communicate clearly enough with young people?
- Where do you see overlaps or confusion between EUSALP, ASP and the Alpine Convention in youth engagement?
- What could be improved in the way these structures coordinate their outreach to young audiences?
- What type of content would make ASP more attractive to youth (Instagram, video testimonials, relatable posts)?
- How can youth be more involved in capitalisation and transfer to policy?
- Do you feel equipped/empowered to disseminate ASP messages?
- What would make communication more youth-friendly?
- How can youth contribute to the capitalisation of project and programme results?
- Do you see a role for youth bodies (Youth Parliament, Youth Council) in transferring results to policymakers?
- Which formats (peer-to-peer exchanges, storytelling, school/community activities) would help capitalise results for young audiences?

## Annex 4. Survey Questionnaire

**What is your gender?**

Female

Male

Non-binary

I prefer not to say

**What is your age group?**

Under 18

18–24

25–34

35–44

45–54

55–64

65+

I prefer not to say

**Where in the Alpine region do you currently live or work?**

Wien

Niederösterreich

Oberösterreich

Burgenland

Steiermark

Kärnten

Salzburg

Tirol

Vorarlberg

Bourgogne-Franche-Comté

Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes

Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur

Grand Est

Oberbayern

Niederbayern

Oberpfalz

Oberfranken

Mittelfranken

Unterfranken

Schwaben

Stuttgart

Karlsruhe

Freiburg

Tübingen

Lombardia

Friuli Venezia Giulia

Veneto

Provincia Autonoma di Trento

Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano / Bozen

Valle d'Aosta / Vallée d'Aoste

Piemonte

Liguria

Liechtenstein

Zahodna-Slovenija

Vzhodna-Slovenija

Ostschweiz

Zürich

Zentral-Schweiz

NW-Schweiz

Espace Mittelland

Région Lémanique

Ticino

Other

If you chose other, please specify:


**Have you ever seen this logo (shown above)?**

Yes

No

Not sure


**What thoughts, feelings, or ideas come to mind when you see this logo? (Even if you haven't seen it before) :**

**Have you ever seen this symbol? (shown above)**

Yes

No

Not sure

**What thoughts, feelings, or ideas come to mind when you see this symbol? (Even if you haven't seen it before) :**

**Have you ever heard of the Interreg Alpine Space Programme?**

Yes

No

Not sure

**If your answer is yes, could you describe what the programme does?**

**If you know the Alpine Space Programme, how did you hear about it?**

Social media

Local event

Local media

Local authority

Project

Other

**If other, please specify:**

**Have you ever visited the Alpine Space Programme's website?**

Yes

No

Not sure

**Have you ever visited the Alpine Space Programme's social media channels?**

Yes

No

Not sure

**If yes, which social media channel?**

LinkedIn

Facebook

Instagram

YouTube

**If you can, please name a project or activity in your region that was co-funded by the Interreg Alpine Space Programme:**

**How much do you agree with the following statement: "EU-funded projects have contributed to making our region more sustainable/climate-resilient**

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree

**In your opinion, which of the following areas have benefitted most from these projects?**

Climate change adaptation

Green mobility

Innovation

Circular economy

Biodiversity

I don't have an opinion

Other

**If other, please clarify:**

**Have you ever attended an event, used a product, or benefitted from a service that was part of an EU-funded project?**

Yes

No

I don't know

**If your answer was yes, which event/product or service?**

**How visible do you think EU-funded projects are in your region?**

Very visible

Somewhat visible

Not visible

I don't know

**What is the best way for you to receive information about projects in your area?**

Local press

Social media

Municipality website

Posters/flyers

Community events

Other

**If other, please clarify:**

**What language do you prefer for receiving public information?**

(please specify)

**How could EU-funded projects be more visible in your region?**

Clearer communication

Real-life stories or testimonials

Events in my area

School or community involvement

Practical benefits (e.g. services, products, jobs)

Nothing in particular

Other

**If other, please clarify:**

**Overall, how do you feel about the impact of EU-funded projects in your region?**

Very positive

Positive

Neutral

Negative

Very negative

I don't have an opinion

**In one sentence, how would you describe the added value of EU cooperation in your daily life or region?**

## Annex 5. Checklist for Social Media Publications

**Step 1. Link to Objectives**
- Which communication objective does the post support?

    - Objective 2: Bringing the programme closer to citizens (awareness, visibility, project results, benefits).

    - Objective 3: Positioning Alpine Space as green/innovative leader (sustainability, innovation, digitalisation).

- Is this clear in the way I framed the post?

**Step 2. Hook**
- Does the post start with an attention-grabbing hook?

    - Citizen-friendly framing ("What does this mean for your region?" "How is climate change affecting Alpine homes?").

    - Not just a technical description ("The project developed a WebGIS platform").

**Step 3. Clarity of Language**
- Am I using **simple, everyday language**?

- Have I avoided EU-specific / technical jargon (e.g., "outcomes," "deliverables," "work package")?

- Did I replace policy terms with citizen-friendly equivalents (e.g., "results," "new tool," "map," "story")?

**Step 4. Relevance & Examples**
- Does the post explain *why this matters for people* (citizens, communities, businesses)?

- Have I added at least one **concrete example** (place, project, person, impact on daily life)?

- Is it clear what part of the Alpine region is involved?

**Step 5. Call to Action (CTA)**
- Is there a clear and engaging action for the reader?

    - "Check the map for your region"

    - "Discover how wool from the Alps is being reused"

    - "See how Alpine SMEs are going digital"

- Is the CTA easy to understand and motivating?

**Step 6. Tone & Storytelling**
- Does the tone reflect **storytelling and is inviting**, and less institutional?

- Did I include a human element (a quote, a beneficiary, a local place)?

**Step 7. Visuals**
- Does the visual reinforce the story?

- Could the visual be presented as a carousel?

**Step 8. Accessibility & Reach**
- Is the post understandable across Alpine countries?

- Did I consider adding a multilingual version or at least a short phrase in another language?

- Did I include geographic or thematic hashtags for discoverability (#Slovenia, #GreenAlps, #CircularEconomy)?

Annex 6. List of social media handles of projects (separate document)

Annex 7. Monitoring Template for KPIs (separate document)

Annex 8. Monitoring Template for KPIs incl. OKRs (separate document)

Annex 9. Survey Results (separate documents including raw data)