

EUSALP Embedding Workshop

Tuesday October 25th - Online

The process of **embedding** aims at **facilitating the connection between EUSALP activities and available funding opportunities** by enhancing **dialogue & exchange of information** between Action Groups members and bodies in charge of managing funding opportunities and in particular managing authorities and intermediary bodies.

The **EUSALP Embedding Workshop**, organised by the 2022 EUSALP Italian Presidency, aims to facilitate the transition to the second phase of the embedding process by providing a concrete working session showcasing instruments & best practices which could be utilised by the bodies in charge of managing the funds in order to mainstream and implement **common priorities, objectives and strategic projects** for the Alpine Region within the national and regional programmes and direct EU funds.

The first networks within EUSALP were set up at the EUSALP Embedding Workshop, during the second EU MRS Week (March 2021), on a voluntary basis:

- > Network on **energy transition** and specifically hydrogen, led by the Auvergne-Rhône- Alpes Region;
- > Network on **digital technology** led by the Lombardy Region;
- > Network on **sustainable mobility** led by the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region.

Opening Remarks

Marco Doglia, Italian Department for Cohesion Policies

- > The current European regulatory framework fully supports and endorses the embedding process. **The embedding of EUSALP has achieved its first results**, from the identification of cross-cutting themes and the operation of the Financial Dialogue Networks to the programming phase of aligning a number of Interreg and mainstream programmes with the EUSALP priorities;
- > There is a pressing need to achieve a **simplification of the EUSALP priorities and the identification of flagship projects and initiatives**.

Emma Mitrotta, Autonomous Province of Trento - EUSALP Italian Presidency 2022

- > Embedding is among the main priorities for the 2022 Italian Presidency of the EUSALP Strategy which strongly endorses the work carried out in order to achieve fully functioning and operational Financial Dialogue Networks.

Giacomo Luciani - European Commission, DG Regio

- > Embedding is about making the best use of funds available in order to increase the territorial impact. This process has a solid legal and policy basis in the 2021-27 programming period: **Article 22(3) Common Provisions Regulation**;

- > This has direct impacts on the contribution to EUSALP at different levels, from the Regional Programmes based on ERDF funds to the direct management funds such as the LIFE programme which encourages the use of MRS for the implementation of Strategic Integrated Projects at trans-national scale.

Keynote sessions

Ilze Ciganska - INTERACT

- > The embedding process is strategic due to the fact that Macro Regional Strategies pull together common resources to fast-track change on specific common challenges. Coordination of such activities can help to **reach the planned impact on a trans-national scale**.
- > Good practices of embedding already exists, such as **calls supporting partnerships outside the region and promoting MRS priorities** (e.g. the experience of [Basilicata Region, IT](#)), **the inclusion of a transnational component** in specific calls or **the alignment of call timelines** in order to allow synergies between similar initiatives;
- > Embedding is not only about EU funds but can be promoted through the use of regional funds and bilateral cooperation agreements.

Robert Lichtner - Danube Region Strategy

- > The EUSDR addresses a wide range of issues, based on an Action plan, and topics divided among four Pillars and 12 thematic Priority Areas. The Action Plan was revised in 2020;
- > The embedding process within the Danube Strategy comprised the **involvement and coordination of different governance levels in the discussion** starting from the TRIO Presidency, National Coordinators to Priority Area Coordinators and stakeholders;
- > The Danube Region Strategy identifies **flagship projects and/or processes that contribute greatly to the implementation of the strategy**, that have a clear macro-regional dimension and a multi-level governance approach;
- > The EUSDR embedding process has implemented moreover a **monitoring process in order to assess the impacts that the strategic projects/initiatives have had on the territories involved**. The monitoring process encompasses the use of the PAC Reporting Tool (EUSDR Monitoring).

Judith Schrick-Szenczi - Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Tourism Baden-Württemberg

- > The Innovation Express 2021 is a joint initiative for supporting the four macroregions of the European Union and initiated by the EUSBSR and EUSDR;
- > The IE 2021 promoted the establishment of a **synchronized call where regional administrative procedure/rules apply and the funding does not cross borders**;

- > The first call focused on **Artificial Intelligence in life sciences applications and Digital Solutions for a sustainable industry** and targeted clusters, SMEs, research organisations and intermediaries;
- > Each partner country or region applies own rules and **funding from existing programs**, but the focus of the calls, the activities to be supported, the launching date of the call as well as the duration of the projects are **jointly decided by the Funding Partners**.

Laurent Soulier - EUSALP Technical Secretariat

- > The EUSALP Technical Secretariat is in the process of finalising its prefiguration for a launch in 2023. Regarding the embedding process, the newly appointed team will continue to take a wide range of actions **to ensure a systematic embedding process of the EU strategy for the Alpine Region and its awareness**.
- > The objectives sought, for the upcoming months, are twofold:
 - the **establishment of a common working framework, contributing to the mapping of common priorities and relevant funding sources** and supporting the implementation of capacity building activities targeting the Financial Dialogue Networks Coordinators;
 - the **establishment of a Managing Authorities & Intermediary Bodies Network to facilitate the exchange** on common EUSALP Priorities.

Parallel Working Sessions - Main Findings

Digital Technology - Smart Land

- > In line with the Twin Transition digitalisation and data interoperability is of extreme relevance for the Alpine Region;
- > There is a current need to promote the development of a common data strategy and a widespread data culture;
- > The digital transformation process should be promoted through the involvement of local communities;
- > Different Cross Border Cooperation Programmes (such as Interreg Alcotra, Interreg Alpine Space) already embedded EUSALP priorities within their operational programmes;
- > Regional Programmes just approved (such as the FESR programme within Lombardy Region) took into account MRS priorities in order to align the funding priorities.

Energy Transition

- > Presentation of two Interreg Alpine Space Projects on Green Hydrogen: Amethyst and H2MA. The importance of EUSALP Action groups during all steps of the project has been raised by projects leaders;
- > Regions have a crucial role in the development of hydrogen projects and the Regional Pillar of Hydrogen Europe is a concrete and important asset;

- > Synergies must be found as well as the development of partnerships between the public and the private sectors;
- > Discussions on the embedding of EUSALP priorities into ERDF programmes. This will permit to scale up initiatives by applying to larger calls (Connecting Europe Facility).

Sustainable Mobility

- > All the countries need to move in the same direction, the development need to be balanced so we need a strong coordination on it in developing low emission transport policies;
- > A strong involvement of Member States in decarbonization policy is needed, with a good coordination at regional level for the policy implementation;
- > Different Cross Border Cooperation Programmes (such as Interreg Central Europe, Interreg Italy-Swiss) already embedded EUSALP priorities within their operational programmes;
- > It would be really useful to collect data and information about beneficiaries of the Interreg Programmes that received complementary funds by other Programmes.

Key Findings

- > The embedding of EUSALP has marked some **important results**. It is now ready to be taken to the **next level** by working on organization and multilevel governance;
- > The next challenge is to encourage organizational solutions that can **mobilize regional authorities in a coherent way and further involve managing authorities** and intermediary bodies. Initiatives such as Innovation Express are a reference point for strengthened coordination;
- > The current emphasis on **EU Interreg and mainstream funds** should be complemented with a focus on both **regional and EU direct funds**;
- > The **streamlining of EUSALP priorities** should favour the emergence of **flagship projects and initiatives**.