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Final Report

Alpine Space Programme Impact Assessment

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Background of the study

Transnational cooperation is a complex, multi-level governance process in which a broad variety of sectoral and regional stakeholders are included. The European Territorial Co-operation Programme Alpine Space 2007-2013 supports transnational cooperation to foster territorial development and cohesion. Its overall aim is to increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of the cooperation area. It addresses this aim with three priorities: Competitiveness and Attractiveness, Accessibility and Connectivity, and Environment and Risk Prevention. Two calls have been carried out and 25 projects are being implemented. Although the programme has been found well on the way, programme bodies raised questions regarding efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of project results, specifically the issues of projects contribution to programme objectives and the potential for advanced project steering. One of the findings of the critical reflection was that the assessment of projects concentrates on short term aspects mainly: short term implementation, short term results and short term effects.

Objectives of the study and methodology

Based on these discussions the programme developed the tasks of this study. The Impact Assessment Study has three objectives: (1) to provide a thorough analysis of long-term impacts of projects co-funded by the 'Alpine Space' Programme and assess their compliance with the set programme and project objectives; (2) to find out if there may be varying degrees of success in this respect; and (3) to put particular attention on the variables explaining the effects of the projects and deviations from the objectives. The research was conducted according to a methodology developed by Metis and based on the broad ongoing discussions about the 'attribution gap' between outputs and impacts and the issue of appropriate approaches and models for the evaluation of cohesion policy. Based on a selection of ten case study research was undertaken with a methodological mix of desk and field research between February and April 2010.

Characteristics of identified project impacts

The identified impacts were mostly intangible and related to enhanced knowledge and experience. For their identification specific know-how and effort is needed. The few tangible impacts occurred mainly in projects implemented in transport related interventions fields. Further impacts of INTERREG IIIB projects can be expected during the next years as. Only in rare cases unexpected impacts were identified. Impacts across priorities were also rare and very that general that they do not really address objectives at priority or programme level. Leverage effects were found in three cases. It was important in the context of transnational cooperation to look not only for leverage effects in terms of financial resources but also in terms of human resources.

A series of – mostly soft – success factors were identified at project level being beneficial for the attainment of long-term impacts. These comprise thematic competence, political backing, the quality of cooperation and the quality of project management. Success factors were found in all analysed projects, even in cases with little traceable impacts which could be interpreted also as an indication for avoiding risks and problems during implementation and thus, avoiding changes and innovation. Highly important for reaching impacts is the involvement of decision-makers and political backing. Potential for improvement was identified related to signed agreements with future users of project outputs.

Project typology related to steps in the policy cycle

In order to bring more clarity into the nature of long-term impacts which can be expected from transnational projects a new typology was developed with a bottom-up approach. This typology differentiates three project types related to (1) strategic policy development; (2) exploration and piloting; and (3) policy implementation. A table is provided giving an overview on the main types of activities and conditions for policy development which are related to each project type.

Necessary activities for the transition from one type to another are analysed. This project typology is an essential tool for the identification of the policy context of the project which is necessary for a better anticipation of project impacts.

Relation of project impacts and programme impacts

In order to improve the understanding of this relation project activities were linked to objectives at priority and programme level. This was exemplified with projects from priority 2 and showed in comprehensive figures, which proved to be helpful for the understanding of complex relations. This analysis showed a gap between the project and the programme level which makes the identification of programme impacts challenging. Existing programme tools does not support to close this gap. In order to reduce this gap, the better consideration of potential actors, contexts and improved programme steering is suggested.

Analysis of existing tools for the anticipation and steering of project impacts

The analysis of existing tools for the anticipation and steering of project impacts shows a series of activities undertaken by the Joint Technical Secretariat. These comprise a comprehensive assessment approach for the identification of (potential) results in the application phase and during the implementation; exchange with national contact points; the use of a tool called 'project overview' which highlights special achievements of the project; improved guidance to projects; thematic events and a new 'cooperation platforms'.

All in all, the programme is aware of the importance of long-term impacts but still rather reluctant to deal with them at the priority and programme level. Important steps towards improved steering of results and programme impacts have been taken. However, operational steps towards systematic preparation and processing of information on results and impacts from the former period have not been undertaken yet. And the system of result indicators is rather poorly developed.

Conclusions and recommendations

The main conclusions of the study are, that main impacts at programme level are related to the development of policies which shall create policy changes; that impacts are mostly intangible and difficult to identify; that the currently applied tools leave a substantial gap between the project and the programme level which reduces the possibility to make the programme achievements visible.

Following these conclusions, recommendations are subsumed in five messages:

- Enhance programme impacts and reduce the gap between project and programme level
- Improve project impacts through recognition of its context
- Develop a clear policy role of the programme
- Prepare exhaustive actor maps for better programme and project steering
- Strengthen the accountability and steering of the programme

For the reduction of the gap between the project and programme level it is suggested, that project shall elaborate the logical link between project objectives and objectives at priority and programme level more clearly. The programme should give guidance on this and raise the awareness of project applicants in this regard. The final report shall clearly elaborate the actual use of the project outputs, the actual users and the related conditions and obstacles. The programme shall elaborate a more comprehensive system of result indicators with improved links to the programme level. Exemplarily, a few suggestions are provided.

In order to improve project impacts and their anticipation, the context of the projects should be better taken into account. For this the potential users and beneficiaries should be clearly identified which would also allow better focussed strategies for networking and dissemination activities. During the first selection phase the programme should help applicants to identify the appropriate project type for their project idea. The use of the project typology in this stage would give the project activities and its objectives a clearer profile. Each project shall address directly one phase of the policy cycle. At the beginning, also the political relevance of the partnership has to be verified in terms of the institutional role of the partners in the respective policy field. During the second selection phase the programme should thoroughly check the partnership, included types of actors and their specific roles in the national context. Most important is the consistency of the competencies in the partnership with the project type. Awareness should be raised, that not all stakeholders have to be necessarily integrated as partners. Beyond this, thorough information on the status of the policy context has to be given by the projects (e.g. on achieved agreements, legal and institutional challenges and actual policy agendas.

For a better steering the programme should clearly define its role as a policy promoter. While leading and supporting the project promoters it has to be aware of its capacity to act under the specific context conditions. In doing so, the programme can further strengthen the innovative aspects of its cooperation culture which are being prepared based on the Paper 'Improving Project Quality'. The programme should improve the communication towards project applicants and raise their awareness about specifics of impacts in the context of transnational cooperation. The understanding of the difference between outputs and results has to be underlined. Besides improved guidance, more direct contact between the programme and the projects would contribute to this. The projects have to enhance information about beneficiaries and the usefulness of the project outputs.

In order to better steer project impacts the programme should prepare exhaustive maps of actors in the intervention fields of the projects. A comprehensive map of actors is particularly important in case of project outputs determined for the market. Institutions, networks, companies etc. relevant for the realisation of impacts and for reaching the programme objectives have to be identified. The actor maps can serve as basis for the assessment of the partnerships and could be further specified for single projects together with the project lead partner which would positively challenge the project idea and its implementation.

In order to strengthen the accountability of the programme it should prepare a programme evaluation on the one hand and an operational evaluation on the other hand. The programme evaluation should identify the programme impacts and develop a comprehensive system of result indicators. It could be focused on selected, strategically relevant topics. The operational evaluation should serve for a better steering of project and programme impacts. Based on a methodological guidance detailed and regular checks of the progress of project implementation towards impacts should be undertaken by independent evaluators. They should be used as a kind of 'early alert system' by the programme. However, their use for intensified controls would foil the intention of better programme steering. Analyses from the project level should be generalised and implications for the steering at programme level identified.

The study closes with a point on the possible relation of identified success factors and to the avoidance of risks and problems which might lead to the avoidance of changes and innovation. Although tasks at the transnational level are challenging, innovation is crucial. An evaluation could also identify the potential of more effective innovative actions in the long run.

1 Introduction

Transnational cooperation is a complex, multi-level governance process in which a broad variety of sectoral and regional stakeholders are included. The fact, that the Alpine Space Programme comprises also non-member states enhances the complexity of governance even more.

The European Territorial Co-operation Programme Alpine Space 2007-2013 supports transnational cooperation to foster territorial development and cohesion. Its overall aim is to increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of the cooperation area. It addresses this aim with three priorities: Competitiveness and Attractiveness, Accessibility and Connectivity, and Environment and Risk Prevention. Two calls have been carried out and 25 projects are being implemented. The tender document states, that "although it is generally conceded that the programme is well on its way questions were raised regarding efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of project results." And the question was raised, how programme bodies can ensure that the projects really contribute to the programme objectives. Further issues related among others to the potential for advancement in project steering and the use of project results and to project generation and assessment.

"One of the findings of the critical reflection was that the assessment of projects concentrates on short term aspects mainly: short term implementation, short term results and short term effects. Anything that goes beyond the average project duration of three years is out of scope of the project assessment. It can only be vaguely assessed and needn't be proved in the projects' reports." The tasks of this commissioned study were developed on the basis of the results of this discussion which stated a need for "a more strategic approach towards programme implementation [which] would require instruments to assess and assure the medium term impacts of interventions and have project holders to better consider these in their application for co-funding."

The strengthening of the strategic approach was a major point discussed during the preparation of the Alpine Space Programme 2007-2013. This discussion took place in the context of partly reframing Cohesion policy through their contributions to the implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies. Beyond this, the Third Report on Economic and Social Cohesion Report and the Community Strategic Guidelines added another cornerstone, namely territorial cohesion. The prospective study (Bausch et al. 2005, section 2) discusses the implications of this concept and highlights it as a complementary concept to economic and social cohesion. Issues of territorial cohesion and strategic projects are also discussed by Metis (2009). While building mainly on projects from the programme period 2000-2006 this impact assessment has to be aware of the stronger focus on innovation and competitiveness and on a strategic dimension of projects in the current programme period. "The programme shall concentrate on finding common and innovative solutions to concrete stakeholders' needs requiring a transnational approach." (ETC Programme Alpine Space 2007-2013, p.35)

The stronger strategic focus of projects shall allow a concentration of Cohesion policy funds which is supported through the use of well developed tools and methods during the whole implementation process both at programme and project level. Learning enhances adequate tools and methods and can be supported by evaluations and studies. This impact assessment study can build on a series of comprehensive studies undertaken during the last years and know-how built through previous transnational cooperation. More clarity about the character of mid-term and long-term impacts, suggestions for improved impact anticipation and project steering shall support the learning processes in this complex trans-national cooperation programme.

The objectives of the study are

- To analyse the impacts of projects co-funded by the 'Alpine Space' Programme and assess their compliance with the set programme and project objectives;
- To find out if there may be varying degrees of success in this respect; and
- To put particular attention on the variables explaining the effects of the projects and deviations from the objectives.

The results of the study shall be used to improve project evaluation in the ETC Programme 'Alpine Space' 2007-2013 to allow for better anticipation of possible project impacts and to improve project monitoring to optimise the contribution of co-funded projects to the overall aims of the programme.

Consequently, the impact assessment study at hand has to answer three main questions:

1) What are the impacts of the projects that were respectively are co-funded by the 'Alpine Space' Programme?
2) How can the project evaluation be improved in order to better anticipate the possible project impacts?
3) How can the programme better steer the projects?

The research was conducted according to a methodology developed by Metis and based on the broad ongoing discussions about the 'attribution gap' between outputs and impacts and the issue of appropriate approaches and models for the evaluation of cohesion policy. The background of the methodology, the used tools and the selection of projects are presented in Annex 1. Research was undertaken in two steps. First, the character of results and impacts as well as the pathways to reach them were analysed for ten selected projects including their predecessor or follow-up projects. Seven projects were from the INTERREG IIIB Programme 'Alpine Space' 2000-2006 and three from the new programme period 2007-2013. Second, the findings at the level of projects were compared and generalised focussing on the three questions of the study at hand.

The methodology consisted of a mix of desk and field-research. Desk research entailed on one hand a series of studies, evaluations, programme documents and technical documents related to project assessment and project quality as listed in the references section at the end of this report. On the other hand, project documentation such as application forms, published reports and technical final reports were analysed. Field-research was conducted in March and April 2010. Around 25 interviews were conducted with lead partners and partners of selected projects and – in April 2010 – one expert interview the Joint Technical Secretariat of the 'Alpine Space' Programme 2007-2013. Except for one face-to-face interview, all interviews were telephone interviews. These were partly supplemented by additional written contacts to clarify open questions emerging during the writing up. Details about respondents are listed in the project analyses in Annex 2.

Some caveats should be borne in mind when reading this report. First, the study at hand is not an evaluation report. It is meant for learning more about the ways cooperation projects in the Alpine Space come to short-term impacts (= results) and to long-term impacts. The empirical basis of the study are selected successful projects, mainly from the last programme period 2000-2006. Their follow-up projects were also taken into account. Nevertheless, these project case study are not evaluations of the projects. Sometimes figures were mentioned in interviews which verification would go beyond the scope of this study. Second, due to limited resources only a few project partners could be interviewed which should be sufficient to identify the most important impacts. Further interviews could bring further impacts to light. Third, when analysing the links between project impacts and programme objectives the ETC Programme was taken as reference document although most analysed projects were form the INTERREG IIIB programme. As priority 2 of the last and the current programme has main features in common, this is also the main reason why priority 2 was selected for the detailed analysis of this link.

The structure of the remainder of this report is as follows. Section 2 presents the main findings on results and impacts including main success factors and potential obstacles. It closes with some observations and learnings made during the research phase. In section 3 a project typology is developed which shall allow for more clarity about the nature of long-term impacts which can actually be expected from transnational projects. Depending on the project type the

project impacts are analysed which were found in the case studies. This analysis follows a few basic assumptions, which are:

- Impact assessment has to do justice to the specific characteristics of transnational cooperation projects;
- Impact assessment at project level is not feasible without an analysis of project short-term impacts, i.e. of results;
- A careful selection of projects from the Alpine Space Programme 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 shall be the basis for the impact assessment;
- Assumptions and hypotheses about the direct and indirect use of project outputs are in the centre of the analysis;
- The analysis has to be open for unexpected results and impacts.

Section 4 relates project impacts logically to objectives at priority and programme level. This is exemplified to projects from priority 2 for which detailed figures were developed to visualise these links. Section 5 provides an analysis of tools actually used for the anticipation and steering of project results and impacts. Section 6 draws conclusions from the main research findings and provides recommendations for improved anticipation and steering of impacts. The report concludes with a reference list.

Details about the methodology applied can be found in Annex 1. Full information on the case studies is presented in Annex 2.

Before going into details of the study, the project team would like to thank Alessandro Valenza for the fruitful cooperation and his contributions at the meetings of the Steering Group for this study. Especially the detailed ideas about recommendations were very inspiring.

2 Main findings on results and impacts at project level

This section gives an overview – first – on the main characteristics of results and impacts and – second – on the crucial factors leading from project activities and outputs to results and impacts. For this end, major success factors and obstacles found in the project analyses are presented. Finally, some observations from desk research and fieldwork on projects are summed up because of its relevant for the analysis of results and impacts.

2.1 Main characteristics of results and impacts

This section is based on the analysis of results and impacts found in selected INTERREG IIIB projects. Table 1 gives a first overview.

Table 1: Main characteristics of results and impacts of INTERREG IIIB projects

Project acronym	Main results[1]	Main impacts[2]
INTERREG IIIB projects		
ALPLAKES (priority 1)	**Enhanced knowledge** about common features of alpine lakes and criteria for ecotourism among stakeholders and partners **Exemplary implementation of new policies for ecotourism** (originally not planned) **Network still active** in the framework of the follow-up project **Technical documents are used for data collection** in follow-up project	**Enhanced knowledge on criteria for ecotourism** among policy-makers and private stakeholders like NGOs, SMEs etc.
ALPPS (priority 1)	**Use of outputs by EIC Centres, chambers and SMEs** **Enhanced knowledge** about trans-national contracts among SMEs **Submission of bids abroad by pilot companies** (two won) and gathered **know-how**	**Enhanced awareness of SMEs and public authorities** with regard to bidding for trans-national contracts (possibilities, limitations) More than half of the pilot companies **(SMEs) continue to bid for trans-national public contracts** **Application for DG Enterprise project** on public procurement networks
AlpCheck (priority 2)	**Know-how** about traffic monitoring and pollution in the broader network of public administration and transport planners (also through pilot projects) **Cooperation experience** with Alpine Observatory, Alpine Convention and transport ministries in Austria, Italy and Slovenia	**Improved traffic monitoring in parts of north-west Italy** **Planned impact of the follow-up project** AlpCheck2: Improved basis for transport planning in whole Alpine Space area Enhanced project partnership in follow-up project
AlpFRail (priority 2)	**Pilot projects and organisational models known** by rail operators and transport associations **Extended train infrastructure** in one case **A series of pilot trains accepted** by rail operators and transport associations	**A series of pilot trains are regularly implemented** by rail operators **Shift of estimated 75,000 trucks from road to rail yearly**

[1] The information given in this column is generalised from the project analyses for the purpose of analysis. Information at project level was mostly more specific (seen Annex 2).

[2] The same as for results is valid for impacts.

Project acronym	Main results[1]	Main impacts[2]
MONITRAF (priority 2)	**Use of output for further development of the monitoring system** in the follow-up project iMONITRAF **Enhanced knowledge** about traffic situation **Use of normative database** for justification of heavy transport in Tyrol	(Reduction of air pollution, noise and accidents in the area of Tyrol
ClimChAlp (priority 3)	**Use of networks** by follow-up project and other stakeholders **Enhanced knowledge** related to climate change consequences and dealing with them (in spatial planning, risk analysis and management) among policy-makers and professional audience, relevant for follow-up projects	**Improved knowledge and awareness** of the state of art regarding climate change consequences in the Alps (methods, models, data)
CulturALP (priority 3)	**Pilot projects' experience and data base** on cultural heritage used by partners and for policy design (mainly in urban planning) **Enhanced knowledge** about cultural heritage among local authorities **Information products used for research and education** at higher schools in Milano and Avignon	**Use of developed decision support system** in the follow-up project CAPACities **Stronger focus on cultural heritage especially in urban planning concepts**

Table 1 shows that from the listed results of the selected INTERREG IIIB projects six are related to **enhanced know-how and experience** mostly content-specific, partly also related to cooperation. In five of seven projects **experience gained in pilot activities** play an important role, not only for getting know-how but also for using this further (mentioned six times). The other entries are related to the **use of specific outputs**, among them two cases where the further use of the existing network in the follow-up project is explicitly mentioned.

The **main impacts** of projects in **priority 1** are **enhanced knowledge on criteria for ecotourism** among policy-makers and private stakeholders in Alplakes and **enhanced awareness and know-how about possibilities and limitations for trans-national bidding** in ALPPS at the level of SMEs and public authorities. In the latter project this know-how led to the **application for an EU-wide project** on the issue of public procurement and SMEs continue to follow trans-national calls for bids.

In priority 2 the main impacts are **improved traffic monitoring** in north-western Italy (AlpCheck), **reduction of air pollution, noise and accidents** in the area of Tyrol (MONITRAF) and the **yearly shift of a quite large amount of trucks from road to rail** mainly based on the regular implementation of developed pilot trains along the North-South axis in the Alpine Space (AlpFRail).

In priority 3 improved **knowledge and awareness related to climate change consequences** in the Alps was identified in ClimChAlp and especially a **stronger focus on cultural heritage in urban planning concepts** (CulturALP).

The results of the analysis of some further impact categories are rather scarce and contribute to a better understanding only to a limited degree:

- **Unexpected impacts:** After some rearrangements of the project activities Alplakes showed a result to develop a common approach for the support of ecotourism which is likely to lead to long-term impact. In AlpCheck an unexpected impact was identified through the use of gathered know-how for a new cross-border cooperation project on

traffic management between Austria and Italy. In the AlpFRail project unexpected outputs led to unexpected impacts. The project was originally concentrated on piloting activities and ended in two unexpected pilot trains and a series of newly realised trains for freight.

- **Impacts across priorities:** Impacts across priorities were only identified in two transport projects. Both projects contribute also to improved environmental quality in a very general sense (reduction of air pollution and noise). AlpFRail contributes also to improved competitiveness in a general sense. The identified impacts are so broad that they do not really address objectives at priority or programme level.
- **Leverage effects**[3]**:** In three projects leverage effects were identified. AlpFRail mobilised both financial and human resources and capacities, the latter especially in the context of new cooperations with other INTERREG IIIB projects. ClimChAlp mobilised new partners and their expertise for the follow-up projects AdaptAlp and CLISP. CulturALP managed to mobilise financial resources at municipality level for the renovation of older buildings.

➔ All in all, found impacts were mostly intangible and related to enhanced knowledge and experience. Some tangible impacts occurred in projects from priority 2 'Development of sustainable transport systems with particular consideration of efficiency, inter-modality and better accessibility'[4]. In this regard remarkable is also the impact from the cultural heritage project where a stronger focus on cultural heritage is put in urban planning concepts.

➔ Specific know-how and effort is needed to identify and deal with intangible impacts in an effective way.

➔ Further impacts of INTERREG IIIB projects can be expected during the next years as – except for the project CulturALP – all analysed projects ended in 2007 or 2008.

➔ The project ALPPS shows clearly the limitations through different national regulations for public procurement. Consequently, the gained experience shall be brought to the European level.

2.2 Main success factors and potential obstacles for reaching project impacts

In order to learn more about the factors which are relevant for reaching project results and impacts projects, the information gathered with developed assessment criteria is analysed in detail for the seven INTERREG IIIB projects. The criteria equal opportunities and sustainable development were found to be too broadly surveyed and thus not relevant for this analysis. Based on this, the main success factors are extracted.

Project management

- The timing of project implementation was not an issue. Some obstacles occurred and were mostly overcome (they are basically covered by the analysis of obstacles in this section).
- A few projects had distinctive features in project management
  - AlpCheck: network approach in managing the partnership, quality control through the High Level Advisory Board
  - AlpFRail: frequent and regular partner meetings, strong leadership of the project management, frequent visits of rail operators and transport facilities

[3] During the research the definition of leverage effects was broadened so that leverage effects related to human resources are also included. The detailed definition is provided in the Annex 2 on methodology.

[4] Priority 2 in the ETC Programme Alpine Space is called ‚Accessibility and Connectivity'.

- ClimChAlp: externalisation of the project management proved to be effective, in a very strict way the project management allowed smooth communication flows and continuous interaction between work package leaders, the trans-national project management an d the lead partner, in a partnership of 22 partners this was very important.

➔ Thematic leadership is important for reaching impacts.

Composition and features of the partnerships

- The partners are competent in the relevant fields. Potential users were included in the project partnership. The needs of potential users were identified.
- Only in three out of seven projects the lead partner had a coordination function in regional development programmes. Contrary to this, it is worth mentioning that this was the case in all three analysed ETC projects.
- In general, the shares of public authorities in the partnerships were very high.

Political backing and inclusion of stakeholders

- All projects had some kind of political commitment. They involved decision-makers directly in the partnership or indirectly through networking and dissemination activities.
- Their involvement was highly important for the solution of problems during the implementation and for reaching impacts:
  - AlpCheck: lack of data was overcome through involvement of ministries
  - AlpFRail: solution of problems in regional and local contexts during implementation of pilot trains
  - Alplakes: support of use of ecotourism indicators
  - ClimChAlp: common strategic paper responded directly to the needs of policy-makers enhanced the importance of this output and its further use
  - CulturALP: local authorities highly important for reaching impacts in urban planning concepts
  - MONITRAF: regional authority in Tyrol important for reaching impacts in traffic control
- Cooperation with ministries can be highlighted specifically in a few projects
  - AlpCheck: Cooperation with Austrian, Slovenian and Italian transport ministries (AlpCheck) and with the Zurich group indirectly via the Austrian ministry
  - ClimChAlp: Closely related with ministries and authorities in the field of environment from Austria, France and Italy, especially close cooperation with different experts in the Bavarian ministry; direct involvement of decision-makers, high-level officials and ministers at final conference
- No political agreements were signed in the analysed projects.

➔ The involvement of decision-makers and political backing are highly important for the smooth implementation of pilot projects and for reaching impacts.

➔ Projects have not signed any political agreements.

Networking

- All projects had to undertake networking and dissemination activities. In some projects networking activities had high importance for coming to impacts:
  - AlpCheck: Networking with the Alpine Convention and the Alpine Observatory led to a stronger cooperation in the follow-up project. Another aspect in this project were the networks based on transnational and cross-border cooperation experience in the regions Veneto and Carinthia.
  - AlpFRail: Stakeholders who were prepared to implement the pilot trains and to maintain them later on were addressed and acquired through networking and dissemination activities.
  - Alplakes: A continuation of the network could be reached through the follow-up project SILMAS.
  - ClimChAlp: Networks which elaborate gained know-how further were built up.
  - CulturALP: Networking with local authorities was crucial both for the implementation of pilot activities and for reaching impacts in the region of Lower Austria, where urban development concepts take more into account the local cultural heritage
- Networking of partners was used for different aims. It could be focused on other cooperation projects including follow-up projects (e.g. ClimChAlp, AlpCheck) and/or on dissemination and information to stakeholders (e.g. AlpFRail). Frequently, these two aspects are not easy to differentiate.

➔ Networking with relevant stakeholders is crucial for impacts, especially if they are involved in pilot activities. Impacts can be spread broader when project partners work in more networks (e.g. AlpCheck).

➔ Networking with institutions with an agenda in the Alpine Space is of interest towards further trans-national cooperation as it includes 'the highest' governance level in the Alpine Space.

Territorial dimension

- With their partnership compositions project reach a broad geographical coverage.
- Partly, projects focused on specific types of areas, such as rural areas (ClimChAlp), densely populated areas with large lakes (Alplakes). The transport projects focused on the main transport axes through the Alps.
- In few cases the focus of impacts is more concentrated in the region of the lead partner although not limited to it (e.g. AlpCheck)

Capitalisation and synergies

- From the seven analysed INTERREG IIIB projects three built on long-standing experience with trans-national projects in the Alpine Space (AlpCheck, AlpFRail, ClimChAlp).
- Project outputs are available on websites.
- Among those, which started without capitalising experience with trans-national cooperation are also both projects from priority 1 'Promotion of the Alpine Space as a competitive and attractive living and economic space in the scope of a polycentric spatial development in the EU'.

➔ Specific attention should be put on capacity building in the new field of competitiveness where long-standing networks have not yet been built up.

Innovation-oriented approach

- This is not the place to assess the projects in detail. However, analysing information about the innovation-oriented approach two factors were found to be important: On the one hand, this is the innovativeness of the transnational cooperation (fully new, partly new partnership), on the other hand the innovativeness of the specific content.
- Some projects combine in an interesting way the innovativeness of both aspects (e.g. AlpCheck, AlpFRail, ClimChAlp and CulturAlp). A well elaborated and aligned content with a partnership to which especially the transnational aspect of cooperation is new.

➔ A well aligned innovative content of the project implemented in a partnership with some experience in cooperation has a higher potential for long-term impacts in the sense that they seem to be able to realise the use of outputs in a more comprehensive in way in the long run.

Integrated approach

- The analysis of the ways cooperation was implemented across administrative and national borders show two aspects of responsibilities. Besides the required overall responsibility for each work package, partners in the piloting regions are usually responsible for the implementation of pilot activities. These rather complex project management structures can be understood as 'network management' and bring together professional management and openness to partners' needs.
- In most projects activities were adapted to the needs of participating regions. An exception is the project ALPPS in which activities of all partners were basically the same, namely the collection and dissemination of tenders in the Alpine Space. A major reason for this is the same responsibility of partners which were all Euro-Info Centres.
- Vertical cooperation had different functions in project implementation. For projects which develop a new strategic basis for their activities it is beneficial to get backing from the national level and to embed their strategies in existing developments (e.g. ClimChAlp, AlpCheck). Projects which activities are very specific and implemented in pilot projects are frequently more in contact with the regional and local level (e.g. CulturAlp, Alplakes)
- Horizontal cooperation is above all relevant at a technical and practical level, e.g. for getting data, for securing high quality and took place at national or regional levels. However, not all analysed projects included different sectors during implementation. In some cases this might even not be of high importance (e.g. ALPPS, AlpFRail).

➔ Network management is important for strong cooperation, communication and exchange among the partners.

➔ Cooperation with ministries is important especially in cases where strategies are developed.

➔ Cooperation with the local and regional level is important for successful piloting activities.

➔ Horizontal cooperation is above all relevant at a technical and practical level. Its relevance depends on the addressed thematic field.

Dealing with obstacles

- In general obstacles occurred with regard to three aspects: related to project activities; related to formal issues and project management; and related to external hindrances. The first two could be mostly overcome with the support of the project management, whereby the third type of obstacles could not be overcome.

- Obstacles related to project activities comprised mainly difficulties which occurred during the development and implementation of piloting activities although only a few projects reported these difficulties. Initially, AlpCheck had problems to get traffic data and to find carriers for testing monitoring devices. This had some effects on the schedule of other activities. The same difficulty occurred in ClimChAlp. In both cases, these obstacles were overcome partly with the use of other data sources.
- Obstacles related to project and financial management were report quite frequently. Financial management was an issue with regard to unexpected costs, delayed certifications (especially in Italy), dealing with different procedures in participating regions and sharing trans-national management costs. Smooth cooperation and communication were sometimes hindered by language difficulties, staff changes, the need to set-up a common understanding of activities in the partnership and the necessity to adapt time schedules to unexpected changes in the project.
- Obstacles related to external hindrances were mentioned in three projects and could not be overcome as a trans-national cooperation project does not have the competence for this. AlpCheck had to deal with the issue of data ownership which ended up with the decision, that the developed Information System is only accessible after access is authorised by the region of Veneto. One side-result of ALPPS is the knowledge that a unified tool (e.g. single database of tenders below the threshold of € 200,000 in Europe) for the provision of information on tenders is too expensive to be developed in a cooperation project. An obstacle for MONITRAF was the fact that southern Italian regions were not fully included in the project which would make sense as transit traffic is highly relevant also for them. A similar issue came up in the AlpCheck project (transport axis to the North Sea).[5]

➔ Close contact with stakeholders needed for the implementation of piloting activities is important.
➔ Strong project management is necessary to deal with unexpected obstacles.
➔ The coping with external obstacles which occur because of specific regulations is not in the competence of a transnational cooperation project (e.g. data ownership, different public procurement laws among Member States). Projects should show how they handle this obstacle in the best way for the project results.

To conclude, the main success factors for reaching project impacts identified through the analysis of selected projects were:

- Well aligned innovative content implemented in a partnership with cooperation experience (outputs realised in a more comprehensive in way)
- Thematic leadership and strong networks;
- The involvement of decision-makers and political backing;
- Cooperation with ministries especially in cases where strategies are developed;
- Close cooperation with the local and regional and other stakeholders level for successful piloting activities;
- Horizontal cooperation at a technical and practical level, relevance dependent on the addressed thematic field;
- Network approach to management is important for strong cooperation, communication and exchange among the partners
- Strong project management is necessary to deal with unexpected obstacles

[5] Also the ETC project has to deal with an external obstacle as the formal integration of the Swiss partner was very difficult due to the overall structure of the programme.

Independent from these findings, the Joint Technical Secretariat identified the following factors as most important for reaching long-term impacts

- Inclusion of stakeholders / potential users
- Strong political support
- Communication strategy should clearly target potential users and address them actively
- Addressing standards and guidelines that might become national/European law
- Embedded in national strategies
- Self-sustainability (e.g. operational website after project end)

Putting these results at project level in the programme context, allows for more general conclusions which show that **actors matter**:

- It is important to clearly identify the different types of actors in the project context, which are potential users of outputs and beneficiaries; stakeholders; policy makers and public administrations; and project partners. As a basis for the partnership assessment it is necessary to have a map of actors at priority for the Alpine Space taking account of all relevant governance levels.
- The identification of potential users allows for the development of target-oriented and focused strategies for networking and dissemination. The purpose of networking and dissemination activities should be clearly developed at least at the mid-term of the project implementation. Beyond this, professional networking management is necessary.
- Highly important for reaching impacts is the involvement of decision-makers and political backing. Potential for improvement was identified related to signed agreements with future users of project outputs.

2.3 ETC projects

ETC projects from the programme period 2007-2013 were taken into account in order learn about their set-up and their planned ways to potential long-term impacts. They are from the first and the second call for projects and started implementation roughly one year ago (ACCESS in September 2008, ENERBUILD and MANFRED in summer 2009). Table 2 gives an overview on the planned results.

Table 2: Overview on planned results in selected ETC projects

ETC projects	
Project acronym	**Planned results**
ENERBUILD (priority 1)	**Use of know-how** on construction of energy saving and producing buildings **in vocational schools, in SMEs, in local and regional authorities** **Increased investment** in energy saving and producing buildings at the level of municipalities and private developers **Use of piloting experience by construction companies**
ACCESS (priority 2)	**Results of regional analyses and their trans-national comparison should be used** for the third Report on the State of the Alps by the **Alpine Convention** and for the **development of SGI strategies** by political stakeholders **Enhanced supply of SGI after the implementation of pilot projects**
MANFRED (priority 3)	**Use of enhanced knowledge about forest protection and risk prevention** by • Regional and local authorities • Forest managers **Established network used by all relevant experts**

Implementation of these ETC projects is on the way and no major difference could be identified in the set-up of partnerships and the implementation of project activities. Also the character of expected results is basically the same. However, the project documents for the current programme period (application form, progress report) are better structured and have the potential to provide information relevant for results more clearly (see section 2.4).

2.4 Observations and learnings from the research process

Finally, some observations from desk research and fieldwork on projects are summed up because of its relevance for the analysis of results and impacts. The judgements mentioned are based on research experience for this study and therefore selective. The discussed topics have solely the purpose to understand better the way projects come to results and long-term impacts.

Outputs and results in project application and project reports

In project applications and project reports results are often not clearly differentiated from outputs which makes the analysis of results rather difficult. If projects speak of outputs often their purpose remains unclear. Although, grey areas in the use of terminology remain, the relevant forms have been substantially enhanced in their quality and structure for the current programme period 2007-2013. For instance in INTERREG IIIB, the application form had one single box for the elaboration of the background and the objectives which made it easy not be clear with objectives of the project. A major improvement for the project analyses is the workplan in the application form 2007-2013.

Logical links between projects and programme

In general, long-term impacts are nearly not tackled at all by projects. This goes hand in hand with the lack of logical links to objectives at priority and programme level. A good example for the higher quality of information in the current programme period is for instance the project application form for ACCESS which is well elaborated also at a more generalised level but nevertheless never addresses priority objectives.

Blurred information about cooperation quality

When it goes for the quality of cooperation the research team was frequently confronted with rather blurred information. An example for this is the mentioning of cooperation with other projects without saying anything about the frequency and regularity of exchange and its purpose.

3 Analysis of impacts related to project types

Typologies allow improved understanding of phenomena. Through the analysis of empirical information types of projects can be constructed which show major differences between projects. In order to bring more clarity into the nature of long-term impacts which can actually be expected from transnational projects a new typology is developed in this section as the analysis of recent impact studies in the field of transnational cooperation has not found useful typologies which relate to the broader programme context (DIACT, 2009; BMVBS and BBR, 2009).

The following typology, which was elaborated with a bottom-up approach based on the project analyses differentiates projects depending on the character and aims of their activities. Three relevant types were found:

- Type 1: Projects with a focus on strategic policy development;
- Type 2: Projects with a focus on exploration and piloting; and
- Type 3: Projects with a focus on policy implementation (through regulations or via the market) with a transnational character.

Projects with a focus on strategic policy development concentrate on more general analytical and research activities, their aims remain at a broader strategic level and their long-term impacts are scarce and casual as long as project outputs are not really used for some kind of policy implementation. Impacts that can be expected from this project type are rather broad and intangible.

Projects with a focus on explorative and piloting activities are frequently rooted in a – more or less clearly elaborated – strategy and have a focus on development of new tools or methodologies (e.g. problem-specific models or scenarios) and their testing. Their aims are more specific and related to the assembly and development of knowledge and know-how as wells as to the gathering and exchange of experience with transnational cooperation in specific thematic fields. Impacts can be manifold and different among regions depending on the focus of the strategy and the thematic fields. Successful piloting activities are crucial for these projects and they can be very demanding (e.g. when close cooperation with stakeholders/beneficiaries is necessary). From this project type one can expect intangible impacts and also limited tangible impacts. Their link to objectives at priority level is closer than in projects from type 1.

Projects with a focus on policy implementation concentrate on fully developed instruments which are ready for implementation. Policy implementation can be undertaken through legal or planning instruments such as regulations and laws with a transnational character or through actors on specific markets. In the latter case the instruments can have a broad spectrum and depend on sectors. The aims are very specific and the impacts address the programme objectives in a concrete way. Because standardised instruments are needed, this type of project is highly demanding in the European transnational context. This project type has most tangible impacts contributing directly to the objectives at priority and programme level.

Each project type has to meet specific demands if the focus of activities should be changed.

From type 1 to type 2 projects: In order to come the way from strategic policy development to explorative and piloting activities it is necessary

- to exchange specific know-how on a practical level;
- to use existing experience in the partnership
- to develop tools and methods for specific purposes
- to cooperate very closely with frequent contacts

From type 2 to type 3 projects: For this way and development the following activities are necessary:

- Relevant stakeholders have to be convinced of the usefulness and applicability of project activities for their purposes.
- In the case of legal instruments, the clear identification of needs and political will is needed in order to be successful.
- Leadership is necessary for the policy-specific steering and governing of complex processes. Relevant actors at regional, national and trans-national level have to be identified.
- Appropriate instruments for communication and dissemination of know-how are needed.

Coming back to the analyses of selected projects, Table 3 shows the mapping of the analysed projects.

Table 3: Mapping of the analysed projects

		Strategic policy development	Exploration and piloting	Policy implementation (regulation, market)
INTERREG IIIB Projects	Alplakes	X →	SILMAS → X	
	ALPPS	→	X pilot projects	
	AlpCheck + AlpCheck2	X →	X pilot projects	
	MONITRAF	X	iMONITRAF	
	AlpFRail	→	TRANSITECTS → X pilot projects	→
	CulturALP (project end 2/2005)	→	X pilot projects ⇢	urban development concepts
	ClimChAlp	X →	ADAPTALP, CLISP → X pilot projects	
ETC Projects	ENERBUILD		X pilot projects ⇢	
	ACCESS	PUSEMOR →	X pilot projects	
	MANFRED	→	X pilot projects	

Legend: X: focus of activity;
Arrow: 'The way of the project' from start to end of implementation
Dashed arrow: Potential for impacts directly linked to priority objectives
The acronyms of the follow-up projects are entered depending on their focus.

Table 3 shows on the one hand a broad variety of ways projects went during their implementation. On the other hand, it shows that the focus of the analysed projects is clearly on explorative and piloting activities. However, before doing piloting nearly all projects address some preparatory activities to elaborate their strategy clearly.

Some projects (Alplakes, AlpCheck, ClimChAlp) cannot be clearly categorised as the weight of their strategic activities and their piloting activities is rather balanced. Except for the AlpCheck2 project, the follow-up projects are clearer in this regard.

A few projects came to policy implementation on their way. This was unexpectedly so with AlpFRail impacts as this project planned to concentrate on piloting activities. CulturALP addressed cultural heritage. In the participating region Lower Austria the concept of protection zones was integrated in urban development concepts and have the potential to be applied in future. ENERBUILD mobilised a lot of municipalities and construction companies for the construction of energy saving and producing buildings and has the potential to contribute directly to enhanced competitiveness of SMEs in the field of ecological construction.

From the wider perspective of the programme, these research results on the nature of long-term impacts show that the project **context matters**. The developed project typology is one tool for the analysis of the relation of project and programme impacts. It allows for the classification of a specific project in the policy cycle, for the identification of the type of tasks and activities as well as for the identification of major conditions for policy development:

Table 4: Project types and related types of tasks and conditions for policy development[6]

Project type / Stage in policy cycle	Type of tasks and activities	Conditions for policy development
Strategic policy development	Agenda setting • Research • Lessons for decision makers on necessary activities	• Policy owners included • Stakeholders from universities, economy and civil society included
Exploration and piloting	Policy formulation • Policy selection • Consensus building	• Thematic leadership and common political understanding; • Sufficient know-how and capacity in the partnership; • Clearly aligned information and dissemination activities.
Policy implementation	Joint planning • Transnational agreement • Common body or agency • Integrated regulation	• Clear policy framework; • Representatives of stakeholders included; • Specific know-how and competence of the partnership

The next section will provide a further cornerstone on the relation of the project and the programme level. It exemplifies the relation of project impacts to programme objectives for priority 2.

[6] Metis would like to thank Alessandro Valenza for these details presented at the Steering Group Meeting in May 2010.

4 Relation of project impacts to programme objectives exemplified with Priority 2

Impact analyses are faced with a series of methodological challenges. One of the major challenges in cooperation programmes is the frequently soft character of results and impacts which are reached with cooperation programmes. More generally and from a methodological point of view the discussion about the 'gap between results and long-term impacts' takes a kind of missing logical link into consideration. Through the formulation of hypotheses and assumptions this gap can be made more explicit and thus discussable. This can contribute to improved understanding of long-term impacts and – as a consequence – to improved steering and anticipation of project impacts. Thus, in this section the project results and impacts for priority 2 are related to the priority and programme objectives.

Under priority 2 of the programme the following projects were analysed:

- AlpCheck (INTERREG IIIIB)
- AlpFRail (INTERREG IIIIB)
- MONITRAF (INTERREG IIIIB)
- ACCESS (ETC)

The three INTERREG IIIB projects are related to transit traffic through the Alps and the ETC project addresses improved access so services of general interest, a newer topic of the programme. Both MONITRAF and AlpCheck dealt with monitoring databases. Whereas the focus of MONITRAF was on the strategic development (development of an indicator set for freight traffic monitoring), AlpCheck both addressed strategic development (set-up of a database) and piloting activities related to traffic monitoring infrastructure and measurement of environmental pollution at main Alpine corridors. AlpFRail addressed the modal shift of traffic transit from road to rail.

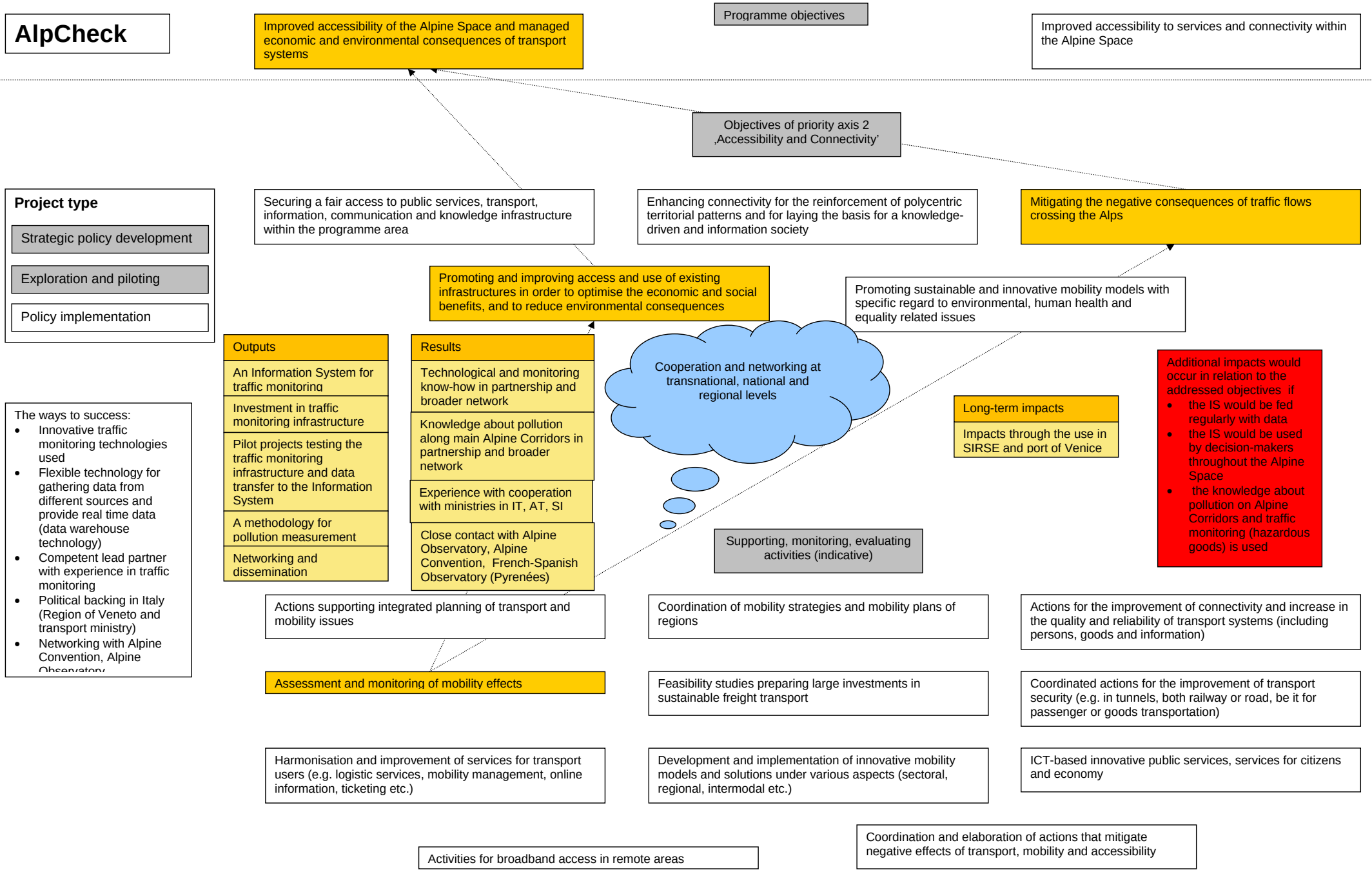
Figures 1 to 4 show the relation of project activities to objectives at priority and programme level. The figures contain quite complex information and should therefore be explained first of all in general.

- The mentioned activities in the lower part are listed in the operational programme as indicative. The orange boxes show the activities and objectives relevant for the respective project. Where relevant, some conditions for reaching further long-term impacts are included in red boxes. In orange and yellow boxes outputs, (planned) results and impacts are summed up.
- The blue cloud symbolises the central topic of the programme: the basic assumption for the justification of cooperation programmes. This is the idea that only cooperation and networking at transnational, national and regional levels in a given area can tackle and overcome issues and problems.
- The arrows show the relations, whereby dashed arrows indicate that the link is (still) at a logical, more theoretical level showing the main directions. Arrows with a full line (only in AlpCheck) indicate that actual impacts were reached, thus, that outputs, i.e. new piloted trains for modal shift is implemented by traffic operators.
- On the very left of the figures are two boxes. The first one shows all three project types. The appropriate project type is marked grey. The second box sums up the most important success factors related to processes which supported the occurrence of results and long-term impacts of the project.

Generally, these figures show clearly the activities implemented and objectives addressed by the projects. Eye-catching are the manifold activities of ACCESS which origin in the combination of transport infrastructure on demand with ICT, i.e. the internet as a tool. Moreover, the figures make also clear that for the anticipation of impacts further information is necessary. This comprises at a general level the project type, the characterisation of the partnership and soft success factors related to cooperation, project management, networking and dissemination.

Major conclusions from this section are:

- The logical link between project activities and priority/programme objectives is essential for the understanding of the intervention logic. A graphical representation is helpful for the understanding of complex relations.
- There is a gap between the project and the programme level which makes the identification of programme impacts challenging. Existing programme tools does not support to close this gap.
- In order to reduce this gap potential actors and contexts have to be taken into account.
- In the context of priority 2 exemplary questions and points of discussion are:
  - Who searches for solutions of problems related to transit traffic through the Alps?
  - At which level can appropriate solutions be found? At regional level? Only at transnational level? At both levels?
  - For instance, looking from the programme perspective on the two traffic monitoring projects raises the question, why no common follow-up project was developed. Furthermore, the issue of a transnational actor as provider of a traffic monitoring database in the Alpine Space can be stated. This raises further questions, e.g. about the relation of the programme to the Alpine Convention and the potential role of the Alpine Observatory or the countries financing the CAFT survey (France, Switzerland, Austria).
- Enhanced transparency and accountability together with an improved communication policy at programme level as well as impact assessments at project level would help to reduce this gap.


AlpCheck
Programme objectives
Improved accessibility of the Alpine Space and managed economic and environmental consequences of transport systems
Improved accessibility to services and connectivity within the Alpine Space
Objectives of priority axis 2 ‚Accessibility and Connectivity'
Project type
Strategic policy development
Exploration and piloting
Policy implementation
Securing a fair access to public services, transport, information, communication and knowledge infrastructure within the programme area
Enhancing connectivity for the reinforcement of polycentric territorial patterns and for laying the basis for a knowledge-driven and information society
Mitigating the negative consequences of traffic flows crossing the Alps
Promoting and improving access and use of existing infrastructures in order to optimise the economic and social benefits, and to reduce environmental consequences
Promoting sustainable and innovative mobility models with specific regard to environmental, human health and equality related issues
Outputs
An Information System for traffic monitoring
Investment in traffic monitoring infrastructure
Pilot projects testing the traffic monitoring infrastructure and data transfer to the Information System
A methodology for pollution measurement
Networking and dissemination
Results
Technological and monitoring know-how in partnership and broader network
Knowledge about pollution along main Alpine Corridors in partnership and broader network
Experience with cooperation with ministries in IT, AT, SI
Close contact with Alpine Observatory, Alpine Convention, French-Spanish Observatory (Pyrenées)
Cooperation and networking at transnational, national and regional levels
Long-term impacts
Impacts through the use in SIRSE and port of Venice
Additional impacts would occur in relation to the addressed objectives if
the IS would be fed regularly with data
the IS would be used by decision-makers throughout the Alpine Space
the knowledge about pollution on Alpine Corridors and traffic monitoring (hazardous goods) is used
The ways to success:
Innovative traffic monitoring technologies used
Flexible technology for gathering data from different sources and provide real time data (data warehouse technology)
Competent lead partner with experience in traffic monitoring
Political backing in Italy (Region of Veneto and transport ministry)
Networking with Alpine Convention, Alpine Observatory
Supporting, monitoring, evaluating activities (indicative)
Actions supporting integrated planning of transport and mobility issues
Coordination of mobility strategies and mobility plans of regions
Actions for the improvement of connectivity and increase in the quality and reliability of transport systems (including persons, goods and information)
Assessment and monitoring of mobility effects
Feasibility studies preparing large investments in sustainable freight transport
Coordinated actions for the improvement of transport security (e.g. in tunnels, both railway or road, be it for passenger or goods transportation)
Harmonisation and improvement of services for transport users (e.g. logistic services, mobility management, online information, ticketing etc.)
Development and implementation of innovative mobility models and solutions under various aspects (sectoral, regional, intermodal etc.)
ICT-based innovative public services, services for citizens and economy
Activities for broadband access in remote areas
Coordination and elaboration of actions that mitigate negative effects of transport, mobility and accessibility

MONITRAF

Improved accessibility of the Alpine Space and managed economic and environmental consequences of transport systems

Programme objectives

Improved accessibility to services and connectivity within the Alpine Space

Objectives of priority axis 2 ‚Accessibility and Connectivity'

Project type

- Strategic policy development
- Exploration and piloting
- Policy implementation

Securing a fair access to public services, transport, information, communication and knowledge infrastructure within the programme area

Enhancing connectivity for the reinforcement of polycentric territorial patterns and for laying the basis for a knowledge-driven and information society

Mitigating the negative consequences of traffic flows crossing the Alps

Promoting and improving access and use of existing infrastructures in order to optimise the economic and social benefits, and to reduce environmental consequences

Promoting sustainable and innovative mobility models with specific regard to environmental, human health and equality related issues

The ways to success:

- Transport planning competence in the partnership (all partners were public authorities)
- Intensive trans-national cooperation on a technical level among regional administrations
- Political backing of administrative units participating in the partnership, the signature of a resolution involved indirectly the decision-makers

Outputs
Data analysis and set of indicators as basis for common monitoring system
Normative database
Emission scenarios
Resolution: monitoring system, traffic regulations, modal shift, new tools for control of freight traffic
Dissemination and networking

Results
Use of outputs for the set-up of the monitoring system in follow-up project
Enhanced knowledge about traffic situation and emission
Use of normative database for justification of bans for heavy traffic in Tyrol

Cooperation and networking at transnational, national and regional levels

Long-term impacts
Reduction of air pollution, noise and accidents through bans for heavy traffic in area of Tyrol

More long-term impacts if

- Common monitoring system is accomplished and is used by political decision-makers for traffic control measures

Supporting, monitoring, evaluating activities (indicative)

Actions supporting integrated planning of transport and mobility issues

Coordination of mobility strategies and mobility plans of regions

Actions for the improvement of connectivity and increase in the quality and reliability of transport systems (including persons, goods and information)

Assessment and monitoring of mobility effects

Feasibility studies preparing large investments in sustainable freight transport

Coordinated actions for the improvement of transport security (e.g. in tunnels, both railway or road, be it for passenger or goods transportation)

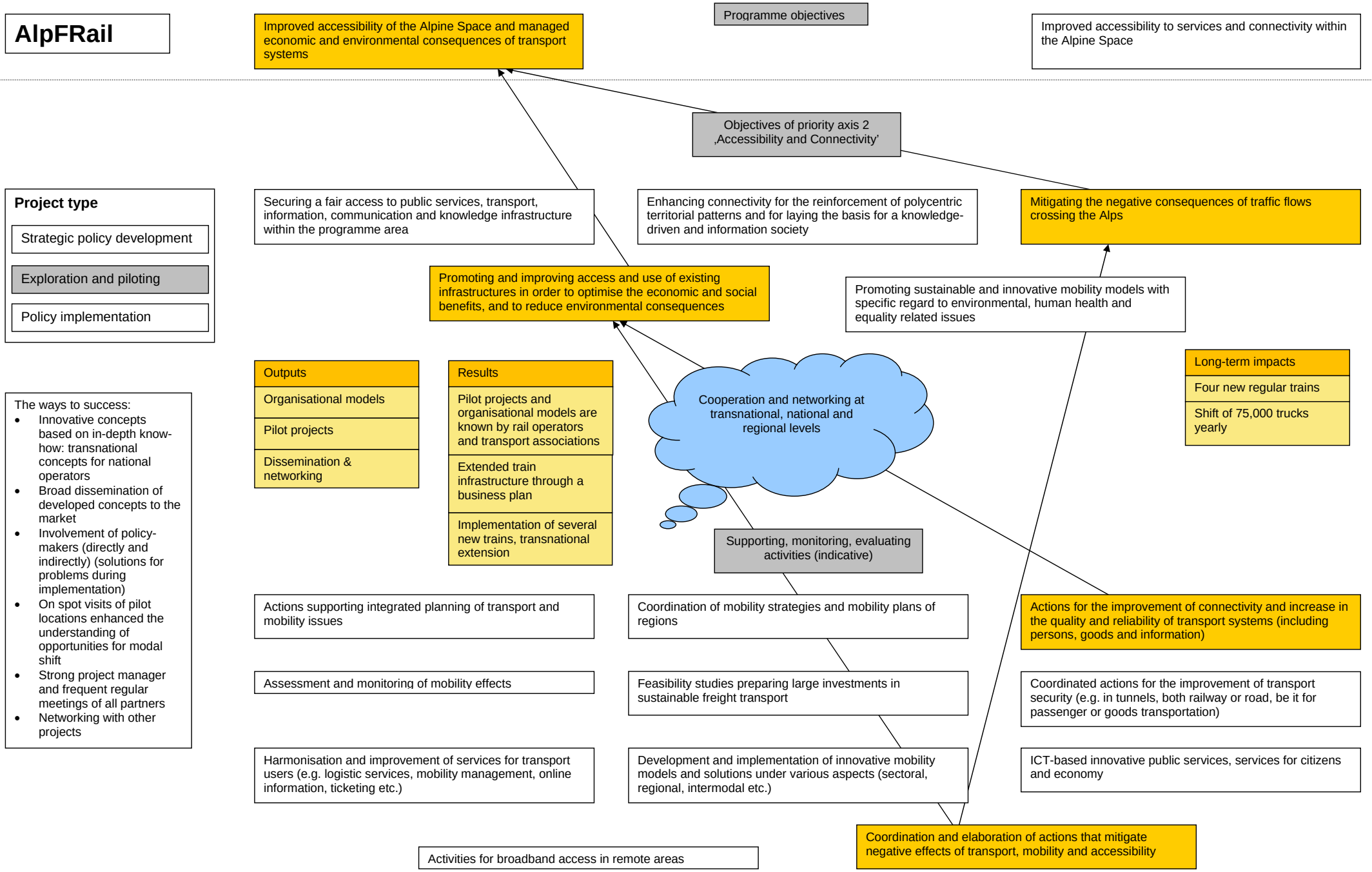
Harmonisation and improvement of services for transport users (e.g. logistic services, mobility management, online information, ticketing etc.)

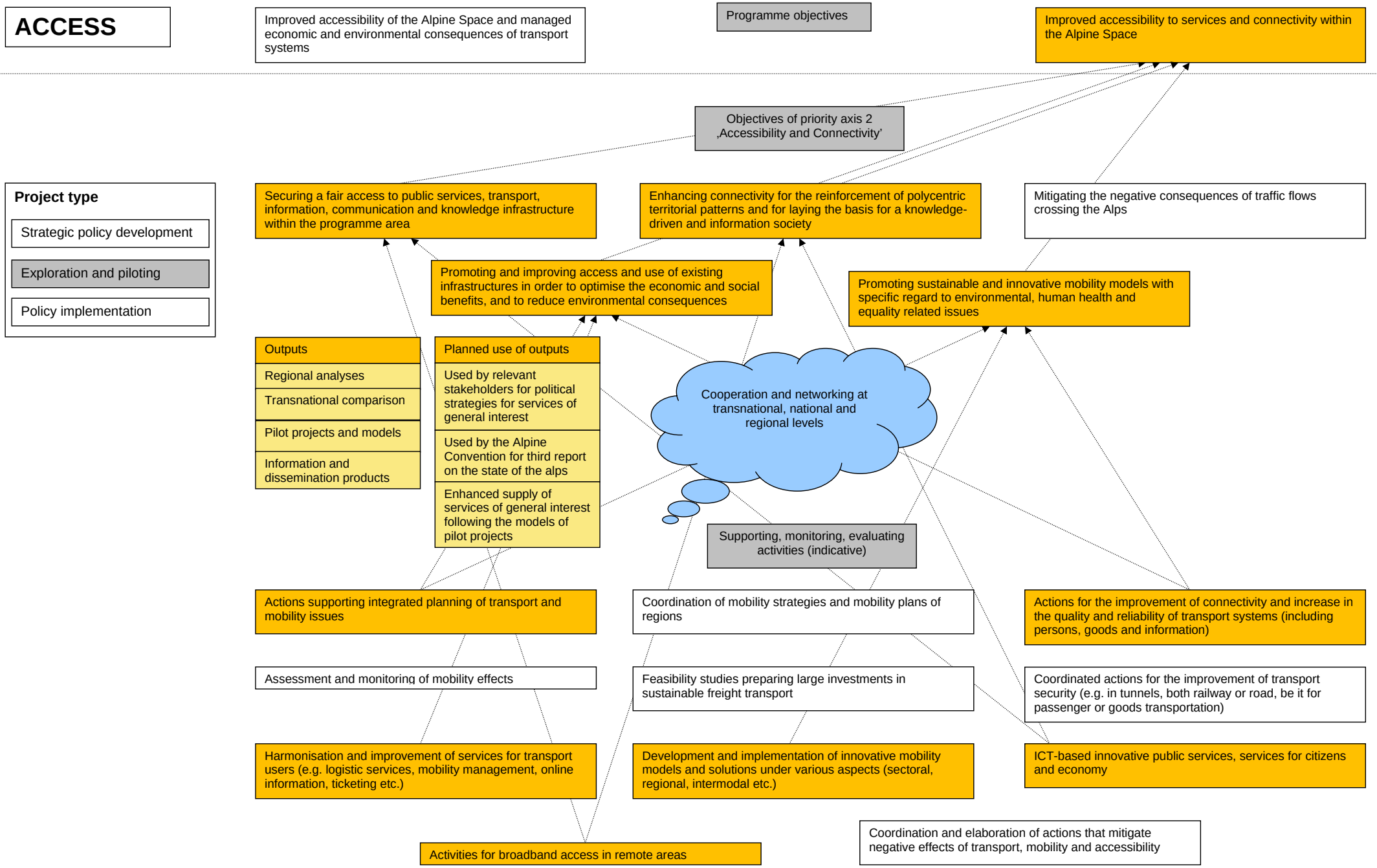
Development and implementation of innovative mobility models and solutions under various aspects (sectoral, regional, intermodal etc.)

ICT-based innovative public services, services for citizens and economy

Activities for broadband access in remote areas

Coordination and elaboration of actions that mitigate negative effects of transport, mobility and accessibility


AlpFRail
Programme objectives
Improved accessibility of the Alpine Space and managed economic and environmental consequences of transport systems
Improved accessibility to services and connectivity within the Alpine Space
Objectives of priority axis 2 ‚Accessibility and Connectivity'
Project type
Strategic policy development
Exploration and piloting
Policy implementation
Securing a fair access to public services, transport, information, communication and knowledge infrastructure within the programme area
Enhancing connectivity for the reinforcement of polycentric territorial patterns and for laying the basis for a knowledge-driven and information society
Mitigating the negative consequences of traffic flows crossing the Alps
Promoting and improving access and use of existing infrastructures in order to optimise the economic and social benefits, and to reduce environmental consequences
Promoting sustainable and innovative mobility models with specific regard to environmental, human health and equality related issues
Outputs
Organisational models
Pilot projects
Dissemination & networking
Results
Pilot projects and organisational models are known by rail operators and transport associations
Extended train infrastructure through a business plan
Implementation of several new trains, transnational extension
Cooperation and networking at transnational, national and regional levels
Long-term impacts
Four new regular trains
Shift of 75,000 trucks yearly
The ways to success:
• Innovative concepts based on in-depth know-how: transnational concepts for national operators
• Broad dissemination of developed concepts to the market
• Involvement of policy-makers (directly and indirectly) (solutions for problems during implementation)
• On spot visits of pilot locations enhanced the understanding of opportunities for modal shift
• Strong project manager and frequent regular meetings of all partners
• Networking with other projects
Supporting, monitoring, evaluating activities (indicative)
Actions supporting integrated planning of transport and mobility issues
Coordination of mobility strategies and mobility plans of regions
Actions for the improvement of connectivity and increase in the quality and reliability of transport systems (including persons, goods and information)
Assessment and monitoring of mobility effects
Feasibility studies preparing large investments in sustainable freight transport
Coordinated actions for the improvement of transport security (e.g. in tunnels, both railway or road, be it for passenger or goods transportation)
Harmonisation and improvement of services for transport users (e.g. logistic services, mobility management, online information, ticketing etc.)
Development and implementation of innovative mobility models and solutions under various aspects (sectoral, regional, intermodal etc.)
ICT-based innovative public services, services for citizens and economy
Coordination and elaboration of actions that mitigate negative effects of transport, mobility and accessibility
Activities for broadband access in remote areas


ACCESS
Improved accessibility of the Alpine Space and managed economic and environmental consequences of transport systems
Programme objectives
Improved accessibility to services and connectivity within the Alpine Space
Objectives of priority axis 2 ‚Accessibility and Connectivity'
Project type
Strategic policy development
Exploration and piloting
Policy implementation
Securing a fair access to public services, transport, information, communication and knowledge infrastructure within the programme area
Enhancing connectivity for the reinforcement of polycentric territorial patterns and for laying the basis for a knowledge-driven and information society
Mitigating the negative consequences of traffic flows crossing the Alps
Promoting and improving access and use of existing infrastructures in order to optimise the economic and social benefits, and to reduce environmental consequences
Promoting sustainable and innovative mobility models with specific regard to environmental, human health and equality related issues
Outputs
Regional analyses
Transnational comparison
Pilot projects and models
Information and dissemination products
Planned use of outputs
Used by relevant stakeholders for political strategies for services of general interest
Used by the Alpine Convention for third report on the state of the alps
Enhanced supply of services of general interest following the models of pilot projects
Cooperation and networking at transnational, national and regional levels
Supporting, monitoring, evaluating activities (indicative)
Actions supporting integrated planning of transport and mobility issues
Coordination of mobility strategies and mobility plans of regions
Actions for the improvement of connectivity and increase in the quality and reliability of transport systems (including persons, goods and information)
Assessment and monitoring of mobility effects
Feasibility studies preparing large investments in sustainable freight transport
Coordinated actions for the improvement of transport security (e.g. in tunnels, both railway or road, be it for passenger or goods transportation)
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Development and implementation of innovative mobility models and solutions under various aspects (sectoral, regional, intermodal etc.)
ICT-based innovative public services, services for citizens and economy
Coordination and elaboration of actions that mitigate negative effects of transport, mobility and accessibility
Activities for broadband access in remote areas

5 Analysis of actual tools for anticipation and steering of project impacts

Based on the analysis of relevant programme documents and templates as well as on an in-depth interview with the Joint Technical Secretariat of the programme research was undertaken on what is actually undertaken by the programme in order to anticipate and to steer project impacts.

Generally, the programme is reluctant to speak of impacts. Instead, it considers outputs and results which are more closely linked to the project. Result indicators are defined at priority level which is an important improvement in comparison to the INTERREG IIIB Programme where projects defined project-specific result indicators. However, the defined indicators are rather scarce. Actual activities of the Joint Technical Secretariat for steering and anticipation of project results are:

- Recognition of results in the selection procedure (in both phases) taking into account also the results of the discussion at the Steering Group Meeting in Zurich in January 2010 ('Zurich list'). The focus of the programme is on ‚quality projects'. These are projects that best follow the programme strategies and guiding principles. In general, the recognition of results is embedded in a comprehensive assessment approach as the results are only intentions at the beginning. Thus, also other factors such as the commitment of the partnership and the potential of the project to transfer outputs to the political level and reach broader and more long-term impacts are taken into account.
- Recognition of results during the content check of the progress reports;
- Exchange with national contact points which have more specific information through regular contact with the projects;
- The use of a tool called 'project overview' which is drafted based on regular progress reports. It highlights special achievements of the project and is used by the members of the Programme Committee. Beyond this, this project information is included in the Annual Implementation Report.
- Based on the paper 'Improving Project Quality' more guidance is given to projects in all phases. During implementation gathering important project partners and exchange about contents is most important. For this thematic events are organised and a new cooperation possibility has been developed which should support content-specific exchange and cluster activities of projects also financially (so-called 'cooperation platforms').

All in all, the programme is aware of the importance of long-term impacts but still rather reluctant to deal with them at the priority and programme level. The paper 'Improving Project Quality' and the 'project overviews' can be considered as important steps towards steering the content and thus, steering results and programme impacts. However, operational steps towards systematic preparation and processing of information on results and impacts from the former period have not been undertaken yet. And the system of result indicators is rather poorly developed.

Recalling the points discussed in section 2.4 (partly difficult to differentiate information on outputs from information on results given in project documents, lack of clear logical links to priority objectives) and taking into account that the Joint Technical Secretariat mentioned that the content check of the progress reports is not always easy the clarification of use of the term 'results' in the following documents would be necessary:

- In the application form and in the progress reports
- In the system of result indicators at project and programme level
- In the communication with the projects

6 Conclusions and recommendations

The Impact Assessment study shows that the main **impacts at programme level are related to the development of policies which shall create policy changes**. The occurrence of impacts is dependent on the **broader programme context**. This comprises a series of factors which can be deduced from the broader political context and the European constitution. For instance, the strong national dimension of laws, the high priority of the single market and the free movement of goods are such factors. Beyond this, the trends and consequences of a globalised economy and society might play an important role.

Besides a few tangible impacts, **mostly intangible results** and some longer-term impacts were identified at project level. Further impacts of INTERREG IIIB projects can be assumed during the next years. The analysis of the selected ETC projects has not brought any major differences to light. Long-term impacts are more diffuse and difficult to be fully surveyed.

The identification of long-term impacts at programme level is only possible with logical links to the project level. With this regard, the study identified **a gap between the project and the programme level** which leaves the relation of project impacts and programme impacts very unclear. Empirical indications for this are:

- Projects were not requested to argue the logical link to priority and programme objectives in the INTERREG IIIB Programme. The ETC Programme foresees a specific section in the application form on the coherence with the programme objectives. However, a stringent logical analysis is not demanded and often the logical link is not clearly elaborated to the more general priority objectives.
- The system of result indicators is rather poorly developed and scarcely linked to the programme level.
- Outputs and results were frequently not clearly differentiated by the projects.

Recommendations – 'Enhance programme impacts and reduce the gap between project and programme level'

In order to improve the identification of programme impacts the programme should reduce the existing gap through the strengthening of the logical links between the programme and the project level.

- Projects should elaborate a clear logical link of project objectives to priority and programme objectives and identify the potential users clearly. The benefit of the use of the project outputs should be clearly stated in the application form. In general, they should have more awareness of the intervention logic and operate with a clear terminology. A standardised form (e.g. template for a graph) for this would have the advantage to get a better overview.
- In the final report the use of outputs should be clearly elaborated and understandable at a general level addressing users of outputs and conditions and obstacles for their use.
- The programme should elaborate a more comprehensive system of results indicators with improved links to the programme level. This indicator system should fully address all priority objectives with results indicators at project level. Furthermore, desirable results across priorities could be included addressing issues like increased political recognition of developed tools and methods or improved partner networks. (The already used indicators for unlocking public and private investments would be part of these.)

Some suggestions for output and result indicators related to the stages in the policy cycle were provided by Valenza (2010) as follows:

Indicator	Strategic policy development	Exploration and piloting	Policy implementation
Output	• Study research oriented toward policy makers • Degree of coverage	• Pilot studies • Guidelines • Stakeholders involved	• Agencies • Official documents
Result	• Expression of Interest for the following phase	• Formal agreement (mandatory, voluntary) • Administration involved	• Regulation • Plan/Programme

The character and potential of project impacts is dependent on the position of a project in the policy cycle. In order to systematise the context of projects, the study developed a project typology related to three different stages in the policy cycle, which are strategic project development, exploration/ piloting, and policy implementation.

- Projects with a focus on strategic project development will reach more general and intangible impacts. Projects with a focus on exploration and piloting can partly reach rather tangible impacts and projects with a focus on policy implementation lead to most tangible impacts. Policy changes are reached through tackling actual issues and the provision of appropriate (innovative) solutions. Thus, projects with a focus on exploration and piloting can reach worthwhile unexpected impacts through successful piloting actions.
- Each project type is related to a specific type of tasks and activities and has specific conditions for policy development. A crucial factor for successful projects is the set-up of the project partnership and its political relevance.

Recommendations – 'Improve project impacts through recognition of its context'

For a better anticipation and steering of the project impacts both the programme and the projects should be aware of the specific context in which they act.

- Users and beneficiaries of the project outputs have to be clearly identified as they are crucial for reaching impacts. (The map of actors could be used as a basis for the partnership assessment.)
- The identification of potential users allows also for the development of target-oriented and focused strategies for networking and dissemination. The purpose of networking and dissemination activities should be clearly developed at least at the mid-term of the project implementation. Beyond this, professional networking management is necessary.

First selection phase: Expression of Interest

- The programme should help the applicants with the identification of the appropriate project type. Through the related specific type of activities and conditions for policy development this would give the project activities and its objectives a clearer profile. Each project shall address directly one phase of the policy cycle, in exceptional cases two.
- Furthermore, the political relevance of the partnership should be verified in terms of the institutional role of the partners in the respective policy field and their specific know-how.

Second selection phase: Application guidance

- In this phase, the programme should thoroughly check the partnership and included types of actors. The role of each partner in the specific policy field in national context have to be clearly explained (institutional competencies, experience). The most important criterion for this is the consistency of the competencies in the partnership with the project type. The projects should be aware of the fact that stakeholders do not need to be necessarily integrated as partners. They can have other roles such as beneficiaries or participant in pilot activities etc.
- Beyond this, thorough information on the status of the policy context has to be given by the projects. This should comprise topics such as already achieved agreements, legal and institutional challenges and actual (national, transnational, European) policy agendas.

The programme was found to be well aware of the importance of long-term impacts but it deals with them rather reluctant and maintains a **low profile with regard to promoting policies**.

Recommendations – 'Develop a clear policy role of the programme'

For a better steering the programme should clearly define its role as a policy promoter. While leading and supporting the project promoters it has to be aware of its capacity to act under the specific context conditions. In doing so, the programme can further strengthen the innovative aspects of its cooperation culture which are being prepared based on the Paper 'Improving Project Quality'.

- The programme should raise the awareness of projects about their contributions to the programme impacts which mainly aim at policy development in a transnational context. It should also make clear the difference of impacts in cross-border and transnational programmes. To do so, implementation guidance on the basis of better logical links of project results to the programme objectives should be prepared.
- The programme should enhance its understanding of project results and the status of implementation. More direct contact between the programme and the projects would contribute to this and allow for exchange among projects. For instance, events at priority level with presentations of the projects about their ways to come to results at a mid-term stage could be a tool for this.
- The programme should communicate the difference between outputs and results more clearly which basically emerge from the actual use of the outputs. This should be integrated in guidance documents.
- The projects have to enhance information about beneficiaries and the usefulness of the project outputs.

The Impact Assessment study found that **actors are specifically important for reaching impacts in a transnational programme** as tools for policy changes can only reach impacts through their actual use. The fact, that these policy changes should take place in a complex governance context emphasizes the importance of actors.

Recommendations – 'Prepare exhaustive actor maps for better programme and project steering'

In order to better steer project impacts the programme should prepare exhaustive maps of actors in the intervention fields of the projects. As the programme knows more about the policy actors it should be the initiator of the mapping. A comprehensive map of actors is particularly important in case of project outputs determined for the market.

- For the mapping institutions, networks, companies etc. relevant for the realisation of impacts and for reaching the programme objectives have to be identified.
- For the actual project the mapping could be specified together with the project lead partner. This would positively challenge the project idea and its implementation as questions about the problem addressed, the solution proposed and the intended results would have to be discussed and answered.

A combination of features typical for transnational cooperation in the European context challenges the actual anticipation and steering of project and programme impacts. The most prominent among these features are mostly intangible impacts, project and programme actors occupied with exhaustive control mechanisms and – at the actual state – a lack of tools linking the programme and the project levels.

Recommendations – 'Strengthen the accountability and steering of the programme achievement'

In order to strengthen the accountability of the programme it should prepare two different kinds of evaluations:

- The programme should commission a programme evaluation in order to identify the programme impacts and to develop a comprehensive system of result indicators. Such an evaluation could be focused on selected, strategically relevant topics. It should improve the strategic focus of the assistance for transnational cooperation in the Alpine Space and the visibility of the programme through the provision of good practice examples.
- The programme should commission an operational evaluation for a better steering of project and programme impacts. It should develop a methodological guidance for detailed and regular checks of the progress of project implementation towards impacts. These checks should be undertaken by independent evaluators. They should be used as a kind of 'early alert system' by the programme. However, their use for intensified controls would foil the intention of better programme steering. Analyses from the project level should be generalised and implications for the steering at programme level identified.

Evaluations could tackle also success factors and their relation to innovation. Related to this a last point shall be made. The study at hand identified a series of – mostly soft – success factors at project level being beneficial for the attainment of long-term impacts:

- Thematic competence
- Political backing
- Quality of cooperation (vertical, horizontal, across administrative boundaries)
- Quality of project management

Success factors were found in all analysed projects, even in cases with little traceable impacts which could be interpreted also as an indication for avoiding risks and problems during implementation and thus, avoiding changes and innovation. This would not be specifically new for a transnational programme with challenging tasks and strong financial controls. However, innovation is crucial and an evaluation could also identify the potential of more effective innovative actions in the long run.

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