



ASTAHG ALPINE SPACE TRANSNATIONAL GOVERNANCE ON ACTIVE  
AND HEALTHY AGEING

ACTIVE AND HEALTHY AGEING STRATEGY FOR THE ALPINE SPACE

Activity A.T1.3

AHA TRANSNATIONAL STRATEGY PROPOSAL

D.T1.3.1

Trieste, April 2021

WP T1



REGIONE AUTONOMA  
FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA



PROVINCIA  
AUTONOMA  
DI TRENTO

REGIONE DEL VENETO



ULSS1  
DOLOMITI



PARTNERS



EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR  
SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY  
AND RESEARCH



National Institute  
of Public Health



**Responsible partner for Work Package 1:**

Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, Department for Health&Social Policies and Disability  
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**ASTAHG I Project Partners**

[FVG](#) | AutonomousRegion Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italy, Lead Partner)

[AREA](#) | Area Science Park (Italy)

[PAT](#) | Autonomous Province of Trento (Italy)

[AULSS1](#) | Local Health Authority n.1 Dolomiti (Italy)

[PLUS](#) | Centre for Ethics and Poverty Research at University of Salzburg (Austria)

[European Centre](#) | European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (Austria)

[PSP PACA](#) | Professional network of home care service providers in Provence-Alpes-Côte-d’Azur (France)

[NIJZ](#) | National Institute of Public Health (Slovenia)

[GINA](#) | Geneva International Network on Ageing (Switzerland)

**Funding**

Total eligible costs: 1.078.659 EUR

ERDF grant: 916.860 EUR

**Project duration**

Start date: 2018-04-17

Closure date: 2021-04-16

**More information on the project:**

<https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/astahg>



## 1.1 THE ASTAHGPROJECT AT A GLANCE

The Alpine Space Transnational Governance of Active and Healthy Ageing (ASTAHG) project is part of the Priority 4 “Well-Governed Alpine Space” of the Alpine Space Programme that has the specific objective of increasing the application of multilevel and transnational governance in the Alpine Space (AS).

Acting on policy implementation stage, the ASTAHG project aims at helping local, regional and national governments in implementing a scaling up strategy for Active and Healthy Aging (AHA) across regions and countries of the AS— bringing together key stakeholders and policy makers. Moreover, by supporting a successful uptake of innovations, ASTAHG will provide important insights for the EU-Strategy for the Alpine Region EUSALP and European Innovation Partnership on AHA mission.

To improve AHA in the AS, the ASTAHG project follows a multisectoral, transnational, and multilevel approach. It is multisectoral as it aims to facilitate innovation across sectors, e.g. social care, healthcare, long term care, independent living, mobility and transport— as well as culture and tourism. It follows a transnational approach as it brings together stakeholders from different regions of the AS to exchange experiences, ideas and innovations, streamline strategies to address the ageing challenge and to share knowledge and best practices across geographically and/or politically defined contexts. The project’s multilevel approach deals with cooperation between stakeholders on local, regional, and national level to identify, implement, evaluate and improve upon successful AHA policies and to harvest potential synergies through efficient cooperation along all stages of the policy cycle.

In short, the overall objective of the ASTAHG project is to improve capacities and coordinating efforts in support of AHA between sectors and different levels, and to respond with tailored initiatives to AS territorial needs. It aspires to enhance



governance capacities related to regional AHA policies, foster the transfer of innovation for AHA in the AS, and to develop a social innovation framework for generating and adopting innovative solutions for AHA involving both public and private actors.

ASTAHG specific objectives include improving governance capacities of regional AHA policies by coordinating actions in different sectors, easing the transferring of innovation and initiatives for AHA across the AS, and enabling social innovation framework for generating and adopting innovation for AHA including both public and private actors.

## 1.2 OVERVIEW OF WORK PACKAGE 1 AND THE TRANSNATIONAL GOVERNANCE BOARD

The Transnational Governance Board (TGB) is an open network that was established within the ASTAHG project on December 2, 2019 in Marseille. Based on the 4Helix approach, the TGB is a network of different organisations, such as public authorities - at different levels of government -, research centres and universities, associations, industries, individual firms, and civil society organisations. It is set up for a three-years term after the end of the project— with the possibility of extending its duration.

The Board's main objective is to promote an "Age-friendly" Alpine Space Area bringing together public and private actors from different levels, sectors, and territorial specificities within the AS to create synergies and to foster the exchange of successful AHA policies, initiatives, and innovations. The Board aims in particular to support cities and regions in the AS area to develop, implement and evaluate policies,



services, and projects to answer the challenges of an ageing society— while promoting networking and knowledge sharing among its members, and building synergies with existing initiatives.

The TGB is the output of the ASTAHG project Work Package 1 aims at establishing and managing transnational and multilevel board on AHA. The TGB will be organized in thematic groups representing the most important areas of interventions for AHA. The activities of WP1 comprise the gathering of the 4helix actors from the AS to provide inputs and feedbacks to the project's results; and the organization of regular TGB meetings for the definition of a strategy for AHA in the AS and the identification of sustainability mechanisms for the board. The Management Committee members of TGB — representing all the thematic groups— have the objective of developing strategic actions for AHA in the AS to support transnational governance of the AHA at the macroregional level and to keep alive the intersectoral and multilevel cooperation beyond the project end.

The following organizations are the founding members of the TGB:

- FVG Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italy, Lead Partner)
- AREA Area Science Park (Italy)
- PAT Autonomous Province of Trento (Italy)
- AULSS1 Local Health Authority n.1 Dolomiti (Italy)
- PLUS Centre for Ethics and Poverty Research at University of Salzburg (Austria)
- European Centre European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (Austria)
- PSP PACA Professional network of home care service providers in Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur (France)
- NIJZ National Institute of Public Health (Slovenia)
- GINA Geneva International Network on Ageing (Switzerland)
- Funka Nu AB (Sweden)



## 1.3 AHA TRANSNATIONAL STRATEGY PROPOSAL

### 1.3.1 Aim of the document

The purpose of this document is to propose guidelines and recommended actions for an AHA Transnational Strategy conceived explicitly for the Alpine Space (AS), as foreseen by the Application Form of the ASTAHG Project (Activity A.T1.3). It collects and organises the Transnational Governance Board (TGB) forecasts and inputs as part of the HASTAG Project's legacy, whose activities deployed over the past three years (2018 - 2021).

This document (D.T1.3.1) takes its main inputs from the work carried out to establish the Transnational Governance Board (TGB) and form its founding documents (D.T1.1.1, D.T1.1.2, D.T1.1.3) and also from the discussions and results of the meetings held during the past months (D.T1.2.1).

Concerning the synergies and the connections with the whole ASTAHG project activities, the present strategy is also feed by three HASTAG outputs, namely OT 2.1, OT 3.1 and OT 3.2.

The document includes strategic elements for an AHA transnational governance at the AS level, fostering multilevel cooperation in the AHA domain. Two main factors shape this strategy: a thorough approach to the demographic aspect (AHA) and the specific impact of the AS area's geography. The process develops in two parallel directions: on one side, it aims to foster remarkable changes at a local and regional level; on the other side, it strives to fill the existing gap between territorial governance and the policies/findings/recommendations expressed at EU level.

Preliminary consideration has to be made before getting into the details of the strategic vision and work plan: the COVID-19 pandemic had a heavy impact on the



first year of the TGB activities. The ongoing emergencies, and the dramatic change in the agenda's priorities at all levels of public debate and government, strongly restricted the TGB potential as a Network. The strategy focuses on recovering lost time while taking the new scenario into due account, both as to thematic areas - by proposing, for example, a specific Working Group on the post COVID recovery in Alpine Space - and as to methods of activities (promoting remote modality).

### **1.3.2 Vision**

Since its foundation in 2019, and as an actual continuation to the ASTAHG Project activities, the TGB's main objective was to promote an "Age-friendly" Alpine Space Area, creating synergies among interested stakeholders at all levels and improving the governance models. It encouraged the local, regional and national AS authorities and other stakeholders to collaborate in promoting innovative solutions that address the needs of the ageing population.

Among the Board's original objectives, the following three have the most significant relevance:

- to support cities and regions in the Alpine Space area to develop, implement and evaluate initiatives (policies, services, projects) to answer to the challenges of an ageing society;
- to promote networking and knowledge sharing among its members;
- to build synergies with existing initiatives at EU and global level on Active and Healthy Ageing.

While demographic ageing is a significant challenge in Europe, the average population age is exceptionally high in Alpine Space, especially in the mountain





areas (Eurostat, 2013). This challenge requires systematic transnational cooperation both at the horizontal level (policymakers of health, social care, transport, culture, tourism) and at the vertical level (regions, provinces, municipalities), together with the involvement of the public and private sectors (R&I, local communities, social business). The aim is to support innovation for active ageing through actions tailored to the specific context of the AS region and capitalising from this geographic area's particular strengths in Europe.

The pandemic added even greater urgency to the priorities mentioned above, as the impact of the COVID has rapidly and massively affected the quality of life of the ageing population. In the current circumstances, the elderly represent not only the most fragile and exposed segment of people but also the part which, together with women and young students, lost most dramatically decades of progress in the quality of life, meant in its broadest value: health, well-being, socialisation opportunities, homecare, etc.

This strategy stems from a series of shared experiences from Alpine environments and backgrounds, outlining essential service, facilities, and actions to address the ageing population's needs over the next future. The strategy focuses on the vast potential of the different ASareas: despite all impediments, the AS communities share a natural predisposition to be safe, caring, inclusive and aware of their diversity.

Demography within the mountain areas remains a difficult challenge: as the struggle with depopulation is always open. Supporting older residents to continue to lead active and independent lives is pivotal to these communities' very self-preservation. Safe, accessible and pleasant environments are more enjoyable for people of all ages. Connected communities enjoy better health and social outcomes. Inclusive practices allow businesses and community groups to thrive. On top of all





this, harnessing older people's skills and experience offers a valuable opportunity to strengthen and enrich the community as a whole. It's not just a matter of financial burden/benefits, but it's something that improves the community's social and cultural framework.

The rural and mountain areas often suffer a sort of paradox: they are very cohesive regions, but somehow keep distant from a genuine joint and long-term territorial vision. The paradox also relies on the fact that these communities' typical small dimensions and a long-established tradition of mutual help make these centres the ideal lab for innovative actions of social inclusion and territorial engagement. Local stakeholders have an essential role in assisting older residents in remaining engaged with their community and helping them stay part of the active workforce and undertake activities that interest and fulfil them. The local involvement is essential as ever in building trusted participation within the process: credit must be acknowledged that these areas' remarkable resiliency and creativity are indispensable assets for implementing successful actions and pattern changes.

Geography remains a crucial fact: the settlement models may vary enormously, from area to area, but often older residents may live separated from larger centres or in detached housing on large blocks, all elements that may worsen social isolation. Also, there are economic considerations that can influence older residents' capability to lead healthy and active lives.

Different AS areas may present considerable wealth status disparities; it's not uncommon to share a condition, more or less pronounced, of socioeconomic disadvantage. Similarly, it's not unusual that older residents - often the "last-left" of a past, larger community - experience financial stress or impossibility to afford the service, activities and support they need as they age. Acknowledging this and the many other characteristics that differentiate older people, services and facilities



should be provided flexibly and targeted to support those highest risk residents.

This shared strategy provides all TGB participants and stakeholders with an opportunity to reconsider the policies, programs, and priorities within their region to improve the responsiveness to the ageing population's needs, also considering the most recent and dramatic developments. Actions and topics in the relevant work-plan will assess the current situation and investigate and identify new needs and priorities as emerged by the 4helix approach of the Board.

Several are the factors that emerged more frequently as keypoints of the discussion during the TGB activities. The result is a faithful portrait of residential life within the mountain areas, where improvement strategies dedicated to the elderly should take into account: distinctions of "older" segment of the population; the efficacy of local governance and the policy and legislative context; transportation issues; access to community and health services, accessibility to social and civic participation; access to communication and information.

The strategy intends to inspire a clearer vision and management direction for the communities' most significant issues. Also, it wants to work as a bridge at a territorial level - by connecting more closely different experiences and actors/stakeholders - and to reassert the inner UE values and inspiration of well-built local practices.

The current pandemic has tragically hit the oldest segment of the population, and within the arch of approximately one-year, life expectancy has dramatically fallen. Should mountain communities overcome several of the structural/technological and administrative weaknesses that continue to be a burden, these areas have a lot to teach and share, and preserve a hidden potential in attracting new resources and inhabitants. Becoming age-friendly and keeping in touch with changing expectations and preferences of different groups of older people is part of any vision aiming at



the heart of the AS area's recovery and development.

### 1.3.3 Work Plan

As part of the Agreement signed by each of the Transnational Governance Board members, TGB is expected to define an Agenda of concrete actions and meetings beyond the project conclusion, covering at least a period of 3 years. Given the current situation it is impossible to define a long-term agenda and it is wise to foresee a meeting of the TGB in autumn 2021 where TGB members can define and set up an Agenda for 2022 based on the pandemic situation and forecast.

The strategy outlined above will develop at least four different activities and actions, which will guarantee consistencies with the ASTAHG project results while giving continuity to its findings and leading its effects to a more considerable extent.

The definition of activities will include then the following aspects:

- **multidimensionality**
- ❖ the ASTAHG experience proved to be thoroughly multidimensional, and this feature should remain as one main asset. Different elements account for this, all of which maintain the utmost importance:
- ❖ the multi-stakeholder approach, or the so-called 4helix approach— integrated by the Welfare Mix Triangle' approach to better understand and engage actors from non-formal social spheres who are often overlooked; the TGB's composition and approach to activities should reflect the same variety of key-players that distinguished ASTAHG accomplishments until today;
- ❖ multisectoral process: the promotion of an AHA environment naturally leads to an impact on different fields - from economy to culture - which go beyond any restricted vision of "social issue";



- ❖ multilevel approach: that is acting on a progressive territorial dimension - local, regional and transnational;
- ❖ human geography: the importance to include all the different contexts of the Alpine space, which vary enormously in its scenarios - from urban to rural settlements, from poor/disadvantaged areas to wealthy valleys.

- **cohesion to the HASTAG results**

There are at least three ASTAHG outputs, namely OT 2.1, OT 3.1 and OT 3.2, whose object represent a source for inspiration and direction for future actions. Each of these is a category to be further implemented and enlarged: OT 2.1 is about targeting and reaching a wider audience of stakeholders; OT 3.1 is about the portfolio of good practices - to be subsequently updated and enriched; OT 3.2 is perhaps the most strictly correlated to the mandate of the TGB, as it works as a permanent observatory on innovation and AHA innovative policies and practices.

- **definition of Working Groups**

Based also on the discussion already carried out, that proposed horizontal WGs instead of sectoral ones, TGB members will define all activities in the framework of thematic Working Groups, whose areas of interest are meant to connect different sectors, competencies and needs, e.g., accessibility, tourism, inclusion.

Activities will include thematic analysis and discussion on specific topics; while selecting thematic areas, members will consider the priorities coming up from the ASTAHG Good Practices Portfolio and the ones already defined in EU strategic documents on the development of Alpine Space, on EUSALP Strategy for 2021-2027 and on the Cohesion Policy for the same period.



- **Networking advancements**

TGB members are expected to encourage, promote and establish collaboration with interested stakeholders, with other thematic networks, with national and EU-level support organisations, with macro-regional organizations, with other similar transnational projects and initiatives. Moreover, they will encourage cooperation with regional, national and EU institutions.

Networking actions will also be very welcomed on specific objectives shared by the TGB or on particular topics covered within the Working Groups.

From a broader perspective, the TGB aims at strengthening its identity as a Network developer, being acknowledged as an open and engaging community, able to gather knowledge, skills, key players.

- **communication activities and meetings**

Communication activities will be fundamental in promoting the AHA strategy, helping TGB members to feel part of a lively community and to promote its further enlargement.

Activities will include the development of a dedicated web-information on TGB and AHA in AS strategy. This solution will provide TGB members soon with an institutional window, giving evidence of TGB advancements and actions. All TGB members will share some communication inputs - dedicated hashtag for all Working Groups, dedicated hashtag on TGB, an official message for promoting new membership - to work jointly and consistently on building the TGB reputation.

The TGB foresees to organise at least one annual meeting and a series of thematic sessions promoted by the Working Groups: these will be all occasions to disseminate some selected facts&figures emerged from the rich portfolio of the ASTAHG outputs and topics. Members will be able to share their belonging to this community and to highlight the concreteness of its approach and results.