

WHAT DOES ECONNECT MEAN?**ECOLOGICAL CONTINUUM**

Connecting habitats and protected areas in order to preserve the Alps' extraordinary biodiversity in times of rapid climate change and to allow a common attitude within countries responsibility.

HOLISTIC APPROACH

Integrating administrative, local and scientific institutions within a unified network so as to create a common work system.

MIGRATION CORRIDORS

Creating wildlife corridors or so-called "green corridors" in different habitats with the aim of connecting wildlife populations separated by human activities.

COMMON LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Overcoming legal barriers between different countries and their administrative systems which are currently hindering migration routes and conservation efforts of all countries involved.

HOW DOES ECONNECT WORK?**INFORMATION GATHERING**

- Harmonisation of geographic data
- Analysis of existing physical and legal barriers for the establishment of ecological corridors
- Definition of migration corridors between high value biodiversity areas in the Alps and links with other eco-regions

ACTION IN THE FIELD

- Creation, approval and testing of a methodological approach for the establishment of ecological corridors and promotion of this procedure across the Alpine region
- Strengthening the cooperation between relevant institutions
- Application of innovative concepts and actions in Pilot Regions rich in biodiversity

COMMUNICATION

- Raising awareness as regards the importance of ecological connectivity
- Distribution of **ECONNECT** results

Lead Partner**AUSTRIA**

University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna,
Research Institute of Wildlife Ecology

Project Partners**AUSTRIA**

Hohe Tauern National Park
Federal Environment Agency
Gesäuse National Park
University of Innsbruck, Institute for Ecology

GERMANY

Berchtesgaden National Park

FRANCE

CEMAGREF
Council of Department of Isère
Task Force Protected Areas -
Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention

ITALY

Alpi Marittime Nature Park
Aosta Valley Autonomous Region
European Academy of Bozen
Ministry for the Environment
WWF Italy

LIECHTENSTEIN

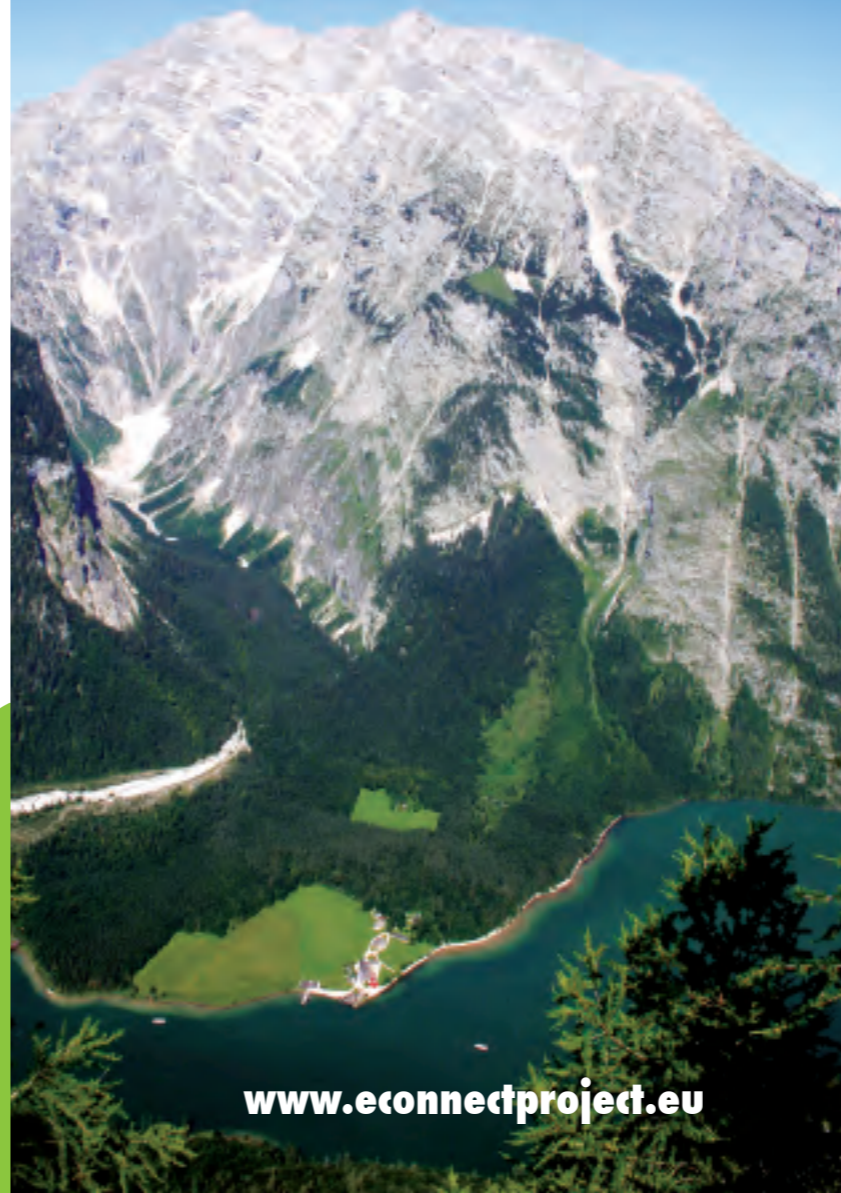
International Commission for the Protection
of the Alps (CIPRA)

SWITZERLAND

Swiss National Park

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ECONNECT: RESTORING THE WEB OF LIFE

The Alps are one of the best-known mountain ranges in the world with a rich and densely populated diversity of plant and animal life. In the past the most popular tools used for the conservation of such biodiversity was the creation of protected areas. Rapid climate change and the impact of human activities however are forcing us to think of new and innovative solutions for biodiversity conservation.

Today **ECONNECT** responds to this need by taking biodiversity conservation one step further.

ECONNECT aims at promoting a trans-Alpine network capable of linking protected areas across the Alps under a common approach. No more frontiers, be they scientific, methodological, statistical or physical.

ECONNECT's objective is to create connections among Alpine countries allowing species to migrate freely across the whole mountain range and thereby helping them adapt to the current environmental transformations. **ECONNECT** means overcoming the deep habitat fragmentation that has been brought about by cultural, physical and legal barriers.

ECONNECT is an innovative concept and a unique method for nature preservation in the Alps.



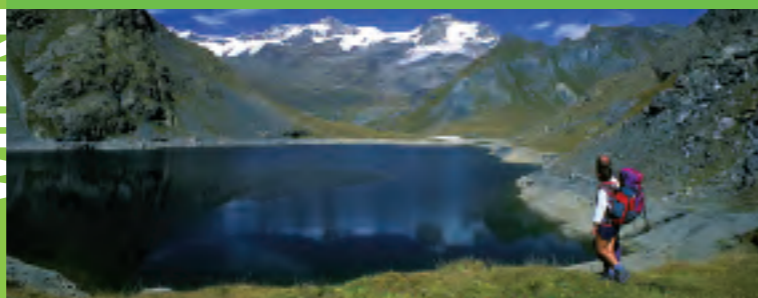
WHERE DOES ECONNECT ACT?

ECONNECT has identified 7 Pilot Regions with a rich diversity of plant and animal life and an urgent need to improve or create ecological connectivity.

WHERE DOES IT ACT?

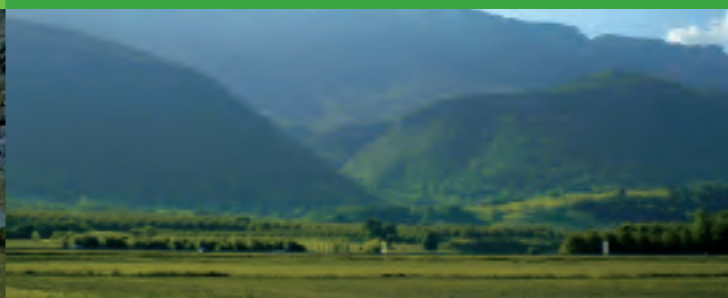
THE MONTE ROSA REGION

This Pilot Region is situated in the Italian-Swiss borderland, in the north-east of Aosta Valley. The area is host to several vegetation species and natural habitats of special interest such as the "Limestone pavements" and other biotopes. It is also an important migration path for the populations of ibex between Switzerland, Piedmont and Aosta Valley. For this reason ecological connectivity will be enhanced in the entire region.



THE FRENCH DEPARTMENT ISÈRE

The Département Isère lies in the French region of the Rhône-Alps. This area of the Alps is characterized by densely populated valleys and continuous human development. At the same time it represents one of the most important routes for migratory birds and other selected species. This region has been especially active in creating migratory maps, green bridges and tunnels as well as imposing new rules and regulations aimed at limiting ongoing damages to the natural environment.



THE NORTHERN LIMESTONE ALPS REGION

This Pilot Region comprises an astounding 25 protected areas covering a total of more than 200.000 hectares. More than 80 percent of this area is represented by a forest characterised by vast areas with low settlement density, highly structured cultural landscapes and rich biodiversity. The importance of this region lies in its strong connection with other Alpine areas and with the neighbouring massifs of the Carpathian Mountains.



THE RHAETHIAN TRIANGLE (ENGADIN/SOUTHTYROL/TRENTINO/TYROL)

This Pilot Region is situated in the Austrian-Italian-Swiss borderland. The area represents particularly vital migration paths for the local species which are threatened by the densely populated and intensively cultivated Adige-valley. Within the same region we also find the protected areas of the Swiss National Park and the National Park Stilfserjoch, the Biosphere Val Müstair, the Natural Park Kaunergrat, Adamello and Adamello Brenta as well as parts of the South Tyrolean Natural Parks. Developing a connection between the existing protected areas is therefore a key to biodiversity conservation in this region.

THE SOUTHWESTERN ALPS-MERCANTOUR/ALPI MARITTIME

This Pilot Region is located at the southwest end of the alpine arc in the French region Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur and the Italian region Liguria and Piedmont. The National Park Alpi-Maritime on the Italian side and the National Park Mercantour on the French side together form one geographical unit. Transboundary cooperation in this region has a longstanding tradition due to cultural affinity. The strategic location of this area implies the need for development of further networks with other Italian mountain ranges (Apennines).

THE HOHE TAUERN REGION

This region is characterized by the presence of the largest cohesive protected network area in the Alps which includes the South Tyrolean Natural Parks and the National Park "Hohe Tauern". This region plays a key role in the connectivity between the northern Alps and the southeast foothills in Slovenia which are particularly important for large birds of prey.

THE TRANSBOUNDARY AREA BERCHTESGADEN-SALZBURG

The transboundary region Berchtesgaden-Salzburg is situated between Germany and Austria, covering parts of the Free State of Bavaria as well as the federal state Salzburg. This area is well-known for its mosaic of pristine Alpine habitats and cultural landscapes which includes one of the broadest collection of rare plants and animal species in the entire Alps. This pilot area however has an urgent need for connectivity among the numerous protected areas present in the region, especially in terms of data exchange and collaborative research.

