

A 3.2 - Hands-on training modules for experts, planners and target groups involved through RCWGs in working on the integrated planning exercises in pilot areas (Case studies A 2.2)

Supporting & Explanatory Document on material

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# Purpose declaration and introduction to document

This document aims to give an overview of the content of the training material that is being presented in the frame of the Interreg Alpine Space Projekt “PlanToConnect”. The following sections provide a brief explanation of the materials included and the purpose of the training material, its aims and scope.

The training material is being elaborated as a result from the Work Package 3 within the aforementioned project. It is part of Activity 3.2 stating: “Work package leads and project partners contribute to the development of e-learning modules (min 4 on topics of A2.2-A2.5: governance settings, network design, regulating uses, planning instruments) and training materials. [...] On-line training sessions are delivered as part of [...] workshops.”

Hereby, a relation to one of the major Outputs of the project is visible, where: “A comprehensive capacity building and training package is created to guide planning authorities at regional/local level in the design of Blue and Green Infrastructure (GBI) networks for connectivity [including] e-modules, technical toolkit and tailored training sessions. Close contact to universities and professional associations [ensures that the material] meets the needs of the state-of-the-art spatial planning education. Strong cooperation with AlpPlan network ensures long-term dissemination to stakeholders in the entire Alpine Space” (see Application Form, pp.63-65).

Consequently, the training material takes on prior results of the project that have been elaborated in the two Work Packages 1 and 2 (referral to O1.1: Strategy implementation; and O2.1: GBI Network design and governance).

The purpose of the capacity building and training programme is to support the implementation of the two outputs and synthesise the background and work-frame elaborated within the case studies on a general level. Hereby, the capacity building and training modules explain relevant definitions, regulations, legal requirements and working processes in relation to implementing GBI into spatial planning. Aspects of governance (what kind of governance and governance levels are to be addressed?/What challenges can arise and which stakeholders need to be involved?) will be addressed.

This document explains the structure, content and planned usage of the capacity building and training programme. It describes how the different formats - presentations, GIS tutorials, factsheets - are linked together and where synergies with the results already developed in WP1 and WP2 arise. It is also shown:

* How the training material is structured (chapter 1)
* What different components the capacity building and training programme comprises (chapter 2)
* How and where the material can be used (chapter 3)
* Which elements and success factors are addressed in capacity building and training in the spatial planning sphere (chapter 4)
* What content is covered (chapter 5)
* How the content is structured and conceptualized in detail (chapter 6)

This is intended as a guide to help project partners, Regional Connectivity Working Groups (RCWGs), planners, policy makers, students and teachers to work with the material in a targeted way.

# Structure & components of the capacity building and training programme

The format of the capacity building and training material includes the following:

* Introductory/explanatory pdf. document as an introduction to capacity building and training (0\_Supporting & Explanatory Document)
* A pdf. document showing the overall objectives and learning outcomes (1\_Overall objectives and learning outcomes)
* A pdf. document containing a matrix with detailed learning objectives (2\_Matrix of learning objectives)
* A pdf. document showing the overall structure of the modular learning plans and an exemplary timeframe for the implementation of the capacity building and training (3\_Overall structure of modular learning plans)
* A pdf. document with instructions for online training (4\_Online training instructions)
* A pdf. document containing the briefing sheets for interactive modules (5\_Briefing sheets for interactive modules)
* A presentation in pdf. format on modules 1-4 including interactive elements (Example\_Slide Set\_Capacity Training\_Module)
* A 20-minute brown bag session providing an initial insight into the capacity building and training programme in the form of a screen recording in half an hour (30-Minutes-Brown-Bag-Session)
* An Excel file providing an overview of the capacity building and training, including the intended objectives, target group, format and approximate duration. The agenda items and related content, methods and materials used and instructions for each module are included (Script & Content of capacity training material)

All files are summarised in a .zip-folder, which is available for download.

This structure enables modular use, so that individual formats (e.g. presentation) can also be used separately in workshops, lectures or online courses.

# Usage information and proposals

The capacity building and training material is meant for use by the following target groups that are interested in and/or dealing with ecological connectivity. The material is not limited to planners and experts in the Alpine Arc and can be used as a base line for training how implementing ecological connectivity is generally possible:

* Planners, experts, political decision-makers, administrations, students and teaching staff in relevant study programmes, interested stakeholders in pilot regions (RCWGs)

Possible formats for the implementation of the material can be:

* **Face-to-face workshops:** combination of thematic lectures (presentations) and interactive group work/quiz as well as joint implementation of the GIS tutorial by institutions/universities/schools
* **Online sessions/webinars:** use of webinar (either in group or for self-study), combination of thematic lectures (presentations) and interactive group work/quiz, demonstration of GIS tutorial
* **Self-study:** files are available for download for individual use

The timeline for the material can vary, but each module is designed to be one full training session for approximately 1-2 hours and applicable both for online and onsite use (see 3\_Overall structure of modular learning plans).

# Elements and success factors of capacity building and training in the spatial planning sphere

Capacity building is essential in spatial planning, especially at local level, as Wakely (2016) emphasises. The requirements for sustainable and integrative planning are constantly increasing, as ever more complex challenges, such as the fragmentation of habitats, climate change and the increasing pressure to utilise land, need to be overcome. Targeted capacity building promotes the ability of various stakeholders to successfully incorporate innovative approaches, such as the integration of green and blue infrastructure networks (GBI), into planning practice and thus strengthen ecological connectivity.

The capacity building and training programme is explicitly aimed at a variety of different target groups: Planners, experts, political decision-makers, administrations, students and teaching staff in relevant study programmes as well as interested stakeholders in pilot regions (RCWGs). The aim is to create a common understanding and a professional basis for the integration of GBI into spatial planning. This includes teaching skills for analysing spatial structures (e.g. using ArcGIS), identifying and resolving conflicts of use, developing and evaluating planning scenarios and applying decision-making tools. In addition, competences for the moderation and management of stakeholder processes in the context of a multi-level governance approach are developed.

As Wakely (2016) emphasises, comprehensive capacity building requires a profound reorientation of local authorities. This includes not only strengthening local government but also involving the private sector and civil society actors. The focus is on developing new skills and knowledge and strengthening non-governmental organisations. International cooperation and the exchange of knowledge also play an important complementary role.

The capacity building and training programme addresses these requirements and specifically addresses the relevant stakeholder groups:

For **spatial planners**, the training is particularly valuable as it enables them to gain in-depth knowledge on integrating and implementing ecological networks within spatial planning processes, effectively applying existing planning instruments to achieve ecological objective.

**Agricultural and forestry authorities** benefit by learning ecological principles and their targeted application in land management practices, fostering more sustainable and resilient landscapes.

**Conservation professionals and ecologists** expand their competencies in practically implementing biodiversity and conservation measures and learn to integrate these effectively into planning processes.

**Local decision-makers/majors** gain essential tools to better align ecological objectives with local development strategies, promoting sustainable planning in their communities.

**NGOs and supra-national organizations** enhance their abilities to successfully coordinate and implement ecological networks at regional and cross-border levels.

**Students and teaching staff** receive practice-oriented material that builds a bridge between academic theory and practical planning.

Overall, the capacity building and training programme sustainably supports participants in expanding their planning and operational competencies, effectively integrating and achieving ecological and spatial objectives.

Source:

Wakely, P. (2016). Integrated capacity building for urban governance, planning and management. [Integrated capacity building for urban governance, planning and management - Urbanet](https://www.urbanet.info/integrated-capacity-building/)

# Content overview of modules

1. Basic knowledge on connectivity planning

* Fundamentals of ecological connectivity and biodiversity in the alpine region

1. How to design GBI networks

* Identification of available/necessary data and how to use it for designing ecological networks / shortcomings of available data and how to deal with them / involvement of relevant stakeholders at different administrative levels

1. Threats on GBI planning and how to deal with it

* Identification and handling of utilisation conflicts, especially in the context of renewable energies

1. GIS-Methodology on GBI Planning

* Practical GIS methods for network analysis and planning

# Detailed concepts for individual modules

## Module 1: Basic knowledge on connectivity planning

**Content:** Fundamentals of ecological connectivity and biodiversity in the alpine region

**Purpose:** The first module is intended as an introductory session to the capacity building and training programme and serves as a basic introduction to the concept of ecological connectivity. It emphasises the relevance of the topic and creates a common basis for all participants. Key terms such as ecological connectivity, green and blue infrastructure, biodiversity, ecological corridors, connectivity conservation area, large-scale connectivity, small-scale connectivity and protected areas are defined. This creates a common understanding of the central concepts, which serves as the basis for the other modules of the capacity training.

**Format:** The module is designed as a combination of a presentation and supplementary interactive elements to ensure a practical and easily understandable introduction. Participants first receive a brief overview in the form of explanations and illustrative examples. Subsequently, optional questions for reflection or/and a short discussion round are used to consolidate the newly acquired knowledge. Depending on needs and target audience, the module can be conducted either in person (workshop) or online (webinar/e-learning). **Structure of module and detailed content:** The importance of ecological connectivity is emphasised right at the beginning. The ALPARC YouTube video ‘Alpine Parks 2030’ can be shown at the start of the module to emphasise the importance of the topic and sensitise participants to the topic. This is followed by a presentation of the relevant definitions and concepts as well as the legal framework for ecological connectivity. At the end of the module, the content learnt is summarised in key takeaways and reflection questions can be answered and discussed in the plenary.

The module thus lays the foundation for the in-depth modules and creates an understanding of the ecological network and its significance through a mixture of theoretical definitions and multimedia elements. Each module is accompanied by a list of suggested literature.

## Module 2: How to design GBI networks

**Content:** Identification of available/necessary data and how to use it for designing ecological networks / shortcomings of available data and how to deal with them / involvement of relevant stakeholders at different administrative levels

**Purpose:** This module aims to give a methodological overview on the process of GBI development and who needs to be involved, which data could be used and which methodological approaches are possible and which spatial planning instruments can be applied to achieve specific objectives of GBI networks. Illustrations from a regional and from a local level will be used to visualize how GBI networks can look like.

**Format:** The module is designed as a combination of a presentation and supplementary interactive elements to ensure a practical and easily understandable learning experience (questions for reflection or/and short discussion, 60-Second GBI Pitch). Participants first receive a brief overview in the form of explanations and illustrative examples. The Alpine-wide connectivity network will be made available to view via ArcGIS online.

**Structure of module and detailed content:** The module mainly builds on the content of D2.3.1, which presents the structure of a GBI network. It introduces elements of green and blue infrastructure networks, ecosystem services of GBI networks and tools for analysing a network. In addition, connectivity is considered at different planning levels and the challenges and potentials of connectivity planning are emphasised. At the end of the module, the content learned is summarised in key takeaways and reflection questions can be answered and discussed in plenary. A list of recommended reading is also provided. The module can optionally be completed with an interactive element (60-Second GBI Pitch).

## Module 3: Threats on GBI planning and how to deal with it

**Content:** Identification and handling of utilisation conflicts, especially in the context of renewable energies

**Purpose:** This module aims on synthesizing the threats posed on GBI planning and on the successful implementation of a GBI network in the Alpine landscape. Its purpose is to illustrate and make planners aware of threats and to critically reflect on solutions posed by legal and planning frameworks.

**Format:** The format of the module is PPT, aiming to highlight all essential and necessary threats and to give an overview on all measurements and planning solutions that exist on dealing with GBI threats. It also contains interactive elements (questions for reflection or/and short discussion, simulation game: land-use scenario).

**Structure of module and detailed content:** The module highlights results collected in D1.2/D1.3 on threats and land-use conflicts and give a detailed overview on the specific extent of each threat. D1.2 and results from D1.3.1 concerning the treats on GBI networks are presented, followed by short explanations to each and approaches how to deal with them through spatial planning, highlighting aspects from D2.4.1. The focus hereby lies on the topic of renewable energies as a main threat to GBI. At the end of the module, the content learned is summarised in key takeaways and reflection questions can be answered and discussed in plenary. A list of recommended reading is also provided. The module can optionally be completed with an interactive element (simulation game: land-use scenario).

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| **PlanToConnect**  Mainstreaming ecological connectivity in spatial planning systems of the Alpine Space  **Project partners:**  Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (SI)  Veneto Region (IT)  ALPARC – the Network of Alpine Protected Areas (FR)  Asters, organisation for the conservation of natural areas in Upper Savoy (FR)  Eurac Research (IT)  ifuplan - Institute for Environmental Planning and Spatial Development (DE)  University of Würzburg (DE)  Salzburg Institute for Regional Planning and Housing (AT)  E.C.O. Institute of Ecology Ltd. (AT)  Fondazione Politecnico di Milano (IT)  A 3.2 - Hands-on training modules for experts, planners and target groups involved through RCWGs in working on the integrated planning exercises in pilot areas (Case studies A 2.2)  Supporting & Explanatory Document on material  **Author(s)**  Kerstin Ströbel, University of Wuerzburg, [kerstin.stroebel1@uni-wuerzburg.de](mailto:kerstin.stroebel1@uni-wuerzburg.de)  Sarah Striethorst, University of Wuerzburg, sarah.striethorst@stud-mail.uni-wuerzburg.de  2025 |

