

A-RING – ALPINE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CAPACITY GOVERNANCE



NEWSLETTER 2, APRIL 2022

A-RING, AN INSIGHT INTO THE BLUEPRINT VALIDATION PROCESS BY EUSALP AG1

Dear Readers, with the second edition of A-RING newsletter we are pleased to further introduce you to the project and its consortium. In this volume, four A-RING project partners are presenting themselves, sharing the most relevant details of their institutions, their role in the project and main activities. The 2nd part of the newsletter is dedicated to an update on what has been achieved within the three A-RING work packages and a highlight of the latest events. Finally, you will find details about the partnership and the website and social media links, for learning in greater detail about ongoing and finalized activities, as well as about news and upcoming project events.

Before digging into the project results, it is worth dedicating a reflexion to the importance of the political endorsement of strategic documents delivered within the A-RING project. With respect to the **Blueprint for Alpine Region Research and Innovation Shared Agenda**, the final output of WPT1, it consists of recommendations and a methodology to build a prioritization for Research and Innovation S3 topics within the Alpine Space, and a path towards the development of a shared R&I S3 Strategy in the same region. To this end, political endorsement is key, to ensure that such strategic document for the Alpine Region will produce effects in the territory it refers to. Here comes into play the role of EUSALP AG1. The Action Group 1 focuses on **developing an effective research and innovation ecosystem** according to the recommendation on which all the Macroregional Strategies are based:

- ✓ **COLLABORATION** among Countries and Regions;
- ✓ **CAPITALIZATION** of the existing instruments, resources and best practices;
- ✓ **HARMONISATION** of procedures.

The AG1 Action Plan identified specific activities to be carried out in order to foster the development of an Alpine Region research and innovation ecosystem. One of them refers to the creation of a common EUSALP Research and Innovation agenda. Both the AG1 mission and workplan are fully aligned with A-RING project objectives, especially for what concerns the elaboration of the Blueprint. Therefore, it appears clear that AG1 is a key stakeholder for ensuring political endorsement of the Blueprint, a key strategic document as a basis for establishing a shared R&I agenda in the Alpine Region and thus an effective research and innovation ecosystem in the Alpine Space.

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SECTION 1 - PROJECT PARTNERS PRESENTATIONS

- **Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences**

The Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences (FHV) is a higher education institution located in the western part of Austria, in the Lake Constance Region. Bachelor's and Master's degree programs are offered in the fields of business, technology, design, and social and health services. Part of the degree programs can be completed part-time, one in dual form.

FHV is one of the most research-intensive universities of applied sciences in Austria. The majority of research projects are carried out in cooperation with regional companies and organizations that operate internationally. The close link between research and studies brings students into contact with current research issues at an early stage. Scientists and students conduct research in the areas of Business Informatics, Microtechnology, User-Centered Technologies, Empirical Social Sciences, Energy and Digital Factory.

In the A-RING project, FHV's research center for Business Informatics is involved. It developed a working methodology to support transnational communication, knowledge transfer and cooperation among various stakeholders of the alpine R&I ecosystem. With it, transnational co-creation processes are facilitated and alpine regions are enabled to work on common goals.

The institute also initiated a co-creative process in order to obtain inputs for the development of a shared research and innovation policy for the Alpine Region with representatives from academia and the business sector. Hereby the most important common focal points were identified and ways were shown how transnational cooperation can be promoted in the future.

- **Ministry of Education, Science and Sport**

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MIZS) is the national public authority responsible for defining the strategic and developmental goals for education and research in Slovenia. Specifically related to research, the MIZS defines the expert basis for the adoption of policy documents in the field of research policy. It drafts laws and implements regulations on research activities. It establishes and improves the system of comprehensive analysis and monitoring of the situation and development in research, develops new instruments for achieving research policy goals, and plans the necessary financial resources for research.

MIZS is a partner in the A-RING project and is responsible for the elaboration of the Blueprint for an Alpine Region R&I Agenda, and it is also involved in testing a common approach between public authorities on selected topics for possible future cooperation.

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- **Hochschule Konstanz University of Applied Sciences**

The HTWG Konstanz - University of Applied Sciences is a modern university that takes a practical, hands-on approach. It offers a broad range of programs, and students benefit from the interdisciplinary approach and focus on bridging theory and practice. The HTWG Konstanz is a key player in the international scientific and business community in the Lake Constance region. The HTWG Konstanz has partnerships with innovative companies, and organizations and pursues excellence in the areas of research and development, technology transfer and continuing education.

The HTWG Konstanz is also the home-base of the Institute for Strategic Innovation and Technology Management (IST), the involved institution in the A-RING project. As an institute for research and transfer, the IST Institute is the competence centre of the HTWG Konstanz on the subject of innovation and strategy. In publicly funded research and industry-related projects, methods, processes and tools are developed with which technology-oriented companies can strategically develop, commercially successfully implement and legally secure innovations. With this expertise, the IST Institute supports companies in improving their own competitiveness and successfully implementing strategic innovation initiatives. Therefore, it imparts knowledge and offers design impulses to embed dynamic skills in companies and to strengthen the agility of organizations.

Within the A-RING project, the IST Institute at the HTWG Konstanz is involved in the consulting process for the Blueprint for Alpine Region Research and Innovation Shared Agenda and co-organizes transnational, and regional workshops and events. The IST Institute is also involved in the development of the Matchmaking Parley and Seed Lab methodology; a methodology designed to facilitate network connections and cooperation within the alpine region.

- **Wirtschaftsagentur Burgenland**

Our institution was founded in 1995. It is the most important public institution for EU funded projects in Burgenland. Since 1.1.2022 RMB was incorporated in another public institution, Wirtschaftsagentur Burgenland. There will be no changes to the content of implementation of EU programmes and projects in Burgenland's region.

Wirtschaftsagentur Burgenland is engaged in good R&I governance with experts and capitalized on AR initiatives, transfers knowhow from high innovation-intensive to less intensive areas in our region.

Wirtschaftsagentur Burgenland's main part of the project A-Ring is to implement the Alpine S3 Lab. Attending and hosting Alpine Transnational Live Learning Sessions and workshops as part of the Policy Pilot Live Scenario are also tasks of the Wirtschaftsagentur. The Policy Pilot Live Scenario Reporting is the implementation of an international platform to discuss about selected topics and involve relevant stakeholders from Burgenland.

For the future the objective of Wirtschaftsagentur Burgenland is to establish new projects in relevant EU-Programmes and bring together the stakeholders to become partner of innovative projects. The relevant research und innovation actors from our region try to use synergies and cooperation also with international partners and networks in a very efficient way.

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SECTION 2 - MAIN RESULTS ON THE PATH FOR A SHARED ALPINE R&I APPROACH

IDENTIFICATION OF A SHARED R&I PATH

In the context of WPT1, task leader of the **Blueprint elaboration**, the Ministry of Education Science and Sport of Slovenia, has been involved in an extensive **consultation process with all relevant stakeholders**, namely A-RING project partners, Advisory Board members, representatives of the triple helix and the Action Group 1 of EUSALP, with the aim to collect feedback on the second draft of the **Blueprint for Alpine Region Research and Innovation Shared Agenda (SRIA)**, the ultimate WPT1 output. The Blueprint was well accepted as a comprehensive guide for developing a SRIA for the Alpine Region addressing important topics including the engagement of all relevant stakeholders and adopting a proactive and visionary transnational approach in dealing with the challenges and opportunities in the area, studying key trends in the common areas of interest.

The Blueprint draws upon the extensive A-RING work in designing and testing consultation and collaboration methodologies. It also benefits from good practices resulting from the work of a series of other Interreg projects, JRC services and other relevant initiatives. The final version will be available in April 2022.

Within WPT1, two additional deliverables are publicly available on the A-RING project website:

- ✓ **R&I Laboratory**: this report provides understanding on how to strengthen interaction among the triple helix R&I actors in order to foster trans-national and trans-regional cooperation in the Alpine Region;
- ✓ **A-RING Blueprint workshop**: this report provides an analysis and evaluation of the current and prospective cooperation within the Alpine Region.

CO-CREATION PROCESS WITH ACADEMIA AND SMES

Within WPT2, **5 Alpine Transnational Live Learning (ATLL)** events were organized:

1. Wirtschaftsagentur Burgenland GmbH: virtual study tour on Burgenland's Innovation Eco-System and the Research and Innovation Strategy.

2. Lombardy Region: illustration of experiences on Artificial Intelligence adoption and Industry Trends.

3. Ministry of Education, Science and Sport: presentation of the Slovenian research and innovation ecosystem, with a focus on sustainable innovation.

4. Hochschule Konstanz University of Applied Sciences: the A-RING Mobility Day two days conference was centered around highlighting key R&I strategy and implementation plans to tackle mobility challenges in the Alpine Region. In this context, two webinars were held: Successful S3 implementation (WPT2) and From Ideation to Implementation (WPT3).

5. Polymeris, French competitiveness cluster for rubbers, plastics: presentation of "Campus du numerique", a place dedicated to support digital transformation for SMEs.

In addition, within WPT2 a joint transnational approach between PAs and OBs in S3 Lab will be tested on topics identified in WPT1 and taken from the Blueprint OT1- **Policy Pilot Live Scenario**. Such exercise will result in a Transnational report, composed of in 3 Regional factsheets, focusing on **policy piloting tested on strategic/common R&I topics** through a shared approach and common actions tailored on territorial regional/national context.

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ALPINE REGION BASED RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Within WPT3, PPs were involved in the organization of Matchmaking Parleys (M-P) and Seed Lab (S-L) Innovative R&I Actions events.

The **Smart Specialization Strategy (S3)** is the general focus part of the entire A-RING project and thus core element within WPT3. The overall target of M-Ps and S-Ls was to gain an understanding of the needs of SMEs in Research and Innovation (R&I) in relation to the S3 of the regions within the Alpine Region (AR). The aim was to promote **transnational collaboration among research and innovation centres, universities, and business sector (BS) representatives** on uptake of existing R&I results in AR-related main topics. The events were organized (virtually) in five different countries: Austria, Germany, Italy, France, Slovenia.

In the framework of the A-RING Mobility Day, a first webinar was organized by the **Hochschule Kempten University of Applied Sciences** and **Hochschule Konstanz University of Applied Sciences** with the aim to present the methodology of and the Smart Specialization approach, National Results deriving from M-P and S-L events, as well as a summary of Alpine Results. A second webinar was organized and hosted virtually, with the aim to illustrate participants possibilities for funding transnational projects and to provide them with hands-on overview on how to engage partners and build a successful project consortium.

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SECTION 3 – A-RING LATEST EVENTS

➤ Transnational Matchmaking Seed Lab (online event): 15th November 2021

Held in partnership between the Hochschule Kempten University of Applied Sciences and Hochschule Konstanz University of Applied Sciences, the virtual A-RING Transnational Matchmaking Seed Lab aimed to connect participants with other stakeholders of the Alpine Region and stimulate transnational collaborations.

Registered participants had the unique opportunity to **exchange current problems and project ideas** and to **generate collaborative ideas during the Guided Design Thinking Workshop**. The event was a combination of the Matchmaking parleys with the Seed Lab methodology. Participants were pre-matched in small groups of five, based on their expressed interest for the topics of **sustainability, digitalization and mobility**. In addition, during the last part of the event, participants were offered the opportunity for **speed dating**, in order to get to know more about each other's project ideas and interest for collaboration.

➤ R&I Alpine Region Talk (online event): 23rd November 2021

In the framework of the project A-RING project, the LP- University of Milan, organized the “R&I Alpine Region Talk”, an **international virtual conference** during which **young professionals** presented their work and experiences on the following Alpine strategic topics:

- **Smart Mobility** – Connecting the Alpine Region
- **Green Energies** – Solutions for sustainable communities;
- **Industry 4.0** – Smarter processes for quality production.

The aim of the conference was to gather a **fresh perspective on the ways research and private sector's young professionals** are tackling crucial issues related to the **sustainable development of the Alpine Space**, and how the interaction between businesses, research centres and public administrations is carried out, highlighting possible obstacles and solutions.

➤ Free A-RING Project Funding Live Webinar: 9th December 2021

How to fund a transnational (research-) project? And how do I build a fundable and successful project consortium?

These questions were answered during the **free A-RING Project Funding Live-Webinar**. As innovation and research projects focus more and more on transnational co-creation, **Philip Pfaller (BayFOR)** shows possibilities for funding transnational projects and the **IST Institute of the HTWG Konstanz** gives a hands-on overview on how to engage partners and build a successful project consortium.

The Webinar was organized and hosted by the A-RING partners Hochschule Kempten University of Applied Sciences and Hochschule Konstanz University of Applied Sciences.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, WE INVITE YOU TO VISIT PROJECT WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

A-RING website: <https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/a-ring/en/home>

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/a-ring-interreg-alpine-space-49836a1b8

Twitter: [@RingAlpine](https://twitter.com/RingAlpine)

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THE A-RING CONSORTIUM AND PROJECT DETAILS

Project partners	Country
University of Milan	Italy
Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences	Austria
Ministry of Education, Science and Sport	Slovenia
University of Ljubljana (Faculty of Public Administration)	Slovenia
Hochschule Kempten University of Applied Sciences	Germany
Hochschule Konstanz University of Applied Sciences	Germany
Regionalmanagement Burgenland GmbH	Austria
Industrial enterprises Association of Belluno Province	Italy
Polymeris, French competitiveness cluster for rubbers, plastics and composites industry	France
USI Università della Svizzera Italiana	Switzerland
Area Science Park	Italy

PROJECT DETAILS

Funding

Total eligible budget: 1.350.583 EUR

ERDF co-financing: 1.147.996 EUR

Lead Partner

University of Milan – UNIMONT CRC GeSDiMont

Project Manager Giuseppe De Luca

E-mail: giuseppe.deluca@unimi.it

University of Milan (UMIL)

Duration

Project start date: 01/10/2019

Project end date: 30/06/2022

Communication support

ALOT s.r.l.

E-mail: a-ring@alot.it

PRIVACY UPDATE - GENERAL PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR).

We are updating our mailing list in accordance with the new data protection regulations which come into force on 25 May 2018 in compliance with the Alpine Space Programme website legal notice (<https://www.alpine-space.eu/legal-notice>). Please note that we have never given our list to anyone, marketing operator or other, and that the data in our possession may contain only name, organization, e-mail address and sometimes also phone number, used only to address updates to you regarding information and news and / or events and invitations. If you want to stay in touch with us and be updated on various initiatives, you do not need to do anything, but if you do not want to receive our information, you can send an e-mail reply simply indicating "no thanks" in the subject, and your e-mail address will be deleted from our mailing list. We thank you for your understanding and cooperation and we cordially greet you. This publication only reflects the author's views and that the programme authorities are not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

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