

**MANDATE OF THE
Alpine Biodiversity Board
FOR THE PERIOD 2025-2026
(BETWEEN THE XVIII AND XIX MEETINGS OF THE ALPINE
CONFERENCE)**

1. Introductory remarks

Importance of the issues selected and relevance of the proposed way to tackle them, including reference to the Alpine Convention and its Protocols and further strategic documents

Transnational cooperation to conserve the Alpine biodiversity, as value *per se* and natural capital of significance, is not sufficiently considered and opportunities for action are under-exploited.

The mandate 2025-2026 of the Alpine Biodiversity Board (ABB) will be based on (1) the MAP 2023-2030, addressing especially thematic priority area 1 "Conserving and valuing Alpine biodiversity and ecosystems", (2) the results of the ABB's first three mandates, and (3) the results of the work of the Slovenian Presidency (2023-2024).

The mandate is a part of global cooperation efforts between Alpine countries for preserving biodiversity, in particular towards the implementation of:

- the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular its Goal 15
- the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation (IYGP 2025).
- the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP 2026).
- the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 (UN DER), which aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide.
- the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Alpine Convention, the Carpathian Convention and the CBD.
- the EUSALP, mostly through its Action Groups 6 and 7
- the European Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 with specific targets, actions and commitments and particularly the EU Nature Restoration Law

2. Planned topics and activities

To achieve the first objective of the Alpine Convention MAP "Conserving and valuing Alpine biodiversity and ecosystems", in line with the "Biodiversity in the Alps" Policy Brief of the Slovenian Presidency and the activities of the Italian Presidency, the ABB's mandate will be articulated along four main topics (Monitoring, Restoration, Connectivity and Conservation), each

developed within a Core Group within the ABB, which will pave the way for an Alpine Biodiversity Action Plan 2030 to be validated at the XIX Alpine Conference.

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| Topic No. 0 (overarching topic): Alpine Biodiversity Action Plan | |
| Topic outline and objective until the XIX Alpine Conference (knowledge sharing, policy setting etc.) | |
| <p>Based on the recommendations of the Biodiversity Policy Brief, and following up on various studies and mapping efforts carried out on the corresponding topics, the ABB will elaborate an Alpine Biodiversity Action Plan (AB-AP) to achieve concrete results by 2030 and beyond in the preservation of Alpine biodiversity and the strengthening of the Alpine-wide cooperation on: <i>monitoring, restoration, connectivity and conservation issues.</i></p> <p>To implement the action plan, cooperation areas will need to be identified, especially in cross-border areas, by targeting protected areas and their buffer zone.</p> | |
| Envisaged activities (desk research, collection of good practices, workshop etc.) | |
| <i>Description</i> | <i>Tentative timeline</i> |
| - Drafting the overall structure of the proposed Action Plan | 2025 |
| - Elaborating the Action Plan's proposal based on the four pillars: Monitoring, Restoration, Connectivity, Conservation Including listing and selection of transboundary areas according to topics for future implementation of the action plan. | 2026 |
| - TWB consultation on the Alpine Biodiversity Action Plan particularly with the ACB | 2026 |
| Expected outputs (statement, report, brochure, exhibition etc.) | |
| - Alpine Biodiversity Action Plan's proposal including preparation for implementation in transboundary pilot areas | |
| Potential follow-up after the XIX Alpine Conference | |
| Implementation of the Action Plan in the four-year period 2027-2030 and beyond. | |

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| Topic No. 1: Alpine biodiversity monitoring |
| Topic outline and objective until the XIX Alpine Conference |

Transnational cooperation is based on a common vision of the current state and trends of biodiversity on which to agree on priorities for action. One of the biggest challenges is the interoperability of different biodiversity monitoring systems through the Alps.

The AlpsLife project, which emerged from the ABB and is being developed in the period 2024-2027 within the Alpine Space Programme, aims at establishing strategic and technical coordination at Alpine level on these data issues, and on transferring the information to relevant policy processes, as the basis for collective action. The ABB, via a dedicated core group, will ensure the constant exchange of information between project partners, relevant stakeholders, and country representatives. These exchanges will ensure that the project meets concrete policy needs, essential for the dissemination and implementation of results in national public policies, but also at operational level.

Envisaged activities (desk research, collection of good practices, workshop etc.)

| <i>Description</i> | <i>Tentative timeline</i> |
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| Supporting the activities planned in the AlpsLife project (especially the work package 4 "Political anchoring of AlpsLife results" coordinated by CIPRA) to facilitate exchanges between political and technical needs by: | 2025-26 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouraging the dialogue to ensure that the project activities and results are in line with the strategies of the Alpine Member States and meet national and Alpine needs and technical feasibility. - Explore the possibilities for the continuity of this line of work after the AlpsLife project | 2026 |

Expected outputs (report, brochure, exhibition etc.)

- Contribution to the implementation of AlpsLife WPs1-4
- Contribution for the Alpine Biodiversity Action Plan on *monitoring* issues
- Options to ensure the legacy of AlpsLife and the continuity of this line of work

Potential follow-up after the XIX Alpine Conference

Continued exchanges on AlpsLife until the end of the project in 2027.

Contribute to the development of a solid basis leading, after 2027, to the implementation of the main recommendations arising from the project results and the continuity of this line of work

Implementation of recommendations within the Alpine Biodiversity Action Plan in the four-year period 2027-2030.

Topic No. 2: Restoration: Restore the ecological functionality within the Alps

Topic outline and objective until the XIX Alpine Conference

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| <p>Ecosystem restoration is an essential element in the recovery and conservation of biodiversity. In this respect, it is essential to improve cooperation between Alpine countries by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analysing the various restoration issues at Alpine level and possible opportunities for international cooperation. - exchanging information, existing tools and best practices - fostering synergies on cross border areas dealing with specific issues and shared ecosystems and sites. | |
| <p>Envisaged activities (desk research, collection of good practices, workshop etc.)</p> | |
| <i>Description</i> | <i>Tentative timeline</i> |
| <p>Workshops with EU NRL national focal points, further public actors (including regional and local actors), EUSALP (AG7), involved in restoration and/or experts to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foster strategic exchange between Alpine countries on national restoration plans (EU countries) or strategies (non-EU) for the Alpine region with a specific focus on topics with high relevance at the Alpine level like peatlands, forests, pollinators or river connectivity - Foster technical exchanges on tools, best practices of restoration in the Alpine region | <p>2025-2026</p> <p>2025-2026</p> |
| <p>Expected outputs (report, brochure, exhibition etc.)</p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular exchange in place between Alpine countries on technical and political level - Regular exchange with the other core groups - Contribution to the <i>Restoration</i> pillar of the Alpine Biodiversity Action Plan | |
| <p>Potential follow-up after the XIX Alpine Conference</p> | |
| <p>Implementation of recommendations within the Alpine Biodiversity Action Plan in the four-year period 2027-2030.</p> | |

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| <p>Topic No. 3: Connectivity: Enhance connectivity within the Alps and beyond</p> |
| <p>Topic outline and objective until the XIX Alpine Conference (knowledge sharing, policy setting etc.)</p> |
| <p>Spatial planning approaches and strategies vary by country (with differences even at sub-national level) and the consideration given to ecological connectivities. Considering connectivity effectively would improve the long-term viability of species with a wide range</p> |

distribution and would facilitate many natural processes and ecosystem services, including for example plant pollination, flood protection and resilience to climate change.

In cases where fragmentation of connectivity areas and degradation of the green infrastructure has already occurred connectivity should be restored.

To this end, the ABB will work closely with relevant working groups from the Alpine Convention, particularly SPSP WG Transport WG and WISO, or from other areas such as the Carpathian Convention and EUSALP, which bring together experts in this field. Projects' results already occurred or on-going in this topic will be considered as well. All together they will jointly reflect on the various solutions and recommendations available for better consideration of ecological corridors.

Envisaged activities (desk research, collection of good practices, workshop etc.)

| <i>Description</i> | <i>Tentative timeline</i> |
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| <p>Based on the previous projects and work done within the AC to map ecological connectivity areas in the Alpine region, for example Econnect project, PlanToConnect, large carnivores report (WISO, 2022) and the PLACE report (Ecological Network Platform, 2019):</p> | |
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| <p>1- Workshop(s) on how the Alpine Convention can support the inclusion of Alpine ecological connectivity into spatial planning documents (joint workshop ABB, AG7, SPSP WG, WISO, Transport WG)</p> | 2025 |
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| <p>2- Workshop on exchanges of best practices on restoring Alpine connectivity (joint workshop ABB, WISO, Transport WG, AG7)</p> | 2026 |
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Expected outputs (statement, report, brochure, exhibition etc.)

- Provision of technical basis or guidelines to support incorporation of ecological connectivities in spatial planning documents
- Regular exchange with the other core groups
- Contribution to the Alpine Biodiversity Action plan on the *Connectivity* pillar

Potential follow-up after the XIX Alpine Conference

Implementation of recommendations within the Alpine Biodiversity Action Plan in the four-year period 2027-2030

Topic No. 4: Conservation: Improve status of conservation for priority species and habitats

Topic outline and objective until the XIX Alpine Conference (knowledge sharing, policy setting etc.)

The network of protected areas in the Alps should be improved, both in terms of the level of protection and the territorial coverage of the network, to provide effective protection for taxa which need specific conservation efforts. To formalise and implement concrete conservation actions at the Alpine level, priorities need to be defined first. In particular, certain ecosystems should be highlighted for their contribution to ecosystem services in the Alps and beyond.

Envisaged activities (desk research, collection of good practices, workshop etc.)

| <i>Description</i> | <i>Tentative timeline</i> |
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| Preparation of a list of species and habitats for the Alps referring to the Nature Protocol's Art. 13 and 14 (cooperation with EEA). | 2025-26 |
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| Workshop(s) to identify optimal criteria for a priority list of Alpine species and habitats, based on scientific evidence and respective national strategies | 2025-26 |
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| Reflection on a more harmonious approach to Alpine conservation strategies | 2025 |
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Expected outputs (statement, report, brochure, exhibition etc.)

- Preliminary list of species and habitats in the Alps to meet the requirements of the Nature Protection protocol
- Methodological recommendations for selecting priority species and habitats at the Alpine level
- Regular exchange with the other core groups
- Contribution to the *Conservation* pillar of the Alpine Biodiversity Action plan

Potential follow-up after the XIX Alpine Conference

Implementation of the Alpine Biodiversity Action Plan in the four-year period 2027-2030

3. TWB meetings schedule

Tentative dates and settings of meetings (month or quarter, online/in presence)

The overall coherence of the four Core Groups will be ensured through coordination, overseeing by the chair and at the ABB plenary meetings

For each core group: TBD with each core group leader (min 3 per year, mostly online)

ABB plenary meetings, min. 2 per year

4. Cooperation

Planned cooperation with other Alpine Convention bodies and further relevant partners and processes, and the expected benefits

- Continued cooperation with other TWBs of the AC and especially with the TWBs that have involvement with biodiversity, as ACB, WISO, Transport, Mountain Agriculture and Mountain Forestry, Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development.
- Cooperation with the Italian presidency regarding the RSA11 on glaciers and new ecosystems that will emerge from their retreat
- Cooperation with the Carpathian Convention and CBD based on the Memorandum of Cooperation, including activities at CBD COP17.
- Strengthening the links with EUSALP AG6 and AG7, specifically regarding landscape planning and ecological connectivity and nature restoration.
- Cooperation with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.
- Evaluating options for cooperation with IUCN Europe and EEA, including cooperation around Alpine Lists of habitats and species
- Cooperation with the Austrian-German CIPRA annual conference on spatial planning (beginning of 2025)
- Considering IPBES assessments specifically on spatial planning and ecological connectivity
- Cooperation with Biodiversa+

Opportunities for new collaborations and partnerships will be explored on a regular basis.

5. Communication

Communication objectives, targets and respective planned measures

Promote ABB activities at the international and European levels (European Commission, EEA, Carpathian Convention, UNEP, CDB COP17-18, international mountain's events...)

Aggregation and dissemination of information on Alpine biodiversity contribution to the targets of the GBF and the European Biodiversity Strategy

Continued dissemination of existing spatial priorities maps (by ALPARC and others, including outside of the AC circle)

Elaboration of a communication plan for the Alpine Biodiversity Action Plan

6. Link to the Multi-Annual Work Programme 2023-2030 of the Alpine Conference

Contribution of the activities to some or all of the priority areas of the MAP 2023-2030 (interlinkages, synergies, and trade-offs with the specific objectives below)

MAP Priority area 1 – Biodiversity and ecosystems: *Contribute to the achievement of the European and international objectives to protect, preserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystems in the Alps; Strengthen the Alpine Convention's own biodiversity and ecosystem-related activities and integrate the topic into the work of all its bodies*

All activities of ABB are designed to contribute to this MAP priority area.

MAP Priority area 2 – Climate action: *Implement the Climate Action Plan 2.0 on the way to reach climate-neutral and climate-resilient Alps by 2050; Pursue cross-sectoral activities and look for cooperation beyond the environmental and climate sector*

By its current activities and setting up an Alpine Biodiversity Action plan, the ABB will ensure the concrete implementation of the pathways 1 “Protection and management of landscapes and ecosystems” and 2 “Transboundary cooperation on ecological connectivity” of the Climate Action Plan 2.0.

MAP Priority area 3 – Quality of life: *Further the Alpine Convention’s knowledge on the quality of life of people in the Alps, acknowledging and respecting territorial and individual differences; Promote the inclusion of quality-of-life measures in public policy-making processes at all territorial levels*

The 10th Report on the State of the Alps has evidenced the importance of biodiversity for the well-being of people in the Alps. To reinforce these synergies, the ABB will aim at including representatives of local administrations and the civil society in its activity.

7. Chair

The Chair will be held by Italy.