

ALPINE SPACE INTERREG IIB PROGRAMME



ALPINE SPACE PROSPECTIVE STUDY

SUSTAINABLE TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE ALPINE SPACE:
TOWARDS LONG TERM TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report represents the opinion of the independent Expert Group and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Alpine Space Interreg IIIB Programme organisational structures.

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Preface

The present document is the Executive Summary of the *Alpine Space Prospective Study*, which the Alpine Space Interreg III B Programme organisational structures have commissioned in December 2004 to an independent and transnational Expert Group as a survey on *Sustainable territorial development in the Alpine Space: towards long term transnational cooperation*. This Executive Summary recalls the main results of the *Prospective Study* Full Report, which is set in a separate volume.

Briefly, the *Alpine Space Prospective Study* is based on three distinct analyses (chapter 1), which the Expert Group has carried out on current economic, social and territorial trends (§ 1.1), on spatial policies in the Alpine area (§ 1.2) and on the outcomes of the Alpine Space Interreg III B programme (§ 1.3). The results of the analyses have then been combined in overall findings (chapter 2), which are organised in substantive key issues (§ 2.1), procedural key issues (§ 2.2) and key actors (§ 2.3). Finally, analyses and findings have given rise to the proposals for a possible Alpine Space territorial cooperation programme in the EU Structural Funds programming period 2007-2013 (chapter 3): these consist in a set of shared scenarios for the Alpine territory (§ 3.1), in proposals for improving cooperation after 2006 (§ 3.2) and in the emerging suggestions for potential strategic projects (§ 3.3). The requested proposals of immediate strategic projects (i.e. to be launched before 2006) are attached to the Full Report, which includes the list of scientific and informative references of the study as well.

In particular, the terms of reference of the *Prospective Study* required that this should lead to answer to a series of specific questions. These are taken up in the preface of the Full Report in order to highlight the overall results of the study and to indicate how the mentioned topics may be retrieved within the report.

In conclusion, however, the *Prospective Study* argues that a long term transnational cooperation will be able to pursue the sustainable territorial development in the Alpine Space only at the condition of a substantial improvement of the current experience. This regards an increased awareness of the complexity of issues and challenges currently at stake in the Alpine area but especially, in this light, the capacity of involving all relevant institutional and socioeconomic stakeholders in the building of shared transnational strategies. Ultimately, stepping into the limelight, the "red thread" of this study indicates that sustainable territorial development in the Alpine Space cannot be automatically ensured by a survey on its relevant features, which the study has carried out. It requires, first and foremost, a more widely shared agreement (i.e. much beyond the borders of the programme organisational structures) on its practical meaning and consequently on the aims, targets and strategies of a common programme for proactive cooperation.

1 Analyses

1.1 Economic, social and territorial trends

The trend analysis has been oriented towards the identification of *developments, which are likely to have strong and longer lasting positive or negative impacts* on the Alpine area. These trends may be characteristic of the whole EU, the Alpine territory or single spatial types of the cooperation area. The latter have been identified as the *mountainous area of the Alpine core space, the mountain cities and the peri-alpine area with the metropolitan cities*. Trends have been classified according to the three categories of sustainable development paradigm: (a) *natural resources and biodiversity*, (b) *economy*, (c) *culture and social welfare*. A fourth dimension has been added, namely (d) *spatial development*, in order to accommodate developments of a more narrowly defined territorial character.

An evaluation of the identified territorial trends with reference to their potential territorial impacts, dynamics and duration has pointed out the *predominant emphasis of developments connected with natural factors*. Dynamic increase of natural hazards, loss of habitats and biodiversity, diminishing variety of landscapes as well as increasing pressure on natural resources and on natural heritage are expected to mark most strongly the future territorial developments of the Alpine area. Moreover, *accessibility to infrastructures and knowledge as well as various aspects regarding the transportation sector development* have been highlighted among trends in the field of economy. As for culture and society, *demographic problems such as over-ageing of population, as well as threats and opportunities presented by the higher education and R&D*, have been rated as the most pertinent. Spatial development will supposedly be most influenced by *economic concentration in the EU and the potentially growing territorial imbalances* connected with it.

Looking at the three *spatial types of the Alpine Space, four trends are expected to have considerable impacts* on all of them. They are *increasing transportation volumes*, whereby road transport will gain further significance, while rail transport is expected to experience further decline; *growth in migration*, due both to urban population seeking opportunity to live in peri-urban or rural areas close to the larger cities and to immigration to the larger cities; *dynamic increase of natural hazards*; and *economic concentration in the EU accompanied with growing disparities*. Moreover, the *mountain core areas* are expected to be affected also by processes of over-ageing of population, further depopulation, growing competition in agriculture and tourism, decline in state aid funding and rising energy consumption. *Mountain cities* could gain from urban growth phenomena and cultural tourism, but will potentially be affected also by their position regarding accessibility to infrastructure and knowledge and by the urbanisation and counter-urbanisation processes taking place in the whole Europe as well as in the Alpine territory.

The identified trends, which have been assessed as highly significant and influential in the long term may serve as a *basis for definition of potential cooperation fields* for a possible Alpine Space programming document for the period 2007-2013 (Table 1).

Category	Main field	Subfield
Natural resources and biodiversity	Habitats and biodiversity	Preservation and sustainable use of habitats and biodiversity
	Air pollution and climate	Prevention and mitigation of environmental damages due to transport
	Cultural landscape	Preservation of variety of cultural landscapes Potentials for sustainable development and use
	Natural heritage	Preservation of natural resources and natural heritage by acting on pressure factors
	Natural hazards	Prevention and mitigation of natural hazards
	Nature protection	Protected areas
	Water resources	Improvement of water resource quality Alpine water reserves as a future asset
Economy	Knowledge economy and accessibility	Knowledge economy and society development in the Alps Accessibility to infrastructure and knowledge as development factors
	Transportation	Innovative solutions to transportation problems Paths to lower external costs of transport
	Energy	Renewable energy as an opportunity for local and regional economies
	Agriculture	
	Tourism	New concepts in Alpine tourism City and cultural tourism as an opportunity for Alpine cities
Culture and social welfare	Cultural heritage	Cultural heritage in the Alps in view of the increasing cultural consumption
	Population	Spatial development instruments to curb depopulation Experience with immigration and policies in the Alps
	Science, technology and education	Alpine cities as R&D locations Alpine universities cooperation: new trends as opportunities
Spatial development	Economic concentration	Strategies for the Alpine core area, Alpine cities and the peri-alpine belt
	Spatial disparities	Regional differences of job opportunities and unemployment
	Urbanisation processes and urban-rural relationships	

Table 1 – Potential transnational cooperation fields as a result of the trends analysis

However, on the basis of literature survey, further observations may improve the discussion on the future of *the Alpine Space as a transnational cooperation area*:

- By results of statistical analyses, the *internal coherence of the Alpine Space cooperation area is graded as high*, since only two out of the 32 NUTS II concerned regions do not share the common indicator profile. Highest degree of similarity regards factors as economic growth potential, unemployment and demographic characteristics. On the other hand, higher variability regards factors as accessibility and research and development.
- NUTS II regions of the Alpine Space cooperation area share, in a European comparison, a *common profile* featured by the indicators: average number of flood events, natural surface as the share of the total area, R&D personnel in business sector, GDP per capita and youth unemployment.

1.2 Spatial policies in the Alpine area

Spatial policies may be defined as the institutional representation of needs for public action on spatial development recognised by policy communities. At least *five different levels of spatial policy* concur in shaping the destiny of the Alpine area, namely: *supranational, national, regional, cross-border and local*. At any of these levels, the specific features of the Alpine area (a valuable mountainous territory strictly connected with its surrounding urbanised lowlands, which is also a barrier / bridge between Central Europe and the Mediterranean basin and between Western and Eastern Europe) implicate the existence of *a great variety of sectoral and integrated policies* both directly and indirectly influencing spatial development.

The fact that *a distinct transnational level* of spatial policy has been established by EU initiative leads to take account of the specific values of EU territorial governance processes. In this light, one should consider not only that EU territorial governance is multi-level and multi-sector, but also that governance processes are proved to be effective as far as they are capable to *valorise the connections among all policy communities* concerned, at different levels, by the same territory.

The analysis carried out has let emerge a complex set of spatial policy aims in the Alpine area, which has been scrutinised both in the horizontal dimension of *policy sectors* and in the vertical one of *policy levels*.

One emerging result is that, given the high complexity of the Alpine area, any attempt of deciding aims and strategies of a transnational spatial programme via scientific legitimisation would risk to weaken the effectiveness of the programme itself (aims and strategies would be perceived as imposed to policy communities). This emerging result implicates a clear indication of method for deciding aims and strategies of a future Alpine Space programme: *the involvement of policy communities at the different levels of territorial governance in the design of aims and strategies is a decisive requirement* in order to obtain an effective transnational programme. Such involvement shall therefore be carefully structured and accompanied through appropriate technical capacities.

A second result regards the ways of approaching policy aims, wherever a wider involvement of policy communities may lead to, namely:

- 1) *to promote the integration of different sector policies*, since this produces value added especially in complex territories like the Alpine area;
- 2) *to combine the policy aims of different levels, from supranational to local*, according to relevant transnational key concepts (Table 2), instead of reducing "transnationality" to the negotiation of only national views.

More specific indications emerging from the analysis regard the opportunity of:

- a) to dedicate a special attention to the *involvement of regional governments in the elaboration of transnational strategies*, being regional plans the primary tools of territorial governance in the most of the Alpine area;
- b) to envisage *a joint strategy of coordination with cross-border programmes*, in order to increase synergies of cooperation; and
- c) to consider *the existing projects established at the different policy levels* as a possible multi-level grid of reference to individuate or to elaborate transnational strategic projects.

These proposals, too, cannot be managed through improvisation and shall require the recourse to specific technical knowledge in order to obtain effective results.

Levels of spatial policy				Key concepts for transnational spatial policy
Supranational	National	Regional	Cross-border	
Spatial policies	Spatial development, regional and urban planning (1)	Spatial planning and territorial governance (1)		Spatial approach
Policies for competitiveness	Improvement of competitiveness (2)	Increase of regional competitiveness (2)	Economic cooperation and development (1)	Competitiveness
Environmental policies	Environment and natural preservation (5)	Preservation of natural and cultural resources (4)	Sustainable development (2)	Sustainable development
	Cooperation and participation in planning process (3)	Social cohesion and reduction of disparities (3)		Social cohesion
Infrastructure policies	Infrastructures and networks (4)			Infrastructures and networks
		Valorisation of local traditions (5)	Reinforcing of local identity and attractiveness (3)	Local identity
	Management of rural areas (6)			Rural dimension

Table 2 – Key concepts for transnational spatial policy according to multi-level policy aims

1.3 The Alpine Space Interreg IIB programme

All the 53 existing projects of the programme were analysed in order to understand the *concrete dynamics of transnational cooperation* in the Alpine Space and to identify *possible ways of improvement* of this process.

A *gap analysis* of projects was developed on the basis of data provided by the programme Joint Technical Secretariat and supplemented by interviews with selected project leaders and partners and other key actors (e.g. the secretary of the Alpine Convention). The analysis also benefited of the transnational seminars of Rosenheim (25-26 November 2004), Innsbruck (6-7 April 2005), and Venice (16-17 June 2005), where many projects and intermediary results were presented, and various issues regarding transnational cooperation have been raised.

Briefly, the analysis leads to the following conclusions:

1. The *running phase of transnational cooperation* (2000-2006) looks generally coherent with what was expected and shows many similarities, in terms of strength and weakness aspects, with other Interreg IIB programmes. In particular, since transnational territorial cooperation requires long term commitment, it is understandable that operating in a transnational dimension has to be further deepened in future action. Especially the private actors are difficultly mobilised. Therefore, the fact that *connections among the projects are weakly developed, determining also the limited impact of the*

programme as a whole, is not surprising. Such weaknesses, however, shall be corrected in a future programme.

2. A clear shortfall against the declared objectives concerns especially the *programme priority 2* (Development of sustainable transport systems with particular consideration of efficiency, inter-modality and better accessibility), particularly measure 2.1 (Perspectives and analyses). This might be explained by the programme players approach to the key issues of accessibility, which appears to be too much focused on infrastructures and heavy investments, and not enough on the overall aspects of mobility and of travel services (*management of the mobility chain*). The states and their relevant ministries cooperate currently in the heavy infrastructures field through other means than the Interreg programmes, like the Zurich Committee or other intergovernmental conferences. Therefore, it seems that this priority can be better tackled in future by *considering the overall topic of mobility, and not its technical branch of infrastructures and transport, a possible aim of a territorial cooperation programme*.
3. Beyond the specific contents of projects, the analysis brings out its principal shortcomings as far as the *transnational cooperation procedures, actors and overall objectives* are concerned. In particular, it seems that the recurring question of *strategic projects* should not be approached from the side of possible contents, but from the one of *final aims of territorial cooperation*, of the organisation of transnational action and of the relevant key actors to be involved. Indeed, if on the one hand the substantive topics of spatial development in the Alpine Space pertain to the field of political decision, a technical discussion on strategic projects should focus on the involvement of key actors who have not yet been sufficiently or correctly mobilised, and on the methods of organising the transnational action as well as of the appropriation and diffusion of relevant results.

2 Findings

2.1 Substantive key issues

Substantive key issues may be defined as topics to be considered with great attention because of the existence of *economic, social and territorial trends* revealing particular sensitivity in the Alpine area (§ 1.1) and of *multi-level political calls for action on spatial development* (§ 1.2). The Alpine area, which constitutes *a well defined territory in the centre of Europe*, is indeed characterised by specific development challenges as a result of territorial trends and political objectives which are continuously redefined from the EU to the local level.

First and foremost, however, the analysis cannot disregard the fact that the future Alpine Space territorial cooperation programme shall be established in the framework of the *new cohesion policy* for period 2007-2013, which is primarily oriented towards the implementation of the *Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies*. These are indeed the cornerstone of the new European Commission financial proposals, the Third Report on Economic and Social Cohesion, the draft Structural and

Cohesion Funds Regulations for the next programming period and the more recent *Commission communication on Community Strategic Guidelines*.

By this the identification of substantive key issues has to reflect the aim of territorial cohesion and the recent discussions on how to make this concept operational. A *matching analysis of the Alpine Space relevance of territorial cohesion topics*, as these are proposed by the DG Regio (Interim Territorial Cohesion Report), has shown that a future Alpine Space programme can contribute to the overall aim of territorial cohesion as a *full-scale laboratory of sustainable development and low scale applied R&D networks*. As a space of interface, transit and circulation it offers a broad variety of possibilities for transnational cooperation in a special context of solidarity between cities and mountain rural areas. Moreover, the strong coherence with the European spatial development priorities offers high potentialities of a strong EU added value. All this cannot cancel the fact, however, that the current needs of sustainable spatial development remain mostly heterogeneous between the regions, the MEGAs or the Alpine core area.

Therefore, a review of substantive key issues concerning the Alpine Space leads to propose a revised framework of current priorities and measures of the Alpine Space programme (Table 3).

Priority	Measures	Focus
I. The Alpine Space as an innovative, competitive and attractive living and economic space in the scope of a polycentric spatial development	Common perspectives of territorial development: the centre-periphery issues	a. Network Alpine MEGAs – periphery b. Network Alpine SMC – periphery
	Competitiveness: economic key sectors and their importance to regions	a. Services, i.e. tourism and healthcare b. handicraft, agriculture, forestry
	Society: culture and identity	a. resolving the polarity of conserving and modernising Alpine culture
II. Improving transmissibility and accessibility of the Alpine Space	Alpine transport of passengers and cargos	a. strengthening efficiency of cargos transport b. sustainable passenger transport
	Alpine telecommunication	a. accessibility in peripheral regions b. accessibility to disadvantaged people c. use of GPS based information technology in mountain areas
III. Wise management of nature, landscapes and cultural heritage, promotion of the environment and the prevention of natural disasters	Cooperation in the field of natural risks	a. climate change strategies b. technical cooperation preventing natural hazards
	Good management and promotion of landscapes and cultural heritage	a. promoting authentic Alpine services and products b. creating additional income sources to agriculture and forestry
IV. Promoting Alpine innovation capabilities and ensuring an equitable repartition of factors of competitiveness	R&D centres with Alpine relevant knowledge	a. networking of Alpine R&D centres b. innovation in the field of health care, sports, handicraft technology
	Innovation capabilities	a. supporting Alpine SMEs by know-how exchange b. public private partnerships in the field of R&D

Table 3 – A revised framework of the Alpine Space priorities

In particular, the former *three priorities can be seen as an update* of the existing Alpine Space programme priorities in the light of the evolving debate on territorial cohesion. The *fourth priority reflects specifically the aim of "improving knowledge and innovation for growth"* as one relevant core topic laid down recently by the European Commission communication on Community Strategic Guidelines.

The above framework is proposed as a concrete contribution to the definition of the future Alpine Space programme priorities. Given the remaining high complexity of this transnational area, however, the final definition shall lean on a strategic scenario shared by all relevant institutional and socioeconomic stakeholders.

2.2 Procedural key issues

Accordingly with the analyses carried out (especially § 1.2 and § 1.3), a major lever to make the Alpine Space transnational cooperation programme more effective with regard to the established aims and more efficient with regard to Community policies resides in the way of building cooperation. The evidence of this, which has emerged also in the context of the most of other Interreg IIIB programmes, may lead to point out some *suggestions for a better definition and implementation of a programme strategy*, which has to precede the identification of strategic projects.

The Alpine Space programme, is indeed subject to the well known *phases of team building: forming / storming / ruling / performing*. After passing the phases of *forming* (i.e. the establishment of the Community initiative) and of *storming* (i.e. the experimental phase of Interreg II and Pilot Action programmes in 1997-1999), this programme appears now to be affected by an excessive worry for *ruling* tasks, which may affect a fully satisfactory development of the *performing* aims. If so, a revision of current procedures, according to overall principles of simplification and efficiency, could help the programme to develop its performing aims in future.

In particular, the following *four groups of key issues* have been identified, each of them responding to a respective phase of programme implementation:

- 1) programme preparation: rules, structures, strategies;
- 2) programme management: effectiveness;
- 3) projects management: facilitation and optimisation;
- 4) programme networking: "cooperation between the cooperation worlds".

In particular, the following activities are suggested as *possible contributions for improving the efficiency of programme and projects*:

- a) a *systematic recognition of the transnational dimension* in all actions at every levels, also including the relations possibly established outside the Alpine Space area;
- b) the *creation of some "learning organisation"* which may contribute to the effectiveness of the programme and to the prosecution of the established activities and networks also beyond the programme duration;
- c) the *improvement, simplification and consolidation of rules and practices* of programme and projects management;

- d) the assistance to project leaders by *appropriate training and coaching activities*.

2.3 Key actors

Accordingly with the spatial policies analysis (§ 1.2), *territorial governance is a dimension of particular importance and difficulty* for a cooperation area like the one concerned by the Interreg IIIB Alpine Space programme, where a multitude of different administrative and cultural experiences, diverse hierarchical levels, and public and private partners are involved together in a complex cooperation process. Not only *different tasks* are ascribed indeed to each participating group of subjects, but also all the involved actors may have *distinct understanding* of their respective roles in the cooperation process. Besides, their *perceptions of the main trends* affecting the Alpine area (§ 1.1) and, more generally, of the substantive key issues at stake (§ 2.1) may differ also radically, accordingly to their respective roles in the game.

Moreover, a lot of findings arising from the analysis of the Alpine Space programme (§ 1.3) may be influential for a redefinition of the key actors roles in a future programme. In particular, they suggest that *innovative management and communication patterns* have to be sought beyond the approach experienced so far (§ 2.2), involving in a way or another the actors of spatial development at all levels.

In this light, *to redefine the overall framework of the effective and potential key players* in the Alpine Space, and of their specific roles in the game, is a necessary point of departure for the preparation of a future programme. In particular the following types of actors are expected or suggested to take a key role in a future Alpine Space programme:

1. The *European Commission* (in the person of the DG Regio officers who will be assigned to the supervision of the Alpine Space territorial cooperation programme) shall be regarded not simply as the formal contracting body of the programme, but as the primary interpreter of EU policies, particularly of the *territorial cohesion* aim.
2. As assigned by the Structural Funds regulations, the *national authorities* (in particular the respective national coordination units) have to fulfil the task of promoting and coordinating transnational spatial policies in the EU policies framework. This task should be interpreted not only as the promotion of the respective national strategies, but especially as the *enhancement of a concrete multi-level territorial governance process* in the Alpine Space.
3. According to the analyses carried out, the *regional authorities* (Swiss cantons, Austrian and German Länder, French and Italian regions, and to some extent also Slovenian statistical regions) are the *primary key actors of territorial governance* in the Alpine area. Therefore, *to assign them a strategic role in the building of the Alpine Space strategies* (not simply in project implementation) would not mislead the overall aim of transnational territorial cooperation, but it would rather strengthen the effectiveness of a future programme. For the same reasons, they should play a central role in the proposal and implementation of strategic projects.

4. The established *international organisations* concerning the Alpine territory, like the Alpine Convention or CIPRA, should be regarded as key actors at programming level as well. In particular, they are expected to foster the connections between EU, national and regional strategies in the elaboration of a joint programme and in the implementation of strategic projects.
5. *Intermediary agencies*, like national and regional management institutions, have attained only limited relevance in the Alpine Space programme up to now but should be seen as *key actors of project implementation* in future. They could especially *support the networking between national, regional and local actors* within the aim of transnational cooperation.
6. A special attention as strategic project developers at a sub-regional level should be addressed to the *innovative groups of stakeholders* like the existing *action groups* and *networks* (some of them deriving from Community initiatives, like the Leader Local Action Groups, some others from local participation activities, like the Local Agenda 21 processes, some others else from the interregional cross-border cooperation organisations like the Euregios).
7. A special attention as strategic project developers at local level, especially for the enhancement of cities participation to the Alpine Space programme, should be addressed to the existing *networks of municipalities* established in the Alpine area (e.g. Alpine cities; Alliances in the Alps, Network of protected areas etc.).

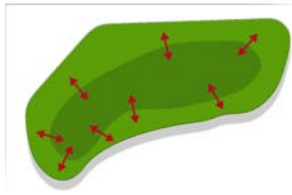
3 Proposals

3.1 Shared scenarios for the Alpine territory

According to the framework of the present study, possible shared scenarios for the Alpine territory are proposed as the answer to an apparently simple question: given the current activities of the Interreg III B Alpine Space programme on the one hand (§ 1.3), and the substantive key issues arising from main territorial trends and policies in the Alpine area on the other (§ 2.1), what strategic vision of the area should be agreed in order to guide the priorities of a future programme?

Experience has shown however that *defining a strategic vision for transnational cooperation is matter of consensus-building* on the foundation of multiple and often divergent viewpoints, more than of assuming beforehand a unique conception of the future which may be desirable for a territory. Therefore, the pursuit of one shared scenario must necessarily pass through the possible combinations of the existing different views as a starting point for building convergence.

3.1.1 Alpine core and the MEGAs



Key words: metropolisation, attractiveness, global sustainability, protection, city/mountain solidarity, international tourism...

Context and perspective: the metropolitan areas surrounding the Alps will continue to grow and the concomitant urban sprawl will put increasing pressure on mountain spaces. At the same time, these metropolitan areas are becoming centres of competitiveness which will drive the entire Alpine economy. The Alpine Space as a whole should be drawn into these phenomena, with the aim of intersecting the interests of metropolitan areas as the primary economic force and the ones of mountain zones as a resource to be protected, facing all inherent contradictions.

Strategic stakes: to protect the mountainous Alpine core, as defined in the Alpine Convention, while encouraging competitiveness of and networks between metropolitan areas; to address the economic interrelation between the core mountain area and the MEGAs (Metropolitan European Growth Areas).

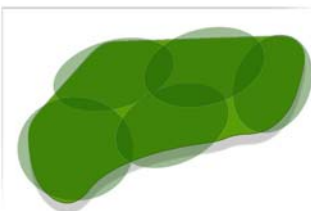
Substantive key issues:

- common perspectives for territorial development dealing with the centre-periphery issue (a. network Alpine MEGAs / peripheral territories; b. network Alpine small and medium cities / peripheral territories);
- cooperation in the field of natural risk (a. strategies to face the climate change effects; b. technical cooperation for preventing natural hazards).

Procedural key issues: cooperative approach; necessity of organising transnational cooperation in connection with other existing forms of cooperation.

Key actors: regions, addressing the values of core Alpine areas; thematic actors as for nature protection, traffic problems etc.; the Alpine Convention general secretary and other Alpine networks; urban authorities (cities and metropolis).

3.1.2 Regional diversity: puzzle and “coopetition”



Key words: “coopetition” (combination of cooperation and competition), territorial systems, multi-level governance, clusters, cultural partnerships, regional heritage, local development...

Context and perspective: cross-border and transnational cooperation has produced and will continue to produce regional sub-zones dealing with sets of issues specific to their respective area. The cultural and linguistic links, the geographic and historic proximity will foster the emergence of several distinct systems of action within the Alpine Space, and, though interconnected the one to the other, yet most efficient on their own scale. This diversity will encourage productive cooperation as well as competition among the regional sub-zones: the Alpine Space should result energised by this dual movement of cooperation and competition among cross-border spaces with strong individual identities.

Strategic stakes: to support the emergence of Euro-regional systems of action within the Alpine Space, while at the same time balancing them in order to make cooperation and competition all over the Alpine Space compatible.

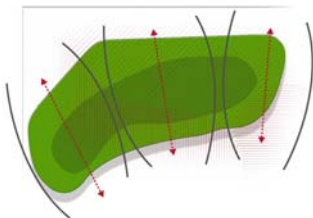
Substantive key issues:

- competitiveness: economic key sectors and their importance for regions (a. services, e.g. tourism and healthcare; b. handicraft, agriculture, forestry);
- society, culture and identity (to resolve the polarity between conservation and modernisation of the Alpine cultures);
- good management and promotion of landscapes and cultural heritage (a. promoting genuine Alpine services and products; b. creating additional income sources from agriculture and forestry);
- innovation capabilities (a. supporting the Alpine SMEs by know-how exchanges; b. public-private partnerships in the field of R&D).

Procedural key issues: bottom-up approach; cooperation projects limited to 2-3 countries.

Key actors: national authorities (with regard to the coordination between the overall spatial policy and national spatial strategies); regional authorities; intermediaries including private partners (for the link of levels, project development and local support) especially in the economic field; local authorities (cooperation of municipalities, thematic cooperation, contributions to regional programmes).

3.1.3 North-South mediation



Key words: transit routes, governmental cooperation, infrastructures, impacts, ports and airports, technological risks...

Context and perspective: the Alpine Space will be increasingly concerned by North-South European mediation, in the heart of the continent's economy. The reinforcement of highway tunnels and of high speed transit infrastructures will shape this mediation into three main transalpine corridors (West, Centre and East), each corresponding to a specific North-South European economic axis. The Alpine Space should be promoted into this logic.

Strategic stakes: to organise and to capitalise the transit economy of each of the major Alpine routes, while at the same time ensuring the overall solidarity so as to prevent side effects and imbalances among the Alpine territories.

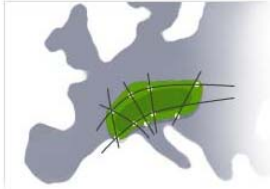
Substantive key issues:

- Alpine transport of passengers and cargos (a. strengthening the efficiency of cargos transport; b. sustainable passengers transport);
- cooperation in the field of natural risk (a. strategies to face the climate change effects; b. technical cooperation for preventing natural hazards).

Procedural key issues: top-down approach; cooperation projects limited to 2-3 countries; necessity of organising transnational cooperation in connection with other existing forms of cooperation.

Key actors: national authorities (particularly referring to transport policy); regional and local authorities; local stakeholders; private partners.

3.1.4 Networks, corridors, connecting elements



Key words: polycentrism, distribution, knowledge networks, mobility management...

Context and perspective: the Alpine Space will be structured primarily by the polycentric network of its metropolitan areas, each located at the crossroads of major North-South and East-West axes in Europe. This network will foster the ability of the Alpine Space to participate in the knowledge economy, an economic engine for the Europe of tomorrow. The quality of connectivity, accessibility to services and mobility management in the Alpine Space should determine the conditions for progress throughout the whole geographic area.

Strategic stakes: to promote metropolitan polycentrism, while at the same time ensuring an effective distribution of the dynamics and benefits throughout the territory thanks to the relay with small and medium-size towns.

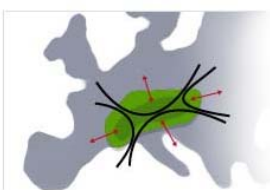
Substantive key issues:

- common perspectives for territorial development dealing with the centre-periphery issue (a. network Alpine MEGAs / peripheral territories; b. network Alpine small and medium cities / peripheral territories);
- Alpine telecommunication (a. accessibility in peripheral regions; b. accessibility for disadvantaged people; c. use of GPS-based information technologies in mountain areas);
- R&D centres with relevant Alpine knowledge (a. networking of Alpine R&D centres; b. innovation in the field of healthcare, sports, handicraft technology);
- innovation capabilities (a. supporting the Alpine SMEs by know-how exchanges; b. public-private partnerships in the field of R&D).

Procedural key issues: cooperative approach.

Key actors: all possible actors dealing with knowledge development and networks building; metropolitan development subjects and networks of Alpine cities as the structuring forces of this process; networks at lower levels important to create linkages internal to this framework and to supply connecting elements; managing authorities of the more important transport infrastructures.

3.1.5 Openness and enlargement



Key words: river basins, openness, enlargement, "little Europes", solidarity, Alpine experience...

Context and perspective: the Alpine Space will become increasingly open in all directions due to the structuring of its major European river basins (Rhine, Rhone, Po and

Danube). This extraversion will shift the stakes for territorial development from the heart of the Alps towards a greater coordination with peri-Alpine regions and even further: Mediterranean Europe, Rhine Europe, Carpathian Europe, Balkan Europe. The entire Alpine Space should be structured according to the functioning of these major basins and to the upstream and downstream solidarity which they imply.

Strategic stakes: to broaden the scope of transnational cooperation outside the Alpine Space, with the aim of expanding the specific Alpine know-how, added values and expectations.

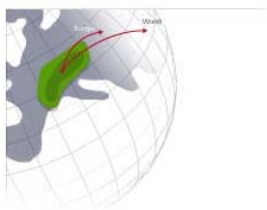
Substantive key issues:

- R&D centres with relevant Alpine knowledge (a. networking of Alpine R&D centres; b. innovation in the field of healthcare, sports, handicraft technology);
- innovation capabilities (a. supporting the Alpine SMEs by know-how exchanges; b. public-private partnerships in the field of R&D);
- society, culture and identity (to resolve the polarity between conservation and modernisation of the Alpine cultures).

Procedural key issues: top-down approach; necessity to involve partners from outside of the Alpine Space (i.e. full use of the Structural Funds 20% rule); possibility of organising restricted calls for proposals targeted on objectives seen as strategic in this view.

Key actors: national authorities, addressing cooperation between the Alpine Space and other neighbouring countries; regional authorities as for the implementation phase.

3.1.6 Positioning: we and the others



Key words: globalisation, international tourism, alpine amenities, global competition, image, joint promotion...

Context and perspective: the Alpine Space will be caught up in the global competition of territories which will continuously destabilise its position and major functions. Alpine tourism, technology, socioeconomic networks and productive systems will be all challenged by the logic of competition well beyond the European scale. After learning to distinguish its own identity and role, in each of the member countries before and within the EU later, the Alpine Space should learn now to rebuild and to communicate its identity and role looking at much broader horizons and at the global scale.

Strategic stakes: to build and to promote a global and competitive identity suitable to address the specific features and challenges of the area as a whole and to exploit the comparative advantages of the Alpine Space.

Substantive key issues:

- common perspectives for territorial development dealing with the centre-periphery issue (a. network Alpine MEGAs / peripheral territories; b. network Alpine small and medium cities / peripheral territories);

- Alpine telecommunication (a. accessibility in peripheral regions; b. accessibility to disadvantaged people; c. use of GPS-based information technologies in mountain areas);
- R&D centres with relevant Alpine knowledge (a. networking of Alpine R&D centres; b. innovation in the field of healthcare, sports, handicraft technology).

Procedural key issues: top-down approach; search for projects federating all the 7 countries of the Alpine Space; possibility of organising restricted calls for proposals targeted on objectives seen as strategic in this view.

Key actors: regional authorities with regard to economic performance, amenity provision and global attractiveness; European Commission and other EU institutions, in view of the contribution of the Alpine Space to European global competitiveness and attractiveness, as a worldwide example of sustainable development policy process; great economic actors.

3.1.7 Towards a strategic scenario

The six scenarios above presented are not (nor they could be) thought as capable to sum up and to rank all possible futures of the Alpine territory. They show rather that the analyses carried out by the present study can offer equally good argumentations to support different spatial orientations, to each responding respective development strategies. In other words, future is not univocal, not simply because it is hardly predictable, but especially because *players into the game of spatial development are too numerous and their needs and interests cannot be easily ignored.*

Therefore, the only serious way to build a strategic scenario for the Alpine Space transnational spatial development (i.e. capable to guide the actors intentions) is *to frame an appropriate public discussion on the proposed visions among the real institutional and socioeconomic decision-makers at stake.* Indeed, any attempt of imposing a desirable scenario by authoritative or scientific legitimation would easily weaken the guiding capacity of such vision, for the simple reason that nobody is motivated to share a scenario which he did not contribute to set up.

3.2 Proposals for improving cooperation after 2006

3.2.1 Contents of cooperation

As previously mentioned (§ 2.1), the *new cohesion policy*, established for period 2007-2013, is primarily oriented towards the implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies. In this framework, other concepts beside the ones addressed to by the ESDP become relevant for future programmes of *European territorial cooperation*, which is expected to take the place of current Interreg III Community Initiative as the new Structural Funds mainstream objective no. 3.

As far as the territorial cooperation objective is concerned, *the emerging concept of "territorial cohesion" is of primary interest.* According to the Third Cohesion Report, territorial cohesion may be seen as a translation of the concept of sustainable development into the spatial dimension by means of polycentric development, an

aim which was already introduced by the ESDP. As a concept complementing the economic and social dimensions of cohesion, it is expected to contribute to the implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies especially throughout *the value added of territorial integration and of cooperation between regions*.

Therefore, the territorial trends of main importance for the Alpine area (§ 1.1) and the political calls for action on different levels of territorial governance (§ 1.2), as they have been mutually interconnected as substantive key issues (§ 2.1), shall be addressed towards territorial cohesion in the future Alpine Space territorial cooperation programme. In this light, special attention should be addressed to the evidence that, especially in a complex territory like the Alpine area, *specificities and differences between local territories are an immense potential towards innovative capacities of competitiveness*. This means that transnational cooperation in the Alpine Space will be able to contribute to the overall EU territorial cohesion objective according to its effective capacity *to valorise local development potentialities throughout transnational opportunities* (i.e. overcoming the limitations due to national separations).

On the contrary, the outcomes of the Alpine Space Interreg III B programme (§ 1.3) have shown that transnational cooperation so far has been developed in many aspects as a framework for the negotiation of distinct national options. *This attitude has to be avoided in future*, since it lead to inhibit local development capacities and, consequently, the success of the next Alpine Space programme and its contribution to EU territorial cohesion and to the Lisbon and Gothenburg aims.

The present study offers offer a vast array of themes and of methodological suggestions which, according to an hopefully agreed development scenario, decision-makers may decide to combine and diversify in view of the preparation of next Alpine Space territorial cooperation programme. Particularly, Table 1 (§ 1.1), Table 2 (§ 1.2) and Table 3 (§ 2.1) are of greater interest for deciding on priorities and measures of future Alpine Space cooperation. First and foremost, however, *a strategic scenario has to be agreed by the concerned stakeholders* according to the proposed procedures (§ 3.1), in the light of the EU territorial cohesion aim.

3.2.2 Area of cooperation

Basing on the simple and perhaps reductive assumption that the Alpine Space "is a space with a strong geographic coherence which should be focused on across-mountain corridors and mountainous environment", *the European Commission services have proposed a restriction of current cooperation area*, to detriment of 6 regions: Alsace, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (FR), Freiburg, Tübingen (DE), Burgenland (AT), and Liguria (IT). Three options are thus proposed for these regions: to remain integrated in the space, to be cancelled or to be associated with the guaranty to be involved in some projects using the geographic flexibility of 20% (according to art. 22 of current draft ERDF Regulations, COM(2004) 495).

Of course, despite the apparent poorness of motivations, such proposal has to be considered, if only because of the authoritativeness of proponents. To this respect, the analyses carried out in the present study have shown that other regions as well tend to differentiate from the average of the Alpine Space regions for some reason. In particular, the trend analysis (§ 1.1) has pointed out that Rhône-Alpes (FR) and Upper Austria (AT) do not share the adopted common indicator profile. Conversely, it

has been observed that other regions located outside the area (Stuttgart and Karlsruhe, Mittel- and Unterfranken in Germany, Toscana in Italy, Småland med Öarna in Sweden, Highlands and Islands in Scotland) share indicator values similar to the Alpine regions. The Commission services may agree, of course, that aggregations could be hardly proposed in these cases. Additionally, the policy analysis (§ 1.2) has led the attention on the high number and extremely diversified range of “exceptions” cohabiting in the Alpine territory, against the backdrop of its geographic coherence.

In brief, the point is that the objective homogeneity of geographic characters does not seem a convincing argument to implicate a change (a restriction nor an enlargement) of the existing cooperation area. Instead, also in accordance to the European Governance White Paper's idea of Open Method of Coordination (OMC), subjective willingness of mutual cooperation appears to be a more appropriate criterion to decide whether or not any region should leave or join the cooperation area.

Therefore, since the institutional forms are fundamental to make the OMC working effectively, a *formal letter of commitment to the next Alpine Space territorial cooperation programme should be asked to all regional governments* (cantons, Länder and regions), currently included, to certify their intention to prosecute the experience after 2006. Additionally, all reasonable requests for joining the area received by regional governments not currently involved should be taken in attentive consideration and possibly welcome.

However, as a general rule, the overall experience of Interreg would suggest *to safe the existing cooperation area as far as possible*, since the established networks and relations among partners, at programme and project levels, are an immensely valuable patrimony to be capitalised over time (§ 2.2). This applies especially to the Alpine Space cooperation area, which has started living in a whole dimension only throughout the Interreg III programmes cycle.

3.2.3 Design of strategies and decision-making process

Design of strategies and decision-making process are matter of both policy practices and technical procedures. One main message derived from the policy analysis (§ 1.2) is that transnational territorial cooperation proves to be a difficult task, even if regarding an apparently homogeneous territory like the Alpine Space, because not only levels of territorial governance are several but also policy priorities are different, variously interconnected and often contrasting the ones against the others. On the other hand, procedural issues (§ 2.2) address to consider that the effectiveness of future programme will depend mostly on the capacity to build real consensus on strategic objectives and on structuring choices.

Therefore, since the overall aim of the Alpine Space programme towards EU cohesion policy is expected to be the promotion of local development potentialities throughout transnational opportunities), the design of strategies shall necessarily pass through the effort of *combining the different calls for action on various sectors (horizontal dimension) and levels (vertical dimension)* according to a authentic appreciation of the main features of EU territorial governance.

In practical terms, *to frame a public discussion for the agreement of a strategic scenario* for the future Alpine Space programme according to the above proposed

procedures (§ 3.1) appears to be the right way for approaching such complex and delicate task. Particularly, this will require the recourse to appropriate techniques in the field of policy consensus building in order to obtain effective results.

The policy analysis has shown more in details that regional claims for action are not usually subsumed in the respective national views, certainly not in the case of the Alpine Space area (§ 1.2). On the other hand, the analysis of current Interreg IIIB programme has pointed out the high prevalence of regional authorities among the partners of project implementation, often to detriment of local subjects and of a genuine local development process (§ 1.3). Indeed, the activism of regional authorities at project implementation level becomes often a factor of inhibition of the participation of local public and private subjects, which are the key actors of local development (§ 2.3).

In fact, such behaviour may confirm the understandable worries of regional authorities, which are instead the key actors of territorial governance in the area, for not seeing “their own” concerns of spatial development enough recognised by the programme. In other words, it seems that regional authorities have to preside projects, since they do not feel themselves involved appropriately in decisions regarding the programme. Be that as it may, *the decision-making system which has been experienced in current programming period has proved to be not enough efficient towards the overall results of the territorial cooperation process.*

It seems therefore that the *involvement of regional governments as the key actors at programming level* of the Alpine Space transnational cooperation (§ 2.3) has to be fostered. Particularly, *the political representatives of regional authorities* (Presidents / Ministers of Cantons, Länder, Regions and Autonomous Provinces) have to be consciously committed to the programme objectives and strategies.

In this light, two practical suggestions arise in view of the next programme:

1. *The role of the “Conference of the regions” should be strengthened* in future, for instance by:
 - assigning the Conference a central role in the programming process of the Alpine Space programme for 2007-2013, especially as far as the design of strategies (priorities and measures) is concerned;
 - establishing also formally in the next programme that the membership of the Conference is composed by the heads of regional governments and not by simple officers;
 - making the Conference's advice for the main advancement steps of the programme (financial plan, projects selection criteria, strategic projects etc.) obligatory.
2. The presence of *national and of regional representatives inside the committees of transnational decision* (i.e. both Monitoring Committee and Steering Committee) should be re-balanced in favour of the latter.

Finally, the analysis has shown that, even if focusing on the same territories and borders and having many structural components in common, Interreg IIIA programmes in the Alpine area carry out their strategies independently from the Interreg IIIB Alpine Space programme. Therefore, *a joint strategy of coordination between transnational and cross-border territorial cooperation programmes* could

serve better the interests of the Alpine communities with an increase in the effectiveness of both kinds of programmes.

3.2.4 Programme management

As far as the management of the future programme is concerned, the present study cannot do less of considering the potentialities of the new legal instrument on cooperation established by draft Regulation COM(2004) 496 and also recalled at art. 18 of draft Regulation COM(2004) 495 on the ERDF. Indeed, the "European Grouping of Cross-border Cooperation" (EGCC), invested with legal personality with the aim of reinforcing economic, social and territorial cohesion, can have also the objective of facilitating and promoting transnational and inter-regional cooperation (COM(2004) 496, art. 1).

In the light of the analyses carried out (see especially § 1.3 and § 2.2), the Alpine Space member states are warmly recommended *to take in consideration the institution of an EGCC as a strategic tool for improving cooperation in 2007-2013*. Of course, the modalities of its possible institution, in particular whether to set up the EGCC as a separate joint legal entity or to assign its tasks to one regional authority, shall be matter of attentive evaluation and of political decision. The same shall be, in both cases of acceptance or rejection of the EGCC opportunity, as for the decision on whether to confirm the existing Managing Authority or to assign this task to a different authority (or joint legal entity). Indeed, apart from the unquestionable capacities of current managers, both the options may imply some advantage, in particular:

- a) to confirm the existing Managing Authority would permit to capitalise the experience and the know-how built up in 2000-2006;
- b) to assign this task to a different authority (or joint legal entity) would permit to spread the institutional capacity also in other regions, perhaps located in other countries and in a different side of the area.

In conclusion, the institution of a EGCC as a new joint legal entity also including the present Managing Authority might be a suitable solution to pursue both the above said advantages.

3.3 Potential strategic projects

3.3.1 Definition of strategic projects

In the course of the legal bases preparation for the new cohesion policy, the issue of strategic projects has been heatedly debated. *The European Commission prepared a definition, which was not readily accepted by the Member States*. However, this debate died off temporarily, perhaps also in the light of political problems affecting the adoption of the financial perspectives for 2007-2013.

The draft regulations on Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund do not mention strategic projects, but adopt the term *major projects* as to indicate complex operations exceeding 25 or 50 million Euro (in the environment field or in other fields respectively). The Community Strategic Guidelines (2005) avoid the term as well but

state that transnational cooperation should be centred on “matters of strategic importance”.

Basing on its analytical findings, the present study has led to assume that the *notion of strategic projects pertains to contents, as well as to territorial coverage, composition of partnerships, types of objectives, of envisaged activities and results.*

According to this definition, strategic projects should normally address *complex topics, of high relevance to a major part of the Alpine Space or specific types of areas. Broad territorial coverage* should be sought in relation to participating or represented territorial entities. Regarding quality of the partnership, *presence of strategic partners in relation to the objectives and envisaged results of the project* should be required. Moreover, further organisation of transnational activities should lead to *partners becoming a “collective player”*. *Commitment of partners and long term orientation of cooperation* should be prerequisites to build partnerships and carry out complex processes and operations.

Project *objectives should help to achieve strategically important aims at several levels*, such as the EU, the programme area, participating states and regions. The envisaged *types of results should pertain to more advanced categories*, e.g. formation of transnational networks, exchange of best practices, strategy building, activities to implement the strategy.

3.3.2 Ideas for potential strategic projects

Two main frames of reference have been used in elaboration of ideas for strategic projects:

- the EU documents pertaining to the new cohesion policy for period 2007-2013, most notably the Structural Funds and ERDF draft regulations (COM(2004) 492 and 495) and the Community Strategic Guidelines; and
- ideas and proposals developed by the *Prospective Study*, especially those concerning substantive key issues (§ 2.1), key actors (§ 2.3), scenarios (§ 3.1) and the themes of cooperation (§ 3.2.1).

In particular, (a) the *project ideas at programme level* are proposed in view of the preparation and implementation of an Alpine Space programme in 2007-2013 and they include:

⇒ *Alpine Space 2020*. The need to elaborate a strategic vision for the Alpine Space area has been expressed in several occasions. The issue should be addressed in a process encompassing all relevant institutional and socioeconomic stakeholders from all Alpine Space countries and regions. The process should be designed using contemporary knowledge in the relevant fields, such as: visioning techniques, group work techniques, facilitation etc.. The implementation could be led by the JTS with inputs from outside collaborators as required.

⇒ *Preparatory projects*. In order to launch projects in fields of strategic importance yielding concrete action, it may be necessary to build the basis for that in the so called preparatory projects. These would be aimed at identification and focusing of themes, identification and bringing together of key actors as well as preparation of the next phase projects according to results of the preparatory works.

⇒ *Synthesis and dissemination projects.* Synthesis of results of projects dealing with similar or complementary themes could bring valuable new knowledge as well as open new perspectives. It could further lead to identifying new (strategic) projects. Projects oriented into activities to do with dissemination of project results could increase the efficiency and visibility of the programme and bring additional benefits to the cooperation area and its component parts.

⇒ *Projects accompanying programme implementation.* It appears relevant to have current information on content related issues, such as whether and in what way project activities are contributing to the implementation of priorities and measures, what are the effects in the Alpine Space countries and regions etc.. These questions could be pursued in specially designed projects aimed at assessing the programme implementation with a view to results and impacts of the projects.

Besides, (b) the *project ideas connected with strategic key issues* are structured around key words pertaining to topics proposed by the European Commission, as well as to substantive findings of the present study and they include:

⇒ *Metropolitan / urban network of the Alpine Space.* A strategic project should preferably be prepared in a pre-project, addressing questions such as: Which elements are connecting the metropolitan ring of the Alpine Space? Are there interest and scope for cooperation? Who are the potential key actors? What are the relevant fields and themes of cooperation? What experiences in metropolitan cooperation in Europe are of relevance for the Alpine Space? Another aspect of urban cooperation and networking relates to the connections of the metropolitan areas with the small and medium-sized towns: How can these benefit from development dynamics of the metropolitan cities? Is a polycentric urban network feasible? How can it function?

⇒ *Rural-urban relations at work.* This project would seek potential promising fields and instruments of cooperation. It would be based on pilot areas or cases in the Alpine Space. The main aim would be to establish permanent partnerships and cooperation between urban and rural areas. The generated knowledge would be exchanged, compared and assessed in the partnership frame, but communicated also to a wider audience and to other European regions.

⇒ *Regional development observatory.* This project addresses the differences between urban centres, peri-urban and remote regions in the Alpine Space in terms, for example, of levels of education, job offer, value creation etc.. It would have several focuses: to map the differences between urban centres, peri-urban and remote regions and their development trajectories by means of a set of indicators on territorial development; to set up an Alpine Space wide comparison of development patterns; to identify success stories or best practices in managing the "differentials"; to identify success factors, develop recommendations and test them in pilot areas.

⇒ *Territorial effects of "brain drain".* The extent and characteristics of "brain drain" processes in the Alpine Space regions would be first analysed and territorial effects of this process would be documented. Further steps would include the proposal of mitigation strategies and measures and their implementation in pilot areas, as well as the evaluation and dissemination of results.

⇒ *Destination Alpine Space.* Is the Alpine Space a (potential) territory, suitable to enter successfully into competition at major scales, such as the EU and up to the global one? If yes, what makes up its identity and image? Which services does and

should this territory provide to whom? How could it be promoted or marketed? What specific structures could be set up at various stages?

⇒ *Sustainable tourism in the Alpine Space*. This strategic project would need to take an integrated view of several aspects: which are the general development options for tourism development in the Alpine Space; what are the social, economic, environmental and spatial consequences of single scenarios in the light of the sustainable development concept; what strategies and organisational measures may be used to pursue the relevant scenario(s); which good practices exist already in the Alpine Space or elsewhere and can be readily used; which alternatives to tourism have regions with a long term decline of guests?

⇒ *Mobility chain in the Alpine Space*. A comprehensive overview of the state of the art and developments of the whole mobility chain – from large urban centres, TGV stations and major airports, to the small Alpine valleys – in the Alpine Space is missing. A strategic project aimed initially at mapping the mobility chain in the Alpine Space could base on findings of projects implemented in the current programming period, as well as from experience of other cooperation areas. The final objective would be to devise a joint mobility management strategy for the Alpine Space and its various component parts.

⇒ *Public passenger transport in the Alpine Space*. A preparatory project should be launched addressing the following issues: Who are the key actors in the field of public passenger transport? What are their views, needs? Is there scope for an overall agreed Alpine Space policy on the issue? Which developments will most strongly influence development of public passenger transport and in what way? What successful models and practices exist already? Who should act on the issue and in what way?

3.3.3 Project selection criteria

Finally, a first rough draft of *criteria, which could be used in project selection* has been developed on the basis of the study findings (§ 2.1 to § 2.3). The criteria address *two sets of issues: response to substantive key issues and response to key issues of transnational cooperation processes*.

The *response to substantive key issues* (Table 4) may be completed by a more general set of criteria, such as better accessibility to infrastructures, knowledge and public services; improved mobility chain management; higher local economic added-value; diversification in the fields of economy / decrease of mono structured economic systems; well balanced demography; decrease of energy consumption per capita; improvement of policy coherence between local, regional, national and European levels.

However, each of the given criteria should be defined in detail by parameters and aggregation methods in order to come to a more operational evaluation grid. This step obviously must be left open until the final decision on the objectives to be pursued will be taken on the basis of an agreed strategic scenario (§ 3.1).

Measures	Focus	Response criteria
<i>I. The Alpine Space as an innovative, competitive and attractive living and economic space in the scope of a polycentric spatial development</i>		
Common perspectives of territorial development: the centre-periphery issues	a. Network Alpine MEGAs – periphery b. Network Alpine SMC - periphery	Increase of integrated territorial development concepts covering the interlink areas of MEGAs / SMC, increase of experience exchange between Alpine MEGAs / SMC
Competitiveness: economic key sectors and their importance to regions	a. Services, i.e. tourism and healthcare b. Handicraft, agriculture, forestry	Market share of key sectors, number of product innovations, regional gross domestic product per capita, decrease of unemployment
Society: culture and identity	a. Resolving the polarity of conserving and modernizing Alpine culture	Increase of participation of citizens in cultural organisations, increase of cultural competitions and events, increase of cultural model projects, decrease of regulations suppressing new Alpine culture
<i>II. Improving transmissibility and accessibility of the Alpine Space</i>		
Alpine transport of passengers and cargo	a. Strengthening efficiency of cargo transport b. Sustainable passenger transport	Decrease of truck based traffic crossing the Alps, improvement of intermodality in cargo transport, improvement of modal split of passenger transport, decrease of car based traffic in sensitive areas
Alpine telecommunication	a. Accessibility in peripheral regions b. Accessibility to disadvantaged people c. Use of GPS based information technology in mountain areas	Increase of share of online users, increase of territorial coverage by telecommunication services, number of GPS-based products in tourism and transport
<i>III. Wise management of nature, landscapes and cultural heritage, promotion of the environment and the prevention of natural disasters</i>		
Cooperation in the field of natural risks	a. Climate change strategies b. Technical co-operation preventing natural hazards	Decrease of natural hazards, number of new tourism and settlement concepts considering the effects of climate change, increase of high quality natural hazard prediction, improvement of information speed about risks to the public, number of licences of new technologies
Good management and promotion of landscapes and cultural heritage	a. Promoting authentic Alpine services and products b. Creating additional income sources to agriculture and forestry	Increase of regional brands, income of farmers per farm and person, increase of regional cross-sectoral co-operations
<i>IV. Promoting Alpine innovation capabilities and ensuring an equitable repartition of factors of competitiveness</i>		
R&D centres with alpine relevant knowledge	a. Networking of alpine R&D centres b. Innovation in the field of health care, sports, handicraft technology	Increase of third party money in R&D, number of graduate and post-graduate students selecting an Alpine R&D institution, number of licences per year, number of long term cooperation activities
Innovation capabilities	a. Supporting Alpine SMEs by know-how exchange b. Public private partnerships in the field of R&D	Increase of transnational co-operation networks of SMEs, increase of private contributions to the priority, number of PPP between SMEs and Alpine R&D institutions

Table 4 – Response criteria to substantive key issues

The analysis of the *response to key issues of transnational cooperation process* is based on the synthesis of the procedural key issues (§ 2.2) as well as on an assessment of possible involvement of key actors (§ 2.3). The integrated approach leads to criteria based on the scale of transnational cooperation objectives, which encompasses *6 categories: knowledge, tools, networks, exchange, strategy and actions*, leading to a comprehensive transnational cooperation. Main aspects behind the scale are the questions addressing the *quality of partnership* (balanced partnership); *existence of provisions* to involve strategic key actors; contribution of the project to the *design of EU community policies*; contribution to *organisational learning* within the project, inside and outside the programme (knowledge spiral).

In particular, an effective transnational cooperation could gain from the *involvement of partner types which have proved to be relatively under represented* in current experience: i.e. economic actors, private consulting agencies, enterprises, public-private partnerships and enterprises executing a public mandate. Moreover, in each project the idea of an organised *continuous improvement process should be followed with respect knowledge*. This process is based on four main components, which should be carried out permanently: *documenting new knowledge, transferring new knowledge* to other project partners, *disseminating new knowledge* to all parties involved in the programme, *developing additional knowledge* outside the programme circle.

Finally, various management tools allow a detailed evaluation of processes as well as of the quality of organisation structures. A future evaluation grid could for example be based upon methods established in the ISO 9000 or ISO 14000 series.