Ecological Continuum Initiative

Think Tank workshop on follow-up projects and new projects implementing ecological networks beyond ECONNECT
Bozen/Bolzano 17 November 2010

Think Tank workshop on stakeholder integration
Toblach/Dobbiaco 23 April 2010

Reports

Beat Schlüchter, ISCAR, Berne, February 2011
The Ecological Continuum Initiative: restoring the web of life
The Ecological Continuum Initiative aims to maintain or restore ecological connectivity in the Alps by facilitating and catalyzing relevant projects and initiatives. The Initiative partners (Alpine Network of Protected Areas ALPARC, International Commission for the Protection of the Alps CIPRA, International Scientific Committee Alpine Research ISCAR and the European Alpine Programme of WWF) provide an interface between policy, practise and science to allow the exchange and pooling of knowledge, lessons learned and expertise. The work of the Ecological Continuum Initiative is supported by the Swiss MAVA Foundation for Nature.
Ecological Continuum
Initiative

Think Tank workshop on follow-up projects and new projects implementing ecological networks beyond ECONNECT

Bozen/Bolzano 17 November 2010

Report
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1 Introduction

Since December 2009, the Continuum Initiative is gathering experts active in scientific, administrative or practical projects on Alpine ecological connectivity in a so-called “Think Tank on ecological networks in/to the Alps”. The aim of this think tank is bringing together competences from science and practice for developing long-term visions and projects beyond ECONNECT. At the moment, approximately 330 experts from science, administration and practice are inscribed and published on the Web:

http://www.alpine-ecological-network.org/information-services/experts

The Think Tank workshop from November 17, 2010 in Bozen/Bolzano was the second meeting that was held in 2010. In total three events are organised in 2010:

- The first meeting was a workshop about “Stakeholder integration” on April 23, 2010 in Toblach/Dobbiaco (I).
- The second workshop took place in Bozen/Bolzano (I) and was about “Follow up projects and new projects implementing ecological networks beyond ECONNECT”. The results of this meeting are published in that report.
- Third, an initiative started by Chris Walzer (ECONNECT), the Platform Ecological Networks of the Alpine Convention and the Continuum Initiative will focus on main research questions concerning ecological connectivity in/to the Alps. At a workshop on December 6 to 7, 2010, a selected number of experts from relevant institutions will identify “55 questions of importance” to maintain and restore ecological connectivity in the Alps.

This second workshop was held just after the ECONNECT partner meeting on November 15 to 16 at the same place. The invitation was addressed to all experts of the “Think Tank on ecological networks in/to the Alps”, especially to all ECONNECT project partners.

The ECONNECT project will end in Summer 2011. It is important to set the course now for an ongoing work for an Alp-wide ecological continuum. This workshop aimed at developing visions and projects beyond ECONNECT, first to ensure that good ECONNECT projects will continue and second, to involve experts of the think tank in new projects.

First of all, five short presentations gave an introduction to the topic and important information and ideas for the following discussions. In specific working groups (WG) themes and projects that should be followed, have then been developed. In this way the participants could contribute to topics they were really interested in. Every participant could make contributions in two of the following four working groups:

- WG1: Analysis of connectivity and data preparation.    Moderation K. Renner & K. Sedy
- WG2: Implementation in Pilot Areas.        Moderation A.-K. Heinrichs & M. Künzl
- WG3: Transfer of knowledge.         Moderation L. Füreder
- WG4: Open Pool for current topics and new ideas.  Moderation T. Scheurer

The day ended with final presentations of the group leaders highlighting the most important outcomes of the discussions in the working groups.
2 Summary (Working Groups)

Within four working groups several priorities for future projects and actions have been worked out.

The following project ideas are directly based on results and experiences of ECONNECT:

- Pilot regions should make use of JECAMI and validate regional connectivity models. Connectivity models are effective tools for planning and supporting decision-making at different levels.
- With the help of modelling tools like JECAMI the interface between the Alpine and the regional level has to be defined and worked out as a basis for future projects.
- Trans-boundary and trans-sectoral cooperation models (public and/or private) aiming at the planning an implementation of connectivity projects have to be developed and setup.
- The Connectivity Suitability Index (CSI) and other results of ECONNECT could be helpful tools for the evaluation of existing compensation measures. With that, new measures regarding the relevance of connectivity could be developed in pilot areas.
- An additional effort has to be done, to evaluate the expertise of all local stakeholders and participant groups, by the mean of questionnaires, interviews, behavioural observations or evaluations through observer. This will yield new adaptation strategies and monitoring systems.

Furthermore the following project ideas were developed:

- For education, teaching materials (theoretical and practical courses) have to be prepared and offered for different target publics (children, students, teachers).
- An independent “Data Broker” should help data users (scientists, administrations) to share data and to find an agreement with data owners to provide their datasets. A “Data Broker” would be a central system to collect, collate and distribute national and trans-national data sets. It could be used for connectivity and ecosystem services as well as lobbying work and awareness-raising. The Data Broker should be organised for all type of projects concerning the perimeter of the Alps (including Alpine Space projects) and therefore could be a task of the data centre of the Alpine convention (SOIA) and/or the Alpine Space programme (incl. funding). The European Environmental Agency is a possible host for this Data Broker.
- A process (project) has to be started aiming at a coherent trans-disciplinary concept for designing and implementing ecological networks on various scales. Such a project has to include scientists and stakeholders.
A specific effort has to be done developing a map with all main existing corridors, flyways, stopovers and barriers based on data and expert knowledge.

Lobbying work in national ministries and in EU administrations (Natura 2000) and programmes (LIFE, Interreg, etc.) is considered as a main condition for future trans-boundary connectivity projects. This could be a main task of the Platform Ecological Networks of the Alpine Convention.

Develop regionally specified approaches for identifying the key players for implementation.
3. Inputs

3.1 Continuum initiative: Achieved results 2010 and outlook 2011+ (A. Ullrich, CIPRA)

1994 witnessed the signing of the Alpine Convention’s protocol on “Conservation of nature and the countryside”, an international treaty drawn up between the eight Alpine states and the European Union. Article twelve of this protocol asks for creating a “national and cross-border network of protected areas, biotopes and other environmental assets protected or acknowledged as worthy of protection”. A study carried out in 2004 concluded that a common approach for the entire Alpine area was needed to guarantee the coherence of different national and regional approaches. Indeed, each of the Alpine countries has already adopted different approaches at different levels, from national to local, without taking into account a wider bio-geographical context.

It is for these reasons that, in 2007, the four pan-Alpine institutions, ALPARC (Alpine Network of Protected Areas), CIPRA (International Commission for the Protection of the Alps), ISCAR (International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps) and WWF (with its European Alpine programme), launched the “Ecological Continuum Initiative”, its aim being to improve ecological connectivity in the Alps. Unlike the national approaches adopted by different individual states, the cross-border approach developed by these four organisations is based on an entirely new vision of protecting the natural environment of the Alpine massif as a whole, from France to Slovenia. The Ecological Continuum Initiative is financed by the Swiss MAVA Foundation for Nature. In the first phase of its activities, the Initiative focused on creating the basis for the implementation of ecological networks in the Alps. This included the production of information material, the establishment of pilot regions, the evaluation of suitable methods and the compilation of a catalogue of potential activities supporting the establishment of ecological networks. It was largely thanks to this preparatory work of the four organisations that the ECONNECT project was approved. Within ECONNECT an exemplary partnership between private and public actors has been set up, focusing on the implementation of ecological connectivity in selected pilot regions. To promote cross-border co-operation and ensure political support in the development of ecological networks, the Platform Ecological Network of the Alpine Convention was established in 2006.

Since 2009, the Ecological Continuum Initiative is active in particular in three fields of work: initiating, promoting and mentoring activities (in particular with the newly established “think tank”), providing know-how and awareness building in particular with “The Wall” campaign. In preparation of this campaign information material has been produced and improved (relaunch of website including projects and experts databases, brochure, series of 11 stakeholder specific fact sheets, overview report).

In order to discuss and design its future activities, the partners of the Continuum Initiative participated in a one week training on adaptive management with the major questions treated being: are we achieving an impact? Are we doing the right things? Are we doing them well? As a result, a draft version of a conceptual model could be developed, that shows potential need of action based on a situation analysis (including vision statement, conservation
targets, goals, threats, contributing factors and potential strategies). This model can serve not only as a base for future activities of the Continuum Initiative, but shows also how activities of other actors such as the Platform and ECONNECT are embedded in the overall picture. The model will be further developed and finalised in the beginning of 2011, involving representatives from the Platform and from ECONNECT. Further activities of the Continuum Initiative and associated partners will potentially include the production of an Alps wide corridor and connectivity map (based on the mapping work of ECONNECT), making results widely known, involving spatial planning as integration actor for implementation and continued local implementation in pilot regions. After 3-4 years, the vision of an ecological continuum should be anchored in the Alps and funding ensured for its implementation.

www.alpine-ecological-network.org

3.2 ECONNECT: current project state and perspectives
(L. Füreder, ECONNECT)

The analysis of barriers and corridors for the 6 selected species at Alpine level is mainly done. The maps visualizing their situation of connectivity in the Alps will be available in February 2011. An online geospatial data catalogue offers the possibility to access the data used and contributes to the Alpine data pool SOIA (System for the Observation and Information on the Alps) of the Alpine Convention. In the participating Pilot Regions, an online tool (named JECAMI) will be available by the end of 2010 showing the connectivity level at regional level and later on at Alpine level. It is based on the integrative analysis of different ecological indicators summarized in the “Continuum Suitability Index’ (CSI). It has become obvious that the terminus “connectivity” still needs a more profound scientific basis, regarding the positive and negative aspects of connectivity and its implications with species migration and functionalities of landscape.

The analysis of the legal situation of connectivity has proven a number of available instruments, which, however, are difficult to apply (e.g. EGTC model). In 2011 a main focus will be put on the dissemination of results and on provoking political support for the topic of ecological connectivity.

3.3 The 55 most urgent questions concerning an ecological continuum in the Alps (C. Walzer, FIWI Vienna)

Ecological connectivity in the Alps and elsewhere is a "hot topic". In the past years many projects were realised and a substantial amount of research has been performed. A new initiative, launched under the lead of the Research Institute of Wildlife Ecology in Vienna will determine the most important questions related to this topic.

Selected experts from research institutions, national administrations, protected areas, major stakeholder groups and non-governmental organizations have been invited to write down the research questions they consider of highest importance. In a joint workshop on 6th/7th
December 2010 and via two email enquiries the knowledge and experience of all “Alpine actors” will be brought together. The results will be published in a peer-reviewed journal in order to support researchers in focusing their activities. The results will also be available to the public and donor organisations within the Alps and beyond in order to direct funds towards urgent and important projects. The outputs are meant to be a useful planning and policy tool for the Alps within the International Year of Biodiversity 2010.

The initiative is based on a methodology that has been developed by William J. Sutherland and successfully applied in several other studies and regions. It is a joint venture of ECONNECT, “The Platform Ecological Network” under the Alpine Convention and the “Ecological Continuum Initiative”.

3.4 TransEcoNet: Transnational Ecological Networks in Central Europe (A. Hahn, TU Dresden)

TransEcoNet provides a comprehensive inventory of ecological networks in Central Europe. The project is implemented through the CENTRAL EUROPE Territorial Cooperation Programme from January 2009 until April 2012. TransEcoNet follows a multidisciplinary approach: The partner consortium consists of scientists from fields like geoinformatics, environment and nature protection, landscape ecology, remote sensing, history of architecture and regional development. Main project aims are to investigate border landscapes in Central Europe regarding their protection status, ecological connectivity, cultural heritage, historical development of land use and vegetation cover and regarding their biodiversity. It is also important to raise awareness on ecological networks in the general public and to develop strategies how to best communicate the findings and recommendations of the project to local stakeholders and citizens.

The project has currently reached his mid-term and the work is progressing. The inventory of ecological networks is already finished and delivers a comprehensive GIS database and map catalogue on the current status of legal protection in the partner countries in general and in the trans-boundary project regions in particular. Also gaps were identified in the existing ecological network on project region level. They were analysed, e.g. regarding their land use category, their extension beyond borders and their correlation with existing national and international ecological network plans.

24 trans-national ecological network initiatives were detected in Central and Southeastern Europe. Most of them were launched by NGOs and by research institutions. The formation of “umbrella” initiatives for certain regions is becoming visible providing the organizational basis for ecological network initiatives. For the future it is necessary to better coordinate and integrate European, national and regional concepts and activities with each other. Stakeholders and initiatives should know from each other and find common starting points for trans-national cooperation.

Ideas and proposals how to further develop TransEcoNet findings and results can be summarized as follows: to continue investigations of ecological connectivity focussed on the
gaps detected on regional level, for example, in the framework of cross-border cooperation or national funded projects. A stronger involvement of local stakeholders in those activities and processes is indispensable!

On trans-national level it is necessary to continue the international dialogue on ecological networks and to exchange knowledge on this issue with stakeholders in other regions like the Alpine space, the Carpathians and the Dinaric Alps. As knowledge and awareness on ecological connectivity in Central and Eastern Europe is lagging behind the network of organisations in the Alpine arc an intense trans-national cooperation between respective actors has to be established beyond predefined programme spaces for territorial cooperation (INTERREG).

3.5 Overview on funding instruments for ecological connectivity
(M. Badura, blue!)

In order to continue the work in the different thematic fields, which have been identified by the ongoing projects on ecological connectivity in the Alpine Space, it is considered to be useful to make a systematic approach for getting further funding. The questions to be answered are the following:

1. Which funding programmes are possible?
2. How to select the right funding for the identified project ideas?
3. Would it be useful to develop a real funding strategy?

Funding schemes are available from international to local level and also from private sources. Depending on the exact theme of a project or activity, the most suitable funding opportunity has to be identified for every single case. The following list shows the most important ones at national and European level:

- National biodiversity funding programmes (research and implementation oriented)
- European funding for nature conservation, (LIFE+) – next call: spring 2011
- 7th European Framework Research Programme (via national ministries)
- INTERREG IVB Alpine Space, Central Europe, South-East Europe or North-West Europe (including cluster initiative)
- INTERREG IVA – Cross-border co-operation on environmental aspects
- INTELLIGENT ENERGY EUROPE (IEE) – co-operation on energy topics
- Trans-national actions financed out of regular ERDF funds (Structural funds)

The European funding instrument LIFE+ covers all topics dealing with nature conservation and environment including relevant communication activities. The most important aspect for approval is that the character of the projects submitted can be considered as best practice and/or demonstration projects contributing to the implementation of EU policy goals in the sectors mentioned (e.g. Natura 2000, ‘Halting the loss of biodiversity’, etc.). There are three different sub-programmes within LIFE+:

- Nature and biodiversity (Natura 2000)
- Environmental policy and governance
- Information and communication
On the long run, it is recommended to establish a routine of project development in an institution/association, which can help to make project work getting steady and to establish continuously financed project staff. To be able to do so, it is necessary on the one hand to have a systematic overview on open questions, which may become subject to project financing. On the other hand it is necessary to identify the appropriate funding scheme(s) for a project idea by systematically carrying out the following steps:

- Define the questions to be answered (for your institution/thematic field).
- Define the objectives of your future work (systematic catalogues of objectives with time line) at a 3-5 years scale and regularly update it.
- Define the thematic areas, which have to be involved (beyond your own department).
- Select appropriate funding schemes for single topics and prioritize the topics.
- Try to organise constant (financial/technical) support for development of project applications
- Try to organise political support for your project applications

The aspects to be considered for a project development are the definition of cost categories needed (e.g. investment), the structure of the partner consortium (public/non-public), the eligibility of actions foreseen, the time line of planned actions, the possible co-funding rate, whether innovative aspects will be covered and the cross-links to other sectors (e.g. energy).

Landhaus XI: Administration building of the Amt für Naturparke in Bolzano and workshop location. (Source: Automone Provinz Bozen – Südtirol; Hochbau und technischer Dienst)
4 Proposed priorities for further projects and actions

The discussions within the working groups were very focused and efficient. After the workshop, all group leaders reduced the group’s ideas and thoughts to two very specific priorities/project proposals. This “essence” of the four discussions is listed below.

4.1 Analysis of connectivity and data availability (WG1)

Validation of regional connectivity models

In the future, connectivity models have to support spatial planning from small to large scales. With the connectivity model JECAMI (R. Haller, Swiss National Park) ECONNECT developed an instrument for analysing regions from a connectivity point of view and for the planning of actions.

First of all, pilot regions should make use of JECAMI and validate regional connectivity models. Connectivity models are effective tools for planning and supporting decision-making at different levels.

An Alp-wide exchange and availability of connectivity-relevant data

Connectivity projects throughout the Alps are facing the problem to get spatial data on species distribution. The availability of such data is crucial for good quality analysis results and for transparent communication.

An independent “Data Broker” should help data users (scientists, administrations) to share data and to find an agreement with data owners to provide their datasets. A “Data Broker” would be a central system to collect, collate and distribute national and trans-national data sets. It could be used for connectivity and ecosystem services as well as lobbying work and awareness-raising. The Data Broker should be organised for all type of projects concerning the perimeter of the Alps (including Alpine Space projects) and therefore could be a task of the data centre of the Alpine convention (SOIA) and/or the Alpine Space programme (incl. funding). The European Environmental Agency is a possible host for this Data Broker.

4.2 Implementation in Pilot areas (WG2)

Sharpening of the interface between the Alpine and the regional level.

ECONNECT Pilot regions are still missing the integration into an Alp-wide strategy. Disparities between regional and Alp-wide approaches are obvious. The need of additional pilot areas in biodiversity hotspots and important local connectivity areas has to be clarified as well.

With the help of modelling tools like JECAMI the interface between the Alpine and the regional level has to be defined and worked out as a basis for future projects.
Improve trans-sectoral organisation for implementing measures in pilot areas

Regarding the planning and implementation of the continuum in the pilot areas, appropriate structures are not built up. In the current concept pilot areas are not congruent with existing administrative structures, which is a challenge in most of the areas. Authorities and responsibilities are distributed over several administrative sectors and often overlapping. Such an organisation makes it very difficult to implement measures. Some existing approaches like Inscunter in the Lower Engiadine could be further developed. Following, the responsibilities have to be discussed in every pilot area.

- Trans-boundary and trans-sectoral cooperation models (public and/or private) aiming at the planning an implementation of connectivity projects have to be developed and setup.
- The Connectivity Suitability Index (CSI) and other results of ECONNECT could be helpful tools for the evaluation of existing compensation measures. With that, new measures regarding the relevance of connectivity could be developed in pilot areas.

4.3 Transfer of knowledge (WG3)

Feedback – get the state of awareness

It is important to improve the work with stakeholders and enabling information exchange and cooperation between experts and stakeholders. For that, the available scientific and practical expertise has to be identified. This information should uncover knowledge gaps and action lacks and hence deepening the awareness for the problem and creating self-awareness for the possibilities of problem solving.

- An additional effort has to be done, to evaluate the expertise of all local stakeholders and participant groups, by the mean of questionnaires, interviews, behavioural observations or evaluations through observer. This will yield new adaptation strategies and monitoring systems.

Curriculum – Education at different levels

To improve the information flow and the awareness level, a continuous multilateral teaching and learning process and hence a continuous knowledge generation and dissemination process is essential. The transfer of knowledge is achieved via different dissemination channels like various media, reports or/and representative actions.

- For education, teaching materials (theoretical and practical courses) have to be prepared and offered for different target publics (children, students, teachers).
4.4. Open pool (WG4)

Based on the brainstorming (see appendix), four priorities for projects and actions have been identified:

**Development of trans-disciplinary concepts**

Appropriate concepts (approaches) for developing trans-disciplinary projects on connectivity are still missing, including lacking theory, no common terms and no ways for conflict management. A consequence of this is that the communication on the needs and goals of connectivity is often not clear and that there are often difficulties to convince stakeholders for cooperation.

- A process (project) has to be started aiming at a coherent trans-disciplinary concept for designing and implementing ecological networks on various scales. Such a project has to include scientists and stakeholders.

**Alps-wide barrier/corridor map**

A general overview on important connectivity areas (terrestrial, aquatic, aerial) all over the Alps will not be accomplished by the ECONNECT project. Such a map could be a good instrument for common communication (on ecological networks in the Alps) or interactive assessments.

- A specific effort has to be done developing a map with all main existing corridors, flyways, stopovers and barriers based on data and expert knowledge.

**Lobbying work on national and EU level**

For planning and implementing trans-national or trans-regional connectivity projects (as follow-up project of ECONNECT projects in trans-boundary pilot areas), national or EU programmes and funding are needed (national REN, LIFE, Interreg, etc.).

- Lobbying work in national ministries and in EU administrations (Natura 2000) and programmes (LIFE, Interreg, etc.) is considered as a main condition for future trans-boundary connectivity projects. This could be a main task of the Platform Ecological Networks of the Alpine Convention.

**Identify key players for implementation**

In many connectivity projects it is not evident, who are the key players for planning and implementation and on which level (political, administrative, land owners, land users) a project has to be initiated. Experiences from different projects should therefore be analysed regarding the role of the different stakeholders.

- Develop regionally specified approaches for identifying the key players concerning aimed project issues.
Appendix

5.1 Participants

Affolter Dominik  ARINAS environment, Zernez (CH)
Badura Marianne  blue! Advancing European projects, Freising (D)
Bruno Cristina  IASMA, Fondazione Edmund Mach, Trento (I)
Ehringhaus Barbara  ProMONT-BLANC, Haute-Savoie (F)
Füreder Leopold  River Ecology and Benthic Invertebrates Institute of Ecology, University of Innsbruck (A)
Golobic Mojca  Urbanisticni Institut RS, Ljubljana (SLO)
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Künzle Michaela  Pilot region transboundary area Berchtesgaden – Salzburg (A)
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Maiolini Bruno  IASMA, Fondazione Edmund Mach, Trento (I)
Ostapowicz Katarzyna  Jagiellonian University Krakow (PL)
Renner Kathrin  Eurac Research, Bolzano (I)
Sascor Renato  Amt für Naturparke, Bolzano (I)
Scheurer Thomas  ISCAR, Bern (CH)
Schlüchter Beat  ISCAR, Bern (CH)
Scolozzi Rocco  IASMA, Fondazione Edmund Mach, Trento (I)
Sedy Katrin  Landnutzung und biologische Sicherheit, Umweltbundesamt
Stöcklein Bernd  Institut für Landschaftsarchitektur Hochschule Weihenstephan-Triesdorf (D)
Ullrich Aurelia  CIPRA International, Schaan (FL)
Walzer Chris  Inst. of Wildlife Ecology, Univ. of Vet. Med., Vienna (A)
### 5.2 Reports from the working groups

**Analysis of connectivity and data availability** (Working Group 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brainstorming</th>
<th>Priorities</th>
<th>Actions per Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data availability is crucial for good quality analysis results</td>
<td>define data sets required - what scale for an analysis that suits practitioners (implementing)?</td>
<td>gain a comprehensive overview over types of data available for Alpine Regions incl. License conditions (scale, thematic and spatial accuracy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop connections with data holders</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem: Missing Metadata</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of species observation data - important to validate modell results</td>
<td>High spatial resolution species observation data required to validate models (covering large area)</td>
<td>gather species data - find agreement with data owners to share datasets / develop a strategy to share data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spatial data costs - money and time invested in the collection process</td>
<td>Find a solution to acquire spatial and species data easily and inexpensively</td>
<td>Set up a &quot;Data Broker&quot; system (central system to collect, collate and distribute data sets → the Broker to collect/store/distribute data for all Alpine Space Projects (larger lobby group to pressurise data owners))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Data Broker&quot; - central pool of information</td>
<td>technical and strategis use of &quot;data broker&quot; to be used for connectivity and ecosystem services</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Public spatial data should be available for public research projects for free</td>
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<td>Lobbying work - awareness raising (taxpayer is paying twice)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>Transferring Research results to possible end users</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Who are the users of the analysis/modelling?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>What do the indicators mean?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>There is a need to communicate research results to different administrative levels (local, regional, national, alpine-wide, European) with different data/indicators</td>
<td>What information should be given to which level of decision makers - How to use modelling results in spatial planning - Specific information focused on specific decision level</td>
<td>Develop a toolset/guidelines how modelling/analysis results should be presented in order to support decision making at the different levels</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tools for impact assessment</strong></td>
<td>Develop different scenarios to find out what impact corridor measures have</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>External services → compensation measures</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Connection between scientific work and what is needed in the field</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Modelling in a first step at a small scale (i.e. covering a large area) and then zoom into local level</strong></td>
<td>Integration of local experts to start from traditional migration routes or use them as validation of the model - Modelling at local/regional scale more important</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Better telemetry data required to classify barriers</strong></td>
<td>Specific species sensitivity to barriers - set up database</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Simplified model results for stakeholders</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ecological Value - Language, Terms, Definition, Meanings</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Include traditional migration corridors - local knowledge about animal paths</strong></td>
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Implementation in pilot areas (Working Group 2)

Based on the experiences which are currently being made in the pilot regions of the project ECONNECT the following main aspects have been discussed in Working Group 2:

Aspects with regard to the implementation of the continuum in pilot regions have been discussed on different levels. Firstly, some more general considerations came up on how to strengthen the role of pilot regions and how to improve their contribution to an Alps-wide continuum. Secondly, the successful implementation of measures within pilot regions has been discussed. Other important aspects have been the evaluation of implemented measures as well as communication which should accompany activities on all levels. As the most important precondition to improve the continuum (Alps-wide and regional) was seen the clear definition of the goals of the continuum (considering aquatic, terrestrial and aerial aspects). With regard to the launching of new projects it was stressed that a careful preparation is necessary in order to bring together a partner structure covering the competences which are needed to meet the specific requirements of the project as well as providing the technical and ecological know-how.

General considerations about “pilot regions”

In order to improve the work in pilot regions and the efficiency of the activities in pilot regions the following aspects can be important for ECONNECT and Continuum as well as further initiatives:

- It seems to be necessary to sharpen the interface between the alpine and the regional level. The following questions cover important aspects:
  o Is it necessary to adapt the existing pilot regions or their current delimitation to the needs of the alpine continuum? (From pilot regions to core regions)
  o Which role does which pilot region play for the Alpine continuum? What is the contribution of each pilot region?
  o Is it necessary to implement additional pilot regions in biodiversity hotspots which are important areas for connectivity?
  o How can the coherence of local/regional initiatives be guaranteed (especially in the transboundary approach which additionally integrates different administrative levels)?
- There is still uncertainty on which is the best way to organise and delimitate the pilot regions. In the current concept pilot regions are not congruent with existing administrative structures which might be a challenge in some of the regions. The responsibilities for the implementation of the continuum in the pilot region are not clearly defined as nobody is responsible for exact this area and competences can overlap with each other. Also the question on who or which administrative body is representing the pilot region remains still open.

The following rough project idea has been developed giving answers to the above mentioned general aspects about the implementation of the continuum in pilot regions:

- Definition of important local connectivity areas in the Alps based on ECONNECT results (Prioritisation)
  o Adaptation of existing focal species, further species analysis
  o Results of alps-wide Continuum Suitability Index and other analysis identifying important areas for connectivity in the Alps
  o Examine the specific contribution of existing pilot regions and their role in the Alps-wide continuum
Implementation of measures in pilot regions

When it comes to the implementation of measures to support the continuum in pilot regions successfully again the definition of the goals of the continuum is a fundamental aspect. But most importantly the available instruments of nature conservation, land use planning, subsidies etc. have to be adjusted to the needs of the specific continuum. Several instruments are existent in all relevant sectors (compare catalogue of possible measures) but they have to be implemented at the right place to favour connectivity. Here the interdisciplinary exchange and cooperation has to be strengthened and basic information has to be provided. Also awareness raising is important so that connectivity is the goal not only of nature conservation but of all sectors who deal with the landscape.

The most important contribution of pilot regions in this process is to support channelling instruments towards the regional continuum. If the basic conditions are complied with (data access, analysing methods and tools are available, coherence with alpine level is guaranteed) the regional continuum can be defined spatially and the implementation of measures can support the continuum efficiently. Main aim on this level is to do the right thing at the right place.

Two very rough project ideas building on each other have been developed dedicated to these aspects:

- Evaluation of existing (compensation) measures for the relevance of connectivity based on CSI and other results of ECONNECT: analysis if and how the available instruments favour connectivity in the pilot regions, define gaps
- Adaptation of existing instruments and measures to their relevance for connectivity: Implement existing instruments and measures at the right place

Evaluation of measures

In order to be able to understand if measures are successful a monitoring is necessary. Here it is important to integrate a spatial-temporal-approach. This means to adapt monitoring to movement, genetics and time. Instead of answering the question “Where is what?” an answer should given to the question “From where to where?” (are species moving).

Communication

Communication is important throughout the whole process of implementing a continuum – in pilot regions as well as on the Alps-wide level. Also here the specification of certain goals with regard to aquatic, terrestrial and aerial aspects needs to be undertaken. All results (analysis and implementation) need to be disseminated and awareness needs to be raised (e.g. through exhibitions). The overall aim of communication is to mainstream connectivity into all sectors to allow for a true interdisciplinary approach to improve ecological connectivity.
Transfer of knowledge (Working group 3)

This working group developed and discussed ideas for future project that were aimed at improving the work with stakeholders and enabling information exchange and cooperation between experts and stakeholders. The development of concepts for specific project ideas based upon four main discussion-points:

- **The Initiator** – this point was found to influence all other topics and dependent on what funding scheme would be possible, and who would then be the ‘executive’ initiator

- **The Identification** – this point can be divided into three subtopics, (1) the identification of the problem (depending on the problem, the definition of the problem, and assessment possibilities, different stakeholders will be important respectively), (2) identification of the stakeholders (finding and involving the relevant and willing stakeholder), (3) identification of the target group area (different definition areas will result in different lists of stakeholders to involve)

- **The Transmission** – How to reach the stakeholder/expert? How to transfer the knowledge (bidirectional)?

- **The Evaluation** – through interviews the success of adapted management measures can be investigated and evaluated for eventual corrections

The work with the stakeholder should be improved by evaluating the knowledge base in stakeholders and consecutively adapting the communication and information transfer strategies. The overall goal is to make each partner realize the problem and by doing so at the same time opening up a problem-solving path. The method consists mainly in the comparison of questionnaires specially designed to evaluate the existing knowledge level and the general acceptance and awareness for problem and solution of the stakeholders, and the evaluation of the questionnaires before and after to develop an adapted and specifically oriented transfer strategy. The transfer of the knowledge is achieved via different dissemination channels like the media, reports, representative actions (e.g. open day), educational programs (for schools and universities) and special programs in education (e.g. CURRICULUM an adapted learning and teaching program).

**Project FEEDBACK** is a project designed to evaluate the knowledge level of each participant and returning this information to all of them for the purpose of showing knowledge gaps and action lacks and hence deepening the awareness for the problem and creating self-awareness for the possibilities of problem solving. The evaluation is aimed at all local stakeholder and participant groups and consists of questionnaires, interviews and behavioural observations/evaluations through observer and will yield as results new adaption strategies and monitoring systems for long terms.

**Project CURRICULUM** aims at a continuous multilateral teaching and learning process and hence at a continuous knowledge generation and dissemination process. The project will yield materials for education via theoretical and practical courses (pilot studies) at different levels (children, students, teachers) and include and propagate the pilot region relevant topic “ecological continuum” in education. The evaluation of success will be achieved by observing the improvements, ascertain the continuous interest and engagement (...) (distribution level acceptance).
Open pool (Working Group 4)

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<th>Priorities</th>
<th>Actions per Priority</th>
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<tr>
<td>What are appropriate concepts?</td>
<td>• Critical reflexion on existing concepts and their implementation</td>
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<td>• Clarify assumptions, visions, mission</td>
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<td>• Concept of an ecological continuum (including potentials in urbanised/degraded areas)</td>
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<td>• Coherence of national/regional ecological networks and concepts</td>
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<td>Who are the key players for implementation?</td>
<td>• Analyse legal barriers &amp; potentials</td>
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<td>• Identify the key players and their roles to find best modes for transsectoral cooperations</td>
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<td>• Identify needed information</td>
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<td>• Different &quot;levels&quot; of decision</td>
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<td>Als-wide corridor &amp; barrier map</td>
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<td>• Interactive assessment tools</td>
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<td>• Analyse legal barriers &amp; potentials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lobbying for EU/National funding, e.g. LIFE (call), Interreg (keyword), etc.</td>
<td>• Analyse existing funds (agriculture,...)</td>
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</table>

Brainstorming on topics, which have not been treated in ECONNECT

Improving Concepts
• Transsectoral approaches & concepts → Implementation (Pilot areas) → Theory
• National concepts/REN → interfaces, coherence with green infrastructures, goals
• Do we have the right (convincing, evident) concepts?
• Common terms, communication of results, explain the topic
• Transdisciplinary concepts/methods → theory development, conflict management

Services provided by ecologicale networks (→ research)
• Describe functions of ecological networks → determine the services
• Multiple use - multiple services
• Evaluation of ecosystem services (in terms of €, price for benefits) → research
Spatial planning, landscape planning
- Transfer of knowledge into planning in municipalities (Land use).
- Impact of Spatial planning on connectivity (part of legal aspects)
- Inputs from connectivity to landscape planning (insuitability map for development / remove development from endangered areas)
- Directives Natura 2000 & Water → connectivity
- Landscape development: What does it mean for connectivity?
- Analysis of legal barriers → transboundary projects

Funding
- Improve funding for local actions → LIFE-call, Interreg
- Funding opportunities: what are best levels?

Transdisciplinarity, cooperations
- Best impact level (concepts, implementation) → cooperation model
- Main target groups? Different levels (buying / selling)
- Identify common topics for close cooperation (multidisciplinarity)
- Integrate economics and social sciences

Protected Areas
- Existing Protected Areas/habitats → Potentials by restoration (mining areas, rivers, infrastructures, ...), potentials by retreat of human activities (forest. ..)
- Connectivity for everybody (alternative to Protected Areas)

Driving factors of landscape change
- Driving factors of landscape change → Landscape history / change
- Analyse/identify driving factors / players / actors and their role in landscape planning and connectivity issues → cooperation mechanisms

Fragmentation
- Fragmentation as a social phenomenon (disciplines, sectors, ...)
- Fragmentation caused by sectoral landscape management

Others
- Exchange with / learn from experiences beyond the Alps
- Develop a connectivity–label
- Climate change: Adaptation by connectivity
Think Tank workshop on stakeholder integration
Toblach/Dobbiaco 23 April 2010
Report
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1 Introduction

Since December 2009, the Continuum Initiative is gathering all experts active in scientific, administrative or practical projects on Alpine ecological connectivity in a so-called “Think Tank on ecological networks in/to the Alps”. The aim of this think tank is to bring together competences from science and practice for developing long termed visions and projects beyond ECONNECT. At the moment, approximately 190 experts from science, administration and practice are inscribed and published on the Web:

http://www.alpine-ecological-network.org/index.php/services-mainmenu-8/experts

The Think Tank workshop from April 23 in Toblach/Dobbiaco was the first of three meetings that are foreseen in 2010. The other two meetings are:

- A second Workshop on 17 November 2010 in Bolzano (I). It will focus on follow up projects, new projects and visions beyond ECONNECT.
- An initiative started by Chris Walzer (ECONNECT) and partners that will focus on main research questions concerning ecological connectivity in/to the Alps. At a workshop in December 2010, a selected number of experts from relevant institutions will identify “55 questions of importance” to maintain and restore ecological connectivity in the Alps.

This first workshop was held just after the ECONNECT pilot areas meeting on April 22 at the same place. The invitation was addressed to all experts of the “Think Tank on ecological networks in/to the Alps”, especially to all ECONNECT pilot regions.

The workshop aimed at bringing together and valorising a broad range of experiences from ECONNECT pilot areas and other regional organisations concerning stakeholder integration into connectivity projects.

It should help the ECONNECT pilot regions in getting new ideas and finding solutions to overcome difficulties they are facing with regard to stakeholder integration.

Based on these experiences some conclusions aimed at measures for improving cooperation with and among stakeholders in existing and future connectivity projects.
2 Presentations

2.1 Introduction (T. Scheurer, ISCAR)

The main goal of this workshop is to work out recommendations on stakeholder integration and cooperation. The exchange and assessment of experiences from existing pilot regions are the main sources for the concluding discussion.

Existing tools and materials that can help on the work with stakeholders are:

- The "Guidelines for involving stakeholders in the implementation of ecological networks" a publication of the ECNC 2009, contains good suggestions about stakeholder integration.
  [www.ecnc.org → Publications → Technical reports → “Making the connection!”]
- The "Fact Sheets" of the Ecological Continuum Initiative cover most of the main stakeholder groups (as forestry, land owners, traffic, hunters-fishermen, etc.)
  [www.alpine-ecological-network.org → Services → Downloads → “Fact sheets”]
- The new information brochure "Restoring the web of life“ about ecological networks.
  [www.alpine-ecological-network.org → Services → Downloads → “Brochure”]
- The publication "Implementing a pan-Alpine ecological network" – A compilation of major approaches, tools and activities“ by A.K. Heinrichs, Y. Kohler and A. Ullrich (published in June). Link: …
- Events, articles and websites can help further distribute existing material and ideas.
- Communication campaign "The Wall". On the 20 October artificial barriers will be placed in the main pedestrian area of different towns. They will be built up for one day. Due to this "wall" pedestrians have to make a detour and should thus be sensibilised for man-made fragmentation of nature. This event is planned to take place in 6 major towns (Vienna, Ljubljana, Lyon, Munich, Milan, Zurich or Bern).
- Excursions for stakeholders from ECONNECT pilot regions. A concept for Excursions in 2011 is in preparation.

2.2 Pilot region French Département Isère: Paths of Life. How are the stakeholders involved? (A.-S. Croyal)

For launching the project, in a first step various actors were identified. The next step was a make-up of four thematic working groups as „water“, „agriculture“, „urbanization“ and “communication”. The Agency of town planning for the region of Grenoble helped to arrange and to organise those working groups. The aim of those working groups was mainly to evaluate a programme of concrete actions that involves spreading the notion of ecological corridors, identifying possible actions and involving all the partners. The study and the programme of action were then presented to managers of motorway, railway and road agencies. They were mostly motivated and willing to join the programme and to implement concrete actions.

The project region is divided in three areas (Cluse of Voreppe, Upper Grésivaudan and Mid-Grésivaudan). For every area a steering committee lead by county councillor was built up.
The involvement of the politics and the work with the communities is of very high importance. Thus a system of conventions has been established that includes:

- Inscription of ecological corridors in the document of town planning
- Participation to communication (articles in the newspaper of the communes)
- Participation to the animation for a reasonable management of communal areas
- Specific actions regarding the situation of each communities

To evaluate the success of the project two separate approaches concerning the social and scientific scale will be used. The methodology for both of those evaluations is not yet defined. Regarding the scientific one, the audition of the candidates will take place with the help of a scientific committee in order to make sure that all the relevant points will be studied.

2.3 Pilot region Mercantour/Alpi Marittime: Hydro connectivity – a project to implement it, a challenge to involve actors. (L. Giraudo)

The water system in the Gesso-river basin is highly affected by human activities (catchments for energy and agricultural needs, artificialization of river beds and artificial barriers as dams and bridles). 70% of the waterflow are modified. Some of the rivers have no water at all during 3-4 months.

The hydropower and agricultural enterprises have the strongest influence on water-management. Both need water for their business and both have a very powerful lobby.

As a preliminary work of the project, a map showing the condition and impacts of all flowing waters from the basin has been drawn. The crayfish has been defined as a flagship species and makes people attentive for the project.

The planned Contratto di Fiume (river contract) is a signed agreement between different contractors. It should allow that public use, economic return, social values and ecological sustainability are kept a good balance. Its main goal is to look for feasible solutions and restore all river functions. It could be the tool, which allows improving a sustainable river basin management. The operative tools of the river contract could be an agreement protocol, an action plan, local technical workgroups, periodic workshops and a communicational and educational plan. A collaboration between the Alpi Marittime Park and its surrounding could be implemented.

The province could be the optimal administrative level to manage the water resource and the hydrographic network. It has a lot of operating competences about water resource (it gives authorizations about drainage in water bodies and for catching water for all utilization, has functions about ground defenses and water drainage and represents the most important subject in the agency of the basin).

A workshop is planned to bring all parties (as electricity, agriculture, fisheries, etc.) together and start a discussion.
2.4 Pilot region Monte Rosa: Implementation of stakeholders in Monte Rosa Pilot Region (C. Sedda)

The problems for connectivity in the Monte Rosa Pilot Region are diverse (ski-lifts, unregulated tourist flows, agriculture, waterway constructions, etc.). Several actions to improve connectivity as demolition of old infrastructure, regulations of touristic flows or maintenance and increase of important landscape elements are planned. Four main stakeholder groups are involved: Monte Rosa s.p.a. (Special Protection Area), mountaineering guides associations, farmers and municipalities. Experiences with those groups are very diverse, but mainly positive. Most of them are well sensitised to environmental topics and many successful collaborations have already been done.

The payment for farmers for structural elements as dry walls or hedges is done by (European) funds of rural development.

2.5 Pilot region Rhaethian Triangle: Networking and exploitation of synergies in the Lower Engadine Valley (R. Haller)

Inscunter is a project of the foundation Pro Terra Engiadina (PTE). PTE is an independent organisation that collects, evaluates, coordinates and promotes ecological projects in the Lower Engadine valley. It is well positioned in the local population and widely accepted. Its main goals are awareness raising, promotion and enhancement of the various natural and cultural landscape in the Lower Engadine valley, the build up of a pool of compensating measures and an additional benefit by ecological and economical exploitation of projects.

Purposes of Inscunter:

- Interdisciplinary cooperation and coordination of ongoing as well as planned projects
- Coordination and exploitation of synergies of the various projects
- Technical and financial coordination of all projects dealing with conservation, valorisation and development of landscape
- Additional funding for projects with an interdisciplinary character

Approach of Inscunter:

- Establishment of a network to pool the knowledge and skills of all actors in the region
- Participatory approach to achieve goals
- Sub-projects to test achievement of objectives
- Establishment of a position for project coordination in the Lower Engadine
- Setting up of sustainable procedures

Inscunter represents and realises the interests and requests of the ecological network (ECONNECT). In this purpose the concept of ecological connectivity is incorporated in the regional landscape management.
2.6 Pilot Region Hohe Tauern: Econnect-Information event in the zone of influence of the Nature Park “Riesenferner-Ahrn” (M. Pallhuber)

7 nature parks are located in Southern Tyrol. Because these parks are free of settlements and large infrastructure, no problems with ecological connectivity within the parks can be determined. The challenge now is to maintain connectivity between the different protected areas. Thus most of the actions take place outside the park borders.

In October 2009 a meeting for all stakeholders of the four nature parks in the region Pustertal was organised. The main goal was to inform the publicity about the ECONNECT-project. Four presentations were held and in the following discussion everybody was invited to ask questions. Most of the people were curious about the planned actions and concrete measurements that will be done next.

Financial aspects: The Budget for landscape elements (hedges, dry walls etc.) is 2.8 Mio Euro and there is an additional support from the EU for grasslands and extensive grassland cultivation.

On the occasion of the Year of Biodiversity 2010 an exhibition has been elaborated that will circulate this year in all information centres of nature parks.

The political acceptance of projects on nature conservation (like ECONNECT) is very good. In 2007 an Act of Parliament between Tyrol, Southtyrol, Trentino (and Voralberg with an observer status) has been signed. It aims at the improvement of communication and cooperation between protected areas and the implementation of ecological networks. As an example of a concrete resolution, the contracting parties are obligated to determine, plan and implement multiple ecological corridors in the region of the Brenner pass.

2.7 Pilot region transboundary area Berchtesgaden-Salzburg: „Involving partners“, experiences from the ECONNECT-Project (M. Künzl)

Focused on the regional organisation level, this is a short list of applied tools that facilitate the work with stakeholders in Berchtesgaden pilot region.

- **Responsibility**: A regional steering committee was built up, which is composed of eight permanent members. It guarantees the coordination between the main actors, gives support in content-related questions and has the responsibility for important decisions (like strategy, concrete aims and activities).

- **Expertise**: Representatives of responsible authorities (forestry, agriculture, water management, etc.) were invited to an expert workshop. The goal was, to apply the common methodology of the Continuum Initiative to the pilot region “Berchtesgaden-Salzburg” (problem analysis; setting aims; define priority landscape types, habitats and species; define activities and instruments). It was focussed on a regional level. Additionally to that workshop, several expert interviews were carried out. One focus
was on the main topic of extensively used grassland. Beside the current situation and funding possibilities also future demands were determined.

- **Information:** A lot of tools to provide information are used by NPB: public lectures, NPB-homepage, NPB-newspaper, conference in 2009 with a public part and media invited, communication to all NPB bodies / in all NPB events.

**Year of Biodiversity:** In 2010 the internal competition „Unknown Biodiversity“ started in the course of ECONNECT. The main goal is to sensitis the staff of Berchtesgaden National Park for the topic of ecological connectivity. In order to achieve attention for this topic, species have been chosen which depend on diverse ecological structures. Moreover, the competition will support the collection about biodiversity relevant data for Berchtesgaden National Park.

### 2.8 Pilot region Northern limestone Alps: Experiences from working groups (E. Werschonig)

To get an overview about the different stakeholders from the region, a **questionnaire** was developed and sent to all known persons concerned. The questions covered a wide spectrum of topics as for example species, biotopes or existing projects. 160 stakeholders answered the questionnaire. Among all participants of the survey, a huge knowledge about relevant themes is already available. Now one of the most important things would be to bring different people together and allow an exchange of knowledge and experiences. The results of such exchanges could be used for further projects.

By the evaluation of the questionnaire and on information meetings a strong interest in cooperation has been noticed. Even if people do not get any money for their participation in projects, they join because they want to discuss and change something. To ease the participation, **four thematic groups** (forest, rivers, tourism/communication, mountain pastures) were formed that could be joined.

Actually a discussion on a **common label** is running. A label could induce a common feeling and establish a uniform representation.

General aspects regarding the work with stakeholders are:

- It is important to speak very early to people and involve them into the process.
- Despite all efforts, some people will never get involved (e.g. from the Hunting sector or landowners). A mediator may be a solution and may help speeding up the process.
- Pay attention to the important/valuable combinations of stakeholders.
- As the National Park does not have the resources to manage everything, people have to bring their own project ideas and take responsibility for it.
3 Practice in stakeholder integration – an overview

The following table gives a comparative overview about the tools used for stakeholder integration by five of the seven Pilot regions. This list of tools for stakeholder integration is based on the publication “Making the connection – Guidelines for involving stakeholders in the implementation of ecological networks” by the European Centre of Nature Conservation (ECNC, 2009). It contains all kinds of tools from the early project phase “Preparation” to more advanced phases as “Conflict management” or “Decision making”.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Département Isère</th>
<th>Mercantour / Alpi Maritime</th>
<th>Monte Rosa</th>
<th>Rhæthian Triangle - lower Engadina</th>
<th>Hohen Tauern / South Tyrol</th>
<th>Berchtesgaden - Salzburg</th>
<th>Gesäuse / Northern limestone Alps</th>
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## Consultation tools

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## Participation tools

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<td>Coll. Task forces</td>
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## Conflict management

<table>
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<tr>
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## Decision making tools

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<td>Pareto analysis</td>
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<td>Cost benefit analysis</td>
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<td>Multi-criteria analysis</td>
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<td>Prioritising</td>
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X: applied tool; ?: application in question; - : tool not applied

Most of the realised actions and applied tools are located in the section “Preparation” and “Communication tools”, which reflects the state of the different projects. Most of the projects are at the beginning and thus the actions focus on tools that are relevant for that state.

As expected, up to now no pilot region made use of all different tools. Beside specific project states, the wide spectrum of possible tools and diverse working strategies are probably main reasons for differences in the use of tools between pilot regions.

Nearly all tools for stakeholder integration are applied in at least one pilot region. This fact shows that this ECNC list of tools for stakeholder integration really contains successfully used recommendations for practical application.
4 Conclusions concerning stakeholder integration

The following list outlines the essence of the final discussion where the most important conclusions concerning stakeholder integration were drawn. The conclusions include three major topics “Cooperation with stakeholder groups”, “Handling of stakeholder communication” and “Initiation of projects”.

4.1 Cooperation with stakeholder groups

- The involvement of the politics is of high importance. In many cases they have the power of decision.
- Most of protected areas have an information line „school“. Profit from those structures and contact local teachers. Kids should learn what is actually going on in their town. Furthermore they are good multiplicators and can disperse the idea of ecological networks to their families.
- Search precisely for stakeholders, depending on the project demands. Allow asking them for their competence and cooperation. Make use of the influence and the decision level of the stakeholder and keep in mind that it is very important to build up a regionally positioned network.

4.2 Handling of stakeholder communication

- Inform the stakeholders about the actual situation, the goals and the ongoing process. Pay attention that every stakeholder-group is provided with information by someone who is well accepted. Always keep in mind the specific role of the stakeholders and the fact that some stakeholders play different roles simultaneously (e.g. hunter and politician).
- As a project leader: start a communication-process as early as possible. Tell the stakeholders, why they are affected by the topic and what the benefits and synergies will be. Find a common objective that appeals to all the stakeholders. If you can induce a discussion with several (ev. opposed) stakeholders, do not stay too general. Talk about concrete issues and ask as concrete questions as possible.
- Identify regional Flagship-species for an effective communication to the population. But pay attention and do not try the wrong thing at the wrong place.

4.3 Initiation of projects

- Focus your actions. Concentrate on 1-3 projects and push them intensely.
- On the work outside the protected areas, a regional organisation that equally engages all partners is a helpful structure. It works as major contact and organising body and simplifies the work for all people concerned with the projects. The Park administration has to be integrated into this organisation but has no leading function.
- If you can initiate a discussion, you have to have the resources to really do something. Do not just speak and promise but offer some concrete actions that can be done right away.
- At the end of ECONNECT the work has to go on. Look now for persons with responsibility who make sure that the projects started will go on and brought to an end.
### 5 Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croyal Anne-Sophie</td>
<td>Pilot region French Département Isère</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giraudo Luca</td>
<td>Pilot region Mercantcour/Alpi Marittime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haller Ruedi</td>
<td>Pilot region Rhaethian Triangle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heinrichs Anne-Katrin</td>
<td>Pilot region transboundary area Berchtesgaden - Salzburg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kias Ulrich</td>
<td>Hochschule Weihenstephan Triesdorf</td>
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<tr>
<td>Künzle Michaela</td>
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<td>Nigro Riccardo</td>
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<td>Sedda Cristiano</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smrekar Otto</td>
<td>University of Basel</td>
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<td>Werschonig Elisabeth</td>
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