

Fit for Cooperation

Cross Border Obstacles

New paths for cross-border projects
Project findings



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Fit4Co CBO | Fit for Cooperation – Cross Border Obstacles

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Foreword by the Local Governors

More than a century ago, the border area between Austria and Italy was one of the theatres of the First World War. Today, we view the Alpine region as a dynamic habitat and economic area straddling Europe's great cultural regions.

To boost cross-border cooperation between Italy and Austria, two European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) were set up in 2011 and 2012—European Region Tyrol–South Tyrol–Trentino and Euregio Senza Confini (spanning the federal states and provinces of Carinthia, Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, and Veneto). Based on provisions under European law, the regions were, for the first time, able to build their cooperation on a solid legal foundation.

The programme was further developed drawing on the experiences of the “Fit for Cooperation (Fit4Co)” pilot project—implemented during the previous funding period—as a targeted initiative to overcome cross-border barriers. This cooperation between the two European Regions aimed to establish the political and legal prerequisites for stronger cross-border cooperation as well as strengthening the institutional resources of public administrative bodies.

By enabling joint projects that resonate with citizens across our European Regions, „Fit for Cooperation Cross Border Obstacles (Fit4Co CBO)” aims to ensure they feel actively involved. These initiatives range from enhancing public resilience to heavy rainfall events and natural disasters to laying the groundwork for collaborative spatial planning, championing patient rights, and enriching tourism across the Italy–Austria Interreg programme area. These projects also involve the continuous strengthening of a sustainable network amongst our administrative bodies, ensuring they are equipped for future challenges.

Therefore, we view the project Fit for Cooperation Cross Border Obstacles as an investment in the future for all of the citizens in our six states. In a way, the project tandems (cross-border administrative partnerships) of Fit4Co CBO can be considered pioneers for a new kind of cross-border cooperation. This is the basis we want to build upon to further intensify the collaboration between our European

Regions—with the goal of assuming a leading role in supporting cohesion in the Europe of the Regions.

The Local Governors of the Fit4Co CBO regions take pride in the achievements to date and look ahead with enthusiasm, eager to realise the long-term benefits of this pilot project.



From left to right:
Arno Kompatscher,
Local Governor of South Tyrol
Maurizio Fugatti,
Local Governor of Trentino
Anton Mattle,
*Local Governor of Tyrol and President of the
 EGTC European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol –
 Trentino*



From left to right:
Luca Zaia,
Governor of the Region of Veneto
Massimiliano Fedriga,
Governor of the Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia
Peter Kaiser,
*Local Governor of Carinthia and President of the
 EGTC Euregio Senza Confini r.l.*

***“Those who want to cooperate will find a way.
Those who are reluctant to cooperate will find an excuse.”***

Fit for Cooperation Cross Border Obstacles (Fit4Co CBO) is a unique programme in two ways: On the one hand, we applied a systematic approach to developing cross-border projects in a multi-level government framework. On the other hand, when the first edition was published in 2018, it was the first joint initiative between the two European Regions at the Austrian-Italian border. Considering the success of the first edition, we decided to roll out the programme again and to expand its remit.

Throughout the implementation of the programme, we benefitted from Fit4Co CBO's robust preparatory planning, the steadfast commitment of policy-makers and rigorous execution delivered by the project team. Thanks to the established communication channels and cooperation structures, we were able to continue our work between the two European Regions in the cooperation tandems.

Fit4Co CBO sought to accompany a series of projects during their planning phase, from the initial project idea to the corresponding project plan, ready and fit for execution.

We are happy to report that most tandems were able to embrace and complete this five-stage process. In the European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino, for example, 19 project tandems were launched at the kick-off event in Toblach/Dobbiaco (South Tyrol) as part of a one-year programme; in the EGTC Euregio Senza Confini area, six tandems are working to overcome cross-border obstacles through a distinct approach that involves allocating funds to public bodies to implement targeted actions.

Fit4Co CBO has elevated collaboration between the two European Regions, as well as between each European Region and its local and regional stakeholders. We would like to thank all of the project coordinators, project participants and pro-

ject coaches for their efforts and the numerous inspiring encounters. To all project teams, we would like to wish them great success in putting their projects into practice and in overcoming obstacles and assure them that in this phase, our European Regions will still be happy to answer their questions and provide support.

We would like to extend a special thank you to the INTERREG Councils of the CLLD regions, Dolomiti Live and Wipptal/Alta Valle Isarco, as well as to the regional coordination units of Interreg Italy–Austria for their harmonious cooperation and funding consultation for the project tandems. Working together, we have reached a new level of successful cooperation in the European Region's multi-level government system.

As European Regions in the border area between Austria and Italy, we will continue our joint effort to overcome the legal, political and organisational barriers of cross-border cooperation.



Matthias Fink
Secretary-General
EGTC European Region
Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino
Project lead Fit4Co CBO



Sandra Sodini
Director EGTC Euregio Senza Confini r.l.

1 Project description: Fit4Co CBO

1.1 Fit4Co CBO: the European Region starter pack for project development

Fit for Cooperation Cross Border Obstacles (Fit4Co CBO) is a joint project between two European Regions: Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino and Senza Confini, comprised of Carinthia, Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia. This is the second edition of this project, whose first round ran from 2018 to 2022 under the name of Fit4Co. At that time, it marked the first joint initiative between two EGTCs in the Interreg Italy–Austria programme area and was one of the first joint projects between two EGTCs in Europe.

Both regions were formed in 2011 and 2012 as European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) for the purpose of further deepening cross-border cooperation within a multi-level governance framework.

Fit4Co CBO seeks to strengthen ties between public sector administrative bodies in the two participating European Regions, fostering synergies through the promotion of tangible projects. Cross-border cooperation is exciting, but also difficult. Different languages, administrative cultures and legal systems represent significant barriers that make cross-border projects challenging. To ensure their success, we need techniques and skills that allow for the successful execution of cross-border projects in the interest of citizens. Fit4Co CBO focuses on finding and cultivating common ground in the complex landscape of differing processes between different administrations.

The central challenge lies in raising awareness among public administrations of their role as system partners in cross-border cooperation, and in supporting them as they take their initial steps in joint cooperation projects. The shared objective of Fit4Co CBO is to support public administrations in project planning—the first pillar of project management.



Stock photo representing the Interreg project Fit for Cooperation: Shaking hands

Through workshops, the European Region programme collaborates with experts to support administrations in developing cross-border projects within cooperation tandems. A cooperation tandem consists of at least two administrative partners from the programme area (Tyrol, South Tyrol, Trentino, Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Salzburg); and there must be at least one Austrian and one Italian partner. In a nutshell, Fit4Co CBO is an incubator for cross-border projects.



“With Fit4Co CBO, we want to establish the necessary framework that enables our cooperation tandems to become experts in cross-border cooperation.”

Matthias Fink, Secretary-General EGTC European Region
Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino

1.2.1 First Fit4Co edition (2018–2021)

The first edition of the project labelled Fit4Co (2018–2021) laid the foundations for continuing the project—now called Fit4Co CBO. This groundwork proved highly valuable, with its outcomes and insights continuing to have a positive impact well into the second edition.

In 2018, a preparatory scientific study was commissioned for Fit4Co to provide an overview of successful cross-border cooperation examples in the project area and to study their recipe for success.

At the 2018 kick-off event in Trieste, both European Regions decided which model projects of cross-border collaboration would serve as starting point for the EURAC study.

In 2019, researchers from EURAC's Institute for Minority Rights created the insightful "Analysis of Key Success Factors in Cross-Border Cooperation" which provided a robust basis for further development.

In addition to that, they prepared "Project Outline—Descriptive Guide for Developing and Designing Projects." In essence, this represented a summary of all the steps necessary for the successful execution of a cross-border project.

For project development and communication, the European Region contracted the communications company clavis kommunikation GmbH (clavis) to map out a viable path for Fit4Co. This work led not only to the development of our communications strategy, but also the tandem system.



Publication (in German): "Analysis of Key Success Factors in Cross-Border Cooperation"



Publication (in German): "Project Outline—Descriptive Guide for Developing and Designing Projects"

1.2.2 Second edition of Fit4Co CBO (2023–2026)

Fit4Co's preparatory steps were essential in establishing the technical basis for the project's second edition. While the project partners maintain the same key aims as well as the underlying structure of the project, the second edition includes a number of interesting updates.

This mandates a secondary phase after project planning, scheduled for June 2025 to January 2026. During this phase, tandems that have completed the initial stage and wish to continue their collaboration may proceed with early implementation steps through so-called "pilot actions"—such as field trials, studies and analyses, public consultations, or the establishment of new European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The aim is to design tangible pilot actions, allocate a dedicated project budget and implement them.

To further help this process, targeted training was held between March and July 2025. This was intended for both participants of the INTERREG project Fit4Co CBO and administrative staff who are interested in cross-border cooperation and who

would like to deepen their expertise regarding project management, cross-cultural projects and the application process within EU institutions.

Clavis also continued to facilitate the project as part of Fit4Co CBO—by developing a comprehensive evaluation concept and implementing parallel monitoring measures. Additionally, with the “Train the Trainer” programme, clavis hosted a training session for project coaches right at the beginning of the project. This aimed to prepare the coaches as best as possible for their tasks and for the challenges of cross-border cooperation. Clavis also prepared, led and facilitated two evaluation meetings—an interim evaluation and a final evaluation. You can find the comprehensive evaluation report resulting from this in chapter “3.2 Process support and evaluation for Fit4Co CBO”.

1.2.3 Training series

The first training session “Hints and tricks when filing a funding application for an EU project” was held on Thursday, 20th March, 2025 in Brixen/Bressanone (South Tyrol). Project coordinator Matthias Fink opened the workshop by presenting handy tips for planning cross-border projects. INTERREG expert Stefan Graziadei went on to share valuable insights drawn from his extensive experience in submitting funding applications.



Expert Stefan Graziadei during the workshop in Brixen/Bressanone in March 2025

On Wednesday, 2nd April 2025, there followed a webinar on “Intercultural Projects” with dedicated experts. Paola Borz, General Director of Trentino School of Management, outlined her experiences with the European Region Master for Public Administrations; Esther Jennings, Managing Director at European Region Inn Valley, reported on cultural and structural differences between Bavaria and Tyrol. Sebastian Vicoli, Area Manager of Terra Raetica within the regional management of the Landeck district, presented the bottom-up methodology of his CLLD region (Community Led Local Development) on the tripoint between Austria, Italy and Switzerland.

Two workshops on project management concluded the series of training sessions—one held in Italian, the other one in German. The Italian workshop was held on the 28th and 29th of May 2025 in Salurn/Salorno (South Tyrol), and the German counterpart on the 1st and 2nd of July 2025 in Matrei am Brenner (Tyrol). Both events provided a concise overview of the core elements of successful project management. The workshop’s content was presented in an easy-to-understand

way and illustrated using concrete examples from real projects. A particular highlight was the fireside chat regarding the reconstruction of the Landshut mountain refuge, Europahütte/Rifugio Europa, with Peter Trenkwalder, the President of the Foundation.



Project management workshop in Matrei am Brenner in July 2025



"This series of training sessions represents an important step towards enhancing skills in submitting funding applications and planning cross-border projects effectively. These are exactly the goals of Fit4Co CBO."

Matthias Fink, Secretary-General EGTC European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino and project lead Fit4Co CBO

1.3 Bringing people on board: the Fit4Co CBO communication campaign

When it comes to high-complexity projects, communication often represents a key challenge. The first communication campaign targeted three groups deemed essential for success during the application period: potential participants, political representatives and influential leaders serving as autonomous communicators. With this broad campaign we wanted to drive and support participation at Fit4Co CBO and involve entities in project tandems. The proven success of the applications can largely be attributed to the preceding communication campaign. Prior to kick-off and during the application period, the Fit4Co CBO team actively looked for ways to reach out to potentially interested stakeholders and providing them with relevant information.

Key communication activities included official information events held in the three local capitals of the European Region: on 8th April 2024 at the Tiroler Landhaus in Innsbruck with Local Governor Anton Mattle; on 18th April 2024 in the inner courtyard of Landhaus 1/Palazzo Provinciale 1 in Bozen/Bolzano with Local Governor Arno Kompatscher; and on 23rd April 2024, in Casa Moggioli in Trento. Along with practical information on participation requirements and steps, these events also focused on best-practice examples from the first Fit4Co edition. These meetings were supported by a large-scale information campaign that promoted the project both via a comprehensive e-mail database as well as relevant media coverage.

EGTC Euregio Senza Confini also organised information meetings for Fit4Co CBO. There were two online meetings on 27th June 2024 and on 23rd May 2025. These meetings were a welcome occasion to elaborate on calls for identifying cross-border obstacles that hinder cooperation in the EGTC Euregio Senza Confini area.



Information event in Tiroler Landhaus in Innsbruck on 8th April 2024 with Local Governor Anton Mattle (left). Others, from left to right: Helmut Gassebner, former President of CLLD INTERREG Council Wipptal/Alta Valle Isarco; Sabine Richter, Regional Management Wipptal; Günther Zimmermann, Department for Forest Protection at the Federal State of Tyrol; Klaus Pietersteiner, Department for Forest Protection at the Federal State of Tyrol; Laura Hackl, Department for Organisation and Human Resources at the Federal State of Tyrol; Günter Sölva, Department for Human Resources Development at the Autonomous Province of Bolzano; Herbert Forster, Director of the Tyrolean State Office.



Discussion during the information event in the inner courtyard of Landhaus 1/Palazzo Provinciale 1 in Bozen/Bolzano on 18th April 2024. Photo, from left to right: Alexander Steiner, Director-General of the Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano – South Tyrol; Martha Gärber, Director of the Department for European Affairs of the Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano – South Tyrol; Andreas Schatzer, President of the Municipal Association in South Tyrol.



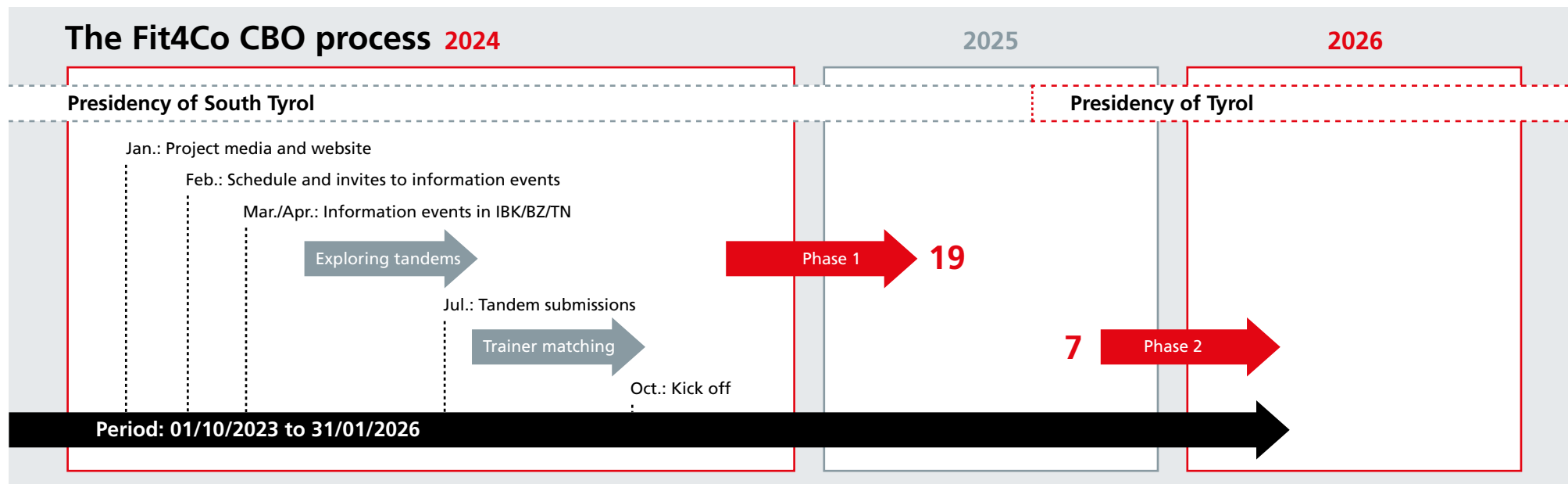
Discussion during the information event in the inner courtyard of Landhaus 1/Palazzo Provinciale 1 in Bozen/Bolzano on 18th April 2024 with Arno Kompatscher, Local Governor of the Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano – South Tyrol.



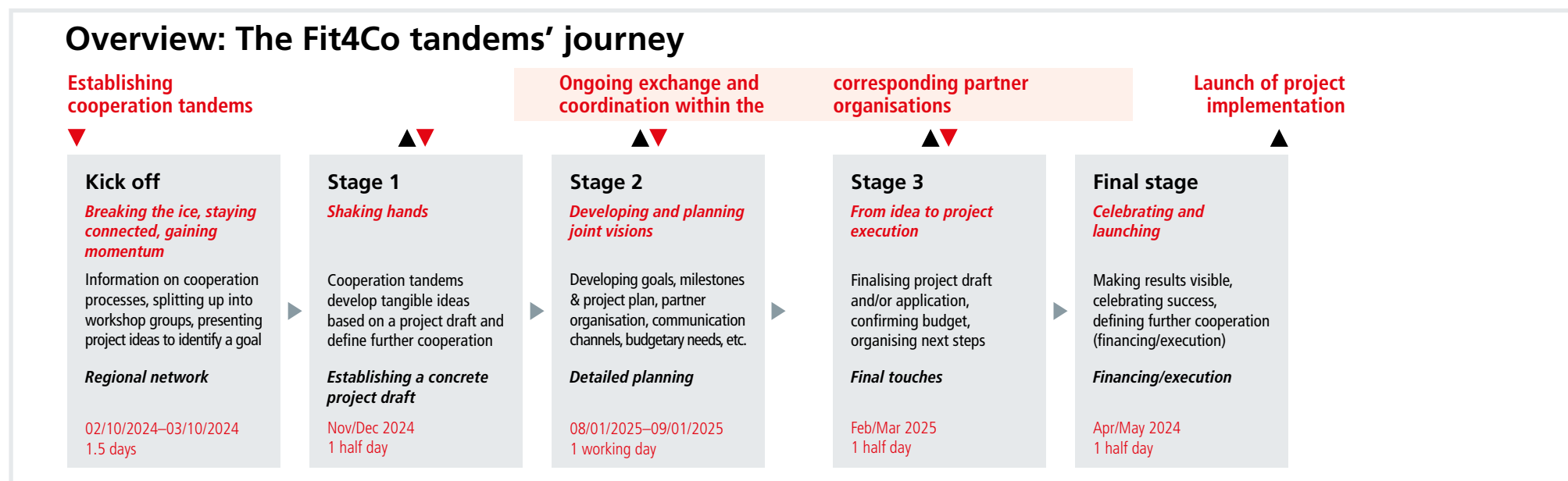
Information event in Casa Moggioli in Trento on 23rd April 2024. Photo, from left to right: Leo Toller, employee at Cultural Institute Bersntol; Simone Marchiori, Provincial Councillor for Housing, State Property, and the Promotion of Autonomy at the Autonomous Province of Trento; Elisa Bertò, Representative of Trentino in the General Secretary of the European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino; Paola Borz, General Director of Trentino School of Management; Matthias Fink, Project lead Fit4Co CBO; Arezia Ronchini, employee at the Department for Tourism and Sport of the Autonomous Province of Trento.

1.4 Project structure

Fit4Co CBO project work is based on the tandem system. The project flow consists of two phases: In the first phase (October 2024–June 2025), the tandems collaborated with coaches across five structured stages. In the second phase (June 2025–January 2026), selected project tandems will realise their project ideas with the aid of the Fit4Co CBO budget.



The entire Fit4Co CBO process.



The first phase of the Fit4Co CBO project.

Fit4Co CBO targets public administrative bodies. These include technical departments of regions and states, city and municipality administrations, the administrations of public bodies like universities or districts in Trentino – South Tyrol, publicly owned operations, social partners and state administrations.

For many partners, Fit4Co CBO is the first project with cross-border cooperation. While partners benefit from the added value of exchanging ideas with each other, they also face new challenges.

This is why, during the first phase, the Fit4Co CBO team assigns a coach to every tandem who structures the flow of the project and provides any necessary input. We conducted market research to support this, ultimately choosing the consulting firm Business Pool GmbH from a list of contenders. Their service included the identification, deployment and remuneration of project coaches. In September 2024, the assignment of project ideas to project coaches was approved during a joint meeting between Business Pool and the Fit4Co CBO project team. That means that partners can rely on expert support when developing their projects.



Meeting with Business Pool and the European Region team in the European Region office in Bozen/ Bolzano. Photo, from left to right: Günther Wurm and Barbara Jäger, CEOs of Business Pool; Elena Rado, Head of Administration for European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino; Matthias Fink, Secretary-General of the European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino; Tommaso Marangoni, Project Manager Fit4Co CBO; Noemi Mascherpa, Project Manager Fit4Co CBO.



One area, two projects: Exchange between the project tandems “Check dam for the border river in Innichen/San Candido and Sillian” and “Developing and designing the border area between Innichen/ San Candido and Sillian” in Alpbach in January 2025.

The coaches assume the role of project facilitators: Their responsibilities include defining the structure and steps of the different workshops. They respond to the individual needs and requirements of the project teams and adapt the workshops to the groups’ specific demands. Within the group, they also raise awareness of the specific challenges of cross-border cooperation and cross-cultural cooperation.

While the coaches may support the tandems, the cooperation tandem retains responsibility for project progress and outcomes. The tandem develops the project and acts as an interface for the administrations concerned. Roles and tasks are defined in the tandem. Project coordinators are the driving force behind the entire project and serve as key contacts for the Fit4Co CBO team.

In turn, the Fit4Co CBO supports the tandems in organisational matters. The Fit4Co CBO Project Managers Noemi Mascherpa and Tommaso Marangoni are responsible for preparing the tandem meetings in organisational and technical

terms (venues, interpreters, accommodation and catering for multi-day meetings, etc.). In case external expertise is necessary, the Fit4Co CBO team will handle these arrangements. To this end, the European Region reaches out to internal resources (C-level and staff members) as well as to external experts. Fit4Co CBO links the project tandems with the European Region and the programme office Interreg Italy–Austria.

This comprehensive support ensures that tandems can focus on what matters most.

The five stages were intentionally designed to be mainly held in person. In the very early stages of a project, face-to-face contact between partners in particular is essential. These informal meetings create space to foster a network and trust within the project tandems. However, in certain scenarios, online meetings proved to be a useful addition for overcoming challenging coordination.

It is the goal of all individual tandems to develop a project outline. For Fit4Co CBO, this means that they define the roles of the partners involved, specify the project goal and develop an appropriate funding strategy. The final result should be a complete project plan or application that can serve as a basis for further action.

However, the added value achieved by the Fit4Co CBO process isn't just limited to developing concrete project outlines. In a broader sense, it creates the foundations for future cooperation and a sustainable cross-border network.

1.5 Fit4Co CBO project flow

1.5.1 Kick-off—breaking the ice, staying connected, gaining momentum

On October 2nd and 3rd, 2024, partners took the first step in the Fit4Co CBO process, meeting for the first time for a two-day event at the European Region Cultural Centre Gustav Mahler in Toblach/Dobbiaco (South Tyrol). In their respective workshops, they gathered together to prepare the groundwork for their joint projects.

A total of 100 people representing 19 cooperation tandems participated in this event. The primary objective of this kick-off event was to strengthen connections between project partners in the different tandems, creating space for informal encounters and to engender team spirit for their cooperation. From the very beginning onward, this nurtured trust—which is vitally important for any further project development.

Chiara Fabbro and Roberta Maccari from the EGTC Euregio Senza Confini also joined us for this event. During the introduction, Euregio Senza Confini presented their initiatives. While both European Regions apply a unified bottom-up approach, their methodologies differ: in the EGTC European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino, project tandems received the support of project coaches and experts who guided them along the structured process up to project execution or submission of an application with the EU authority. Whereas in the EGTC Euregio Senza Confini area, the selected project partners were allocated the financial means to remove cross-border obstacles; for example, for external consultation and services.



Group photo of participants during the Fit4Co CBO kick-off event at the European Region Cultural Centre Gustav Mahler in Toblach/Dobbiaco in October 2024.



Magdalena Amhof, Provincial Councillor for European Affairs, Employment and Human Resources of the Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano – South Tyrol, during the festive opening of the kick-off event in Toblach/Dobbiaco in October 2024.

1.5.2 First stage—shaking hands

The first stage was scheduled immediately after the kick-off event to benefit as much as possible from the momentum obtained during the initial meeting. During this stage, partners did not meet all at once; instead, the individual tandems met with their respective coach to work on their project independently.

They all revisited the concrete outcomes of the kick-off and specified what they wanted to accomplish. So, to launch their individual process, the tandems started to work on their project outline. This includes, for example, defining stakeholders, requesting expert opinions as needed, as well as allocating roles between partners.

As standard practice, they also defined concrete tasks for the period leading up to the next stage. Between the individual stages, they continued their work without interruption, mainly communicating via e-mail or via phone. A key responsibility for the European Region teams was assigning tasks to the appropriate service providers according to the needs of the project teams.



The tandem "Sustainability skills for tourist and travel guides" continues their work within the group.

1.5.3 Second stage—developing and planning joint visions

In January 2025, the second stage of the Fit4Co CBO process was held at the Congress Centrum Alpbach. This village—known throughout Europe because of the European Forum Alpbach—was chosen as the optimal venue for bringing all of the project tandems together for the two-day half-time meeting. The tandems reported on their successes and the challenges they had to overcome. In this context, it became clear that there were certain parallels between all of the tandems with respect to project development. This gave the project partners a better understanding of cross-border cooperation and shared the best practices they had uncovered.

At the same time, differences between the different tandems became apparent. Some of the tandems had already begun work with a clearly structured goal, while others were able to put their intentions in concrete terms by means of sharing and discussing with the project partners and coaches. Tandems that were already able to build upon a foundation of trust, thanks to existing ongoing cooperation and being made up of the same people, benefited from accelerated project development. The two tandems that did not attend the half-time meeting in Alpbach chose to abandon the Fit4Co CBO path at that point. Therefore, at Alpbach, whether or not the Fit4Co CBO structure was a fit for elaborating specific projects became clear.



During the halftime meeting in Alpbach, Gina Streit, member of the Eastern Tyrol regional management, presented funding possibilities in the CLLD area. Dolomiti Live.

Funding issues represent a particularly significant challenge for many project tandems. Therefore, experts from the relevant departments were invited to present different funding opportunities and project funds to the project partners. Due to the cross-border nature of the projects, European programmes like INTERREG Italy–Austria or CLLD programmes are of special interest in border areas.



The project tandem of the Prettau/Predoi, Krimml, Brandberg im Zillertal, and Prägraten am Großvenediger municipalities working with their coach Sonja Karbon in Alpbach.

The second stage allowed for deeper cooperation within the cooperation tandems, while also enabling access to actionable information on funding opportunities for project execution. The halftime meeting also provided important room for informal gatherings between project participants. These moments of personal interaction translated into new motivation and mutual trust—an important foundation for the next project stages.

1.5.4 Third stage—from idea to project execution

In the third stage, the tandems continued their productive work and met, either face-to-face or online, to discuss issues such as the progress they had made, challenges they needed to face and the further steps that would lead them toward project completion.

In collaboration with their coaches, they looked for an appropriate platform. Starting from the first edition, it was apparent that in-person meetings were vital for a successful project, but that online communication channels could allow tandems to collaborate flexibly across borders.

In some instances, participants used an AI translation tool both in online and in-person meetings to support the work of the individual tandems.



The tandem “Citizen-centred healthcare” using the AI translation tool during a meeting.

The tandems then organised a final (fifth) meeting to put the finishing touches on their projects before final completion.

2 Making the project and its added value more visible

The European Region also relies on strong public relations efforts—combining targeted press work with the production of video content. Building on this, the project outcomes were presented to citizens during public events and press conferences organised with the project partners.

Press work and production of video content

Local media and specialist journals covered the Fit4Co CBO programme and its individual projects on a regular basis. To ensure professional and effective public relations, we tasked the Austrian private TV broadcaster Tirol TV with documenting major Fit4Co events project tandems’ progress through video reports and interviews.



Tirol TV documenting the work of the project tandem “Check dam for the border river in San Candido/Innichen and Sillian.”

Website www.fit4co.eu

The project website was designed to serve as central information hub providing access to all relevant information—ranging from current news and videos to details about the cooperation tandems—at the click of a button: www.fit4co.eu.

Closing events

Fit4Co CBO offers an innovative model for cross-border project management, and is therefore presented to other European partners as a benchmark model.

In October 2025, Fit4Co CBO will present central project findings during the European Week of Regions and Cities. The workshop focuses on actionable approaches on cross-border cooperation and creates space for exchange between local and European players. The two European Regions present their joint bottom-up approach for overcoming administrative barriers and for strengthening cooperation by illustrating hands-on examples. As Fit4Co CBO's is so important for cross-border cooperation in Europe, Interreg Europe will join them as a partner for the event.

Key Fit4Co CBO insights with particular relevance for the Alpine region will also be presented during the EUSALP Annual Forum in November 2025 in Innsbruck and introduced to a wider audience. Furthermore, an additional closing event will provide a concise overview of the Fit4Co CBO outcomes and an opportunity to reflect on and wrap up the project.



Find more Fit4Co CBO
videos and news



European Week of Regions and Cities in Brussels: The Interreg Project Fit4Co CBO taking the European stage.

3 Introducing and evaluating the EGTC European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino Fit4Co CBO tandems

3.1 EGTC European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino Fit4Co CBO tandems

Fit4Co CBO has established institutional cooperation in the following areas:

Risk prevention disaster control:

- Check dam for the border river in Innichen/San Candido

Municipal partnerships:

- Developing and designing the border area between Innichen/San Candido
- Project to expand the cross-municipal long-distance trail "Projects between the municipalities of Prettau/Predoi, Krimml, Brandberg im Zillertal and Prägraten am Großvenediger: Three-Country Trail and Periphery Connect"
- European Region municipal council brochure

Tourism development:

- Munich to Venezia cycling route
- Sustainability skills for tourist and travel guides

Regional planning:

- Cross-border working group for the Brenner Base Tunnel (BBT)
- Improving the Passo di Stalle/Staller Sattel area

Health-care sector:

- Cross-border air emergency cooperation
- Citizen-centred healthcare
- University sports

Youth projects:

- Crazy Bike painting competition
- We are European Region
- Humanitarian international law

Science, research and finance:

- PAR-TY-CO - Particle Technology Hub
- Glossary of financial law (Italian–German)

Administrative cooperation:

- Connected human resource development for State Administrations

Check dam for the border river in Innichen/San Candido and Sillian



Project kick-off

Identifying the baseline:

- Different options for a check dam on the border river, along with cost estimates, have already been prepared
- Our project also has points of contact with the project "Developing and designing the border area between Sillian and Innichen/San Candido (SINN)", which might require coordination
- Setting up control structures on the border river may call for an according "State agreement"—as no legal guidelines currently exist for cross-border projects
 - No benchmark



Stage 1

- Adapting the existing (Skolaut) study
- Defining the relevant authorities
- Focusing on the Boundary commission



Stage 2

- Translating and adding to the existing study
- Contacting the Boundary commission via the European Region
- Defining responsibilities for maintenance/operations and cost distribution
 - Identifying precedents for cross-border projects
- Preparing a cost-benefit analysis according to the Austrian model



Stage 3

- Contacting funding bodies (such as b-solutions)
- Performing on-site inspection with all stakeholders
 - Agreeing on technical details



Project closure

- Engaging in close collaboration, exchange and meetings with the legal consultant provided by b-solutions
- Planning and defining the next steps

Check dam for the border river in Innichen/San Candido and Sillian

As part of the European Region Fit4Co CBO project, planning control structures for the border river in Innichen/San Candido and Sillian hydro-engineering and forestry measures aim to protect the state highway, railway, cycling route and buildings. The border river presents a high risk for this infrastructure. With respect to its technical dimension, the details of this project idea have already been defined; its execution at the border between Italy and Austria, however, will require relevant approvals and agreements. Due to a lack of clear legislation, regulations or procedures established for such cross-border activity, this project aims to define an appropriate legal framework.

"With this project, we aim to lay the groundwork for future control structures on the border river between Innichen/San Candido and Sillian to eliminate the risk it poses to the state highway, railway, cycling route and existing buildings in the area". Fabio De Polo



Photo, from left to right: F. De Polo (Department for check dams, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano), M. Martin (Department for check dams, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano), I. Schreiner (expert for check dams and avalanche barriers, federal state of Tyrol), H. Pussnig (expert for check dams and avalanche barriers, federal state of Tyrol), W. Eisendle (coach); not pictured: G. Walter (expert for check dams and avalanche barriers, federal state of Tyrol).

- **Project lead:**
Fabio De Polo, Department for check dams, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano (South Tyrol)
- **Coach:**
Walter Eisendle
- **Project partners:**
 1. Department for check dams, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano (South Tyrol)
 2. Check dams and avalanche barriers, federal state of Tyrol (Tyrol)

Project results

- Stakeholders were largely able to define the technical procedures, organisational structure and responsibilities of the two countries over the course of the project.
- The tandem received additional support from an expert consultant provided by b-solutions.

Challenges

- The tandem expects legal and administrative support from the expert to initiate the necessary approval and funding procedures.

Project outlook

- Clarification of the legal and administrative requirements for operational implementation with the aid of an external legal consultant (b-solutions)
- Creating and submitting all relevant applications for the approval procedure
- Joining operative forces for the cross-border implementation of the "Check dam for the border river in Innichen/San Candido and Sillian" project

Project brief	
Partners:	2
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Previous experience (project):	Yes
Project size (financial budget):	Large
Project partner languages:	German, Italian
Project language:	German
Project to be implemented:	Yes

Developing and designing the border area between Sillian and Innichen/San Candido



Project kick-off

- Specifying cooperation goals
- Identifying partners and their roles
- Initiating review of status quo

Stage 1

- Schedule planning
- Liaising with the project tandem "Check dam for the border river in Innichen/San Candido and Sillian"

Stage 2

- Developing project ideas
- Identifying potential border obstacles and appropriate solutions

Stage 3

- Assessing different needs on both sides of the border
- Dividing project tasks and prioritising interventions
 - Dialogue at the municipal level

Project closure

- Defining future priorities
- Preparing relevant project applications
- Liaising with funding offices and filing project applications

Developing and designing the border area between Sillian and Innichen/San Candido

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This project seeks to improve both the visual character and strategic utility of the border area. By applying conceptual, ecological and social measures, they will not only become more attractive but also be recognised as a connecting space between the regions.

Border areas tend to be places people travel through—not to. This project intends to turn these spots into vibrant community hubs—with more green spaces, common areas, public art and harmonious design.

"The market municipalities Sillian and Innichen/San Candido share one common goal: rethinking and redesigning the border area and turning it into a vibrant space for encounters. With targeted measures, we want to create a space that brings people together instead of dividing them. What once used to be a border should become a symbol for cooperation and regional cohesion. We would like to thank everybody involved and look forward to the next steps of this trailblazing project." Franz Schneider, Klaus Rainer



Photo, from left to right: F. Schneider (Sillian market town Mayor), K. Rainer (Innichen/San Candido market town Mayor), K. Lindner (coach), H. Pussnig (Office for check dams and avalanche barriers, Lienz district), M. Moser (Department for check dams, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano), T. Marangoni (European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino); not pictured: O. Trauner (Eastern Tyrol tourism association).

• Project lead:

Franz Schneider, Sillian market town Mayor (Tyrol)

• Coach:

Karin Lindner

• Project partners:

1. Sillian market town (Tyrol)
2. Innichen/San Candido market town (South Tyrol)
3. Eastern Tyrol tourism association (Tyrol)

• External partners:

1. Raumschmiede ZT GmbH (Lienz, Tyrol)

Project results | Several project applications have been prepared:

- 1. Bike route:
 - Route has been improved for safety
 - Information (QR codes, websites, info panels, etc.)
 - Visibility of border crossing (culture, history)
- 2. Road layout design:
 - Street layout and buildings
 - Truck routing, passing cars, etc.
 - Creating a landmark (culture, history)
- 3. Building "wrapping"
 - Repurposing existing buildings for cultural or museum use

Challenges

- Securing funds
- Cooperating with the "Check dam" tandem
- Differing legal frameworks (Austria/Italy)
- Pending discussions with landowners

Project outlook

- A celebration at the border area will wrap up the project and represent an important public milestone. The celebration will provide an opportunity to present the steps taken and ideas developed so far, as well as to engage in dialogue with interested citizens and people.
- The workshop projects have been submitted, and stakeholders will now discuss initial implementation measures.

Project brief	
Partners:	3
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Previous experience (project):	No
Project size (financial budget):	Small/Medium
Project partner languages:	German
Project language:	German
Project to be implemented:	Yes

Projects between the municipalities of Prettau/Predoi, Krimml, Brandberg im Zillertal and Prägraten am Großvenediger

1. Three-Country Trail: project to expand the cross-municipal long-distance trail "Hoch Tirol Trail"



Three-Country Trail: project to expand the cross-municipal long-distance trail “Hoch Tirol Trail”

This project revitalises the historic relationship between Pretttau/Predoi (South Tyrol), Prägraten am Großvenediger (Eastern Tyrol), Brandberg im Zillertal (Northern Tyrol) and Krimml (Salzburg). A cross-border circular alpine trail is being created, repairing existing hiking trails and enhancing the route with cultural and scientific elements. These measures aim to lay a sustainable foundation for tourism and cooperation in the region.

“On a map, borders are lines—in the mountains, they are paths of connection.”
Robert Alexander Steger



Photo, from left to right: E. Czerny (Mayor of Krimml), R.A. Steger (Mayor of Pretttau/Predoi), H. Ebenbichler (Mayor of Brandberg im Zillertal), M. Kogler (Brandberg im Zillertal), S. Karbon (coach), I. Weißkopf (Prägraten am Großvenediger), P. Lemberger (Krimml), T. Kaser (Pretttau/Predoi), G. Isplitzer (Mayor of Prägraten am Großvenediger).

- **Project lead:**
Robert Alexander Steger, Mayor of Pretttau/Predoi (South Tyrol)
 - **Coach:**
Sonja Karbon
- **Project partners:**
 1. Municipality of Pretttau/Predoi (South Tyrol)
 2. Municipality of Krimml (Salzburg)
 3. Municipality of Brandberg im Zillertal (Tyrol)
 4. Municipality of Prägraten am Großvenediger (Tyrol)

Project results

- Needs defined
- Commonalities determined
- Stakeholder network established
- Historic border crossings made visible

Challenges

- Varying regional administrative structures
- Complying with Alpine nature conservation obligations
- Coordinating four regions
- Facing weather and seasonal constraints in the Alps
- Handling cross-border approval processes

Project outlook

- Sustainable trail use
- Yearly trail competition with chip system
- Continuous further development by local partners
- Contribution to slow tourism and cultural identity
- Broader use of digital information and booking systems

Project brief	
Partners:	4
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Previous experience (project):	Yes
Project size (financial budget):	Medium
Project partner languages:	German
Project language:	German
Project to be implemented:	Yes

2. Periphery Connect



Project kick-off

- Defining the project goals
- Identifying working strategies



Stage 1

- Defining vision and theme
- Identifying the baseline and problem
 - Defining target groups
 - Identifying the stakeholders



Stage 2

- Identifying the tangible work elements
 - Defining work packages
 - Allotting work packages



Stage 3

- Preparing budget
- Developing project outline



Project closure

- Detailing work packages
- Scheduling, establishing contact for continuing the application

Periphery Connect

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This project seeks to redefine, specify and value the role of small municipalities in Austria and Italy. Obstacles regarding different legal systems, administrations and communication are reduced in the border region to drive innovative, replicable solutions and to strengthen the position of local stakeholders. Social innovation, digital tools and trans-national networks give rise to sustainable structures that increase resiliency and enable cohesive, future-proof regional development.

"By removing cross-border obstacles, harnessing social innovations and digital tools and shaping resilient, future-proof regional development, in a joint effort, we strengthen municipalities located in the Austrian and Italian periphery." Robert Alexander Steger



Photo, from left to right: G. Hochgruber (Prettau/Predoi), T. Kaser (Prettau/Predoi), R.A. Steger (Mayor of Prettau/Predoi), G. Islitzer (Mayor of Prägraten am Großvenediger), M. Kogler (Brandberg im Zillertal), I. Weißkopf (Prägraten am Großvenediger), P. Lemberger (Krimml), Erich Czerny (Mayor of Krimml), H. Ebenbichler (Mayor of Brandberg im Zillertal).

• Project lead:

Robert Alexander Steger, Mayor of Prettau/Predoi (South Tyrol)

• Coach:

Sonja Karbon

• Project partners:

1. Municipality of Prettau/Predoi (South Tyrol)
2. Municipality of Krimml (Salzburg)
3. Municipality of Brandberg im Zillertal (Tyrol)
4. Municipality of Prägraten am Großvenediger (Tyrol)

Project results

- Stakeholder network established
- Ongoing further exchange
- Decision made to file a funding application

Challenges

- Defining goals
- Coordinating stakeholders' differing skills

Project outlook

- Strengthening cross-border cooperation with strategies, tools and events for municipalities in the periphery
- Reducing administrative and legal obstacles in the border region with targeted Interreg action
- Developing long-term digital tools (toolkits, templates) for municipal action and administration
- Increasing political visibility of municipalities in the periphery with evidence-based research, policy briefs and case studies

Project brief	
Partners:	4
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Previous experience (project):	Yes
Project size (financial budget):	Medium
Project partner languages:	German
Project language:	German
Project to be implemented:	Yes

European Region municipal councils brochure



European Region municipal councils brochure

The brochure portrays the Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino European Region and is targeted at regional municipal councils in particular. It highlights the European Region’s historic background and illustrates its aims, tasks and the structure of its entities. A guide will support readers to develop their own projects and to access key funding programmes. The integration of digital contents via QR codes and links enables an interactive reading experience.

“It is our goal to further strengthen the European Region. This brochure will motivate municipalities to set joint projects across borders in motion.” Benedikt Galler



Photo, from left to right:
 N. Mascherpa (European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino), D. Sartori (Municipal Association of Trentino), F. Tiefenthaler (European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino), P. Niegmann (Municipal Association of South Tyrol), V. Mengin (coach), B. Galler (Municipal Association of South Tyrol), T. Marangoni (European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino), T. Schuster (Municipal Association of South Tyrol)

- **Project lead:**
 Benedikt Galler, Municipal Association of South Tyrol (South Tyrol)
- **Coach:**
 Verena Mengin
- **Project partners:**
 1. Municipal Association of South Tyrol (South Tyrol)
 2. Municipal Association of Tyrol (Tyrol)
 3. Municipal Association of Trentino (Trentino)
- **External partners:**
 1. Effekt! GmbH (South Tyrol)

Project results

- Information brochure for municipal councils created regarding the European Region
- Awareness raised regarding possibilities for realising joint cross-border projects
- Institutional cooperation between Municipal Associations and municipalities in the European Region strengthened

Challenges

- Selecting engaging and appealing content
- Overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers

Project outlook

- Press conference to introduce the brochure
- Distributing the brochure to all municipal councils in the European Region
- Increasing involvement of municipal councils in European Region and EU initiatives

Project brief	
Partners:	3
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Previous experience (project):	Yes
Project size (financial budget):	Medium
Project partner languages:	German, Italian
Project language:	German, Italian
Project to be implemented:	Yes

Munich–Venezia cycling route



© IDM Südtirol-Alto Adige/Moling

Project kick-off

- Identifying an attractive route for cycle tourism between Munich and Venice
- Analysing the existing organisational structure and its weaknesses
 - Identifying the need for uniform route management



Stage 1

- Developing governance principles for the route
 - Defining the Route Manager role for operative coordination
- Assigning responsibilities and tasks to the partners in the three countries



Stage 2

- Developing a marketing plan and a tourism concept
- Developing a communication strategy for internal and external stakeholders
 - Identifying measures for quality assurance and control



Stage 3

- Structuring a financing strategy for the decade ahead
 - Specifying a business plan for route management
 - Defining performance indicators and measurement



Project closure

- Implementing the Route Manager role
- Strengthening the cultural and economic relation between the regions
 - Ensuring sustainable cycling route development for the next years

Munich–Venezia cycling route

The cycling route between Munich and Venice (MUC–VCE) represents an ambitious cross-border project connecting the Bavarian metropolis Munich with the Italian lagoon city Venice. Stretching for about 560 kilometres, this route takes cyclists across three countries—Germany, Austria and Italy—offering an exceptional mix of Alpine challenges and Mediterranean atmosphere. Launched in 2013 by merging two related Interreg initiatives, this project now requires a clear organisational model for the decade ahead.

“With this project, we want to lay the foundation for consistent route management and transform the cycling route MUC–VCE into an appealing and sustainable cross-border tourism offer for the decade ahead.” Ulrike Pfeifhofer



Photo, from left to right: U. Pfeifhofer (IDM Südtirol business and tourism hub), K. Fabke (München Tourismus tourism organisation), F. Loreggian (external partner), E. Kasslatter (coach), M. Friede (Hall-Wattens regional tourism association), G. Vianello (Innsbruck Tourismus tourism organisation), B. Jenewein (Wipptal tourism association). Not pictured: A. Wüstefeld (Tölzer Land Tourismus tourism organisation), E. Frontull (Silberregion Karwendel tourism association), T. Schär (Alpenregion Tegernsee Schliersee tourism association), M. Wirtenberger (Achensee Tourismus tourism organisation)

• Project lead:

Ulrike Pfeifhofer, IDM business and tourism hub (South Tyrol)

• Coach:

Ellis Kasslatter

• Project partners:

1. Partners in Germany (Bavaria):

- Tölzer Land Tourismus tourism organisation
- Munich district
- Wipptal tourism association
- München Tourismus tourism organisation
- Alpenregion Tegernsee Schliersee tourism association

2. Partners in Austria (Tyrol):

- Silberregion Karwendel tourism association

- Innsbruck Tourismus tourism organisation

- Region Hall-Wattens tourism association

- Achensee Tourismus tourism organisation

3. Partners in Italy:

- IDM Südtirol/Alto Adige business and tourism hub
- Foundation DMO Dolomiti Bellunesi

• Stakeholders:

- Region of Veneto
- World Heritage Hills
- Cortina Marketing Product Development

• External partners:

1. Etifor srl (Padova, Veneto)

Project results

- A clear governance structure with clear roles and responsibilities was established
- Professional route management along the entire 560km was developed
- A ten-year business plan for sustainable financing was created
- An innovative tourism concept and marketing plan were developed

Challenges

- Cross-border coordination between Germany, Austria and Italy
- Overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers
- Aligning different legal provisions
- Missing partners in the Region of Veneto
- Limited financial resources (currently operating on a budget of €33,500.00)

Project outlook

- Implementing the Route Manager role for the next three years
- Improving infrastructure and safety along the route
- Expanding the digital offer (website, app, social media)
- Developing themed routes and sustainable tourism concepts
- Exploring new financing sources and partnerships

Project brief

Partners:	11
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Previous experience (project):	Yes
Project size (financial budget):	Medium
Project partner languages:	German, Italian
Project language:	German, Italian
Project to be implemented:	Yes

Sustainability skills for tourist and travel guides



Project kick-off

- Defining the strategic overall and detailed goals of further training/ additional qualification programme regarding sustainability
- Identifying potential additional project partners in South Tyrol, Tyrol and Trentino



Stage 1

- Internal project workshop to discuss the content of training and skill modules
 - Initial draft of a project structure plan
 - Conducting stakeholder analysis



Stage 2

- Preliminary outline for course structure and duration, potential training sites, performance assessment, draft budget
- Presenting and discussing the project with the Wipptal CLLD region; revising the project plan accordingly
- Reaching out to potential other cooperation partners in the European Region, in particular in the Wipptal area



Stage 3

- Drafting project application for a medium-sized project for the CLLD Wipptal financing framework



Project closure

- Planned medium-sized project submission in the Wipptal CLLD area in summer/autumn 2025

Sustainability skills for tourist and travel guides

Topics like nature conservation, resource exploitation, clean water, energy, education and equality are becoming increasingly important for guided tours through urban, rural and alpine areas. Tourists expect detailed, clearly presented information and unforgettable experiences. Tour guides need targeted opportunities for further training—regarding tour content and methodical and didactic skills such as storytelling—to convey these complex interactions in a comprehensible yet exciting way.

“Tour guides, as advocates for sustainable tourism, can positively impact tourists’ understanding of and behaviour towards sustainability through their tours, as travelling experiences can trigger profound transformation processes. First-hand experiences of sustainable practices whilst travelling often inspire people to implement environmentally friendly habits in their daily lives. Therefore, continuous further training for tour guides is essential.” Miriam Weiß



Photo, from left to right: G. Neuhauser (University of Innsbruck), L. Fuchs (coach), M. Weiß (Eurac Research), P. Überbacher (Association of tourist guides and tourist leaders in South Tyrol).

- **Project lead:**
Miriam L. Weiß, Institute for Regional Development, Eurac Research (South Tyrol)
- **Coach:**
Liebgard Fuchs
- **Project partners:**
 1. EURAC Research, Institute for Regional Development (South Tyrol)
 2. University of Innsbruck (Tyrol)
 3. Association of tourist guides and tourist leaders in South Tyrol (South Tyrol)

Project results

- The spatial project dimension was thoroughly discussed throughout the meetings. This revealed that implementing the project would in principal be possible at both the local/regional level (such as in rural areas) and in urban settings. Stakeholders also discussed if a smaller-scale approach would be more suitable for the project than a broader international collaboration, for example with partners from across the Alpine region.
- There is now a tendency towards developing the project initially as a pilot project at regional and local level, which could be expanded geographically in the future if it is successfully implemented.

Challenges

- The matchmaking process, meaning the alignment of the partner structure and the financial framework for planning and executing the project idea
- So far, reflections indicate that surveying the tour guides will provide an additional input for designing training programmes that meet both current and future needs. Therefore, a survey should be conducted as soon as possible.

Project outlook

- Submitting the project to be considered in the CLLD Wipptal financial framework
- Ongoing networking at the local, supra-regional and international level to further develop the idea and think bigger
- Conducting surveys and a market analysis to fine-tune the focus of further training/qualification programmes

Project brief	
Partners:	3
Prior acquaintance before the project:	To some extent
Previous experience (project):	Yes
Project size (financial budget):	Medium
Project partner languages:	German
Project language:	German
Project to be implemented:	Yes

Cross-border working group regarding the Brenner Base Tunnel (BBT)



Project kick-off

- Kick-off event in Toblach/Dobbiaco on October 2 and 3, 2024
- Assessing the status quo

Stage 1

- 11th November 2024, at BBT Tunnel World in Steinach
- M. Schneider and J. Gruber guided the project group through the show rooms and answered their questions
 - Discussion points:
 - Verona–Munich route (continuation)
 - Kufstein–Verona route (completion planned in 2040)
 - Fortezza–Innsbruck route (completion planned in 2032)
 - Bavaria access route (currently uncertain)
- Online survey concerning BBT awareness in the Wipptal border regions



Stage 2

- Developing the questionnaire for a so-called "transfer of knowledge" with experts at Alpbach



Stage 3

- Conducting a freight carrier survey (BBT awareness)
- Developing a Fit4BBT catalogue including open questions, suggestions and demands for the Wipptal border region



Project closure

- Cross-border meeting of Mayors at the Brennero Pass with the Provincial Councillors for Transport Zumtobel and Alfrieder (handing over the Fit4BBT catalogue)

Cross-border working group regarding the Brenner Base Tunnel (BBT)

A cross-border working group examined the short-, medium-, and long-term effects of the Brenner Base Tunnel (BBT) on the border regions of Wipptal and the area from Innsbruck to Bozen/Bolzano from 2030 onwards. It aims to develop and initiate sustainable regional action. An expert questionnaire includes issues of local transport, infrastructure, development of railway lines, regulation of freight transport and action to prevent gridlocks. Furthermore, a cross-border exchange between the Provincial Councillors for Transport, Mayors and freight carriers focused on possible solutions.

"The Brenner Base Tunnel will be instrumental in moving traffic from road to rail. Moreover, from 2032, more train connections can be offered for local transport between North and South Tyrol. Over the next few years, regional passenger transport will see major improvements, with no need to change trains at the Brennero Pass." René Zumtobel



Photo, from left to right: Martin Schneider (BBT SE), S. Richter (Wipptal regional management), K. Lindner (coach), S. Auckenthaler (GRW Wipptal/Eisacktal), C. Turin (GRW Wipptal/Eisacktal), M. Reinthaler (Wipptal), S. Gufler (Mayor of Pfitsch/Val di Vizze), H. Aukenthaler (Freienfeld/Campo di Trens); not pictured: V. Überegger (Mayor of Freienfeld/Campo di Trens), T. Klapfer (Mayor of Franzensfeste/Fortezza), H. Beermeister (Wipptal regional management), W. Kiechl (Mayor of Ellbögen), A. Neuner (Regional management of Innsbruck-Land district).

• Project lead:

Sabine Richter, Wipptal regional management (Tyrol)

• Coach:

Karin Lindner

• Project partners:

1. Wipptal regional management (Tyrol)
2. Wipptal district (South Tyrol)

3. Municipality of Franzensfeste/Fortezza

(South Tyrol)

4. Municipality of Freienfeld/Campo di Trens

(South Tyrol)

5. Municipality of Pfitsch/Val di Vizze (South Tyrol)

6. Municipality of Ellbögen (Tyrol)

7. Wipptal, Steinach tourism association of (Tyrol)

8. Regional management of Innsbruck-Land district (Tyrol)

9. Wipptal/Eisacktal Regional Development Cooperative (South Tyrol)

Project results

- The BBT working group has established interdisciplinary expertise
- Fit4BBT catalogue with specific demands for the border region Wipptal created
- Catalogue submitted as a series of tasks to regional policy-makers

Challenges

- As of 2025, no direct and tangible measures for improvement for the Wipptal border regions after completion of the BBT (2032 or later) can be identified
- Many questions remain unanswered regarding future use of the BBT and its impact on the Wipptal border regions in 2025

Project outlook

- The working group (+ Mayors' Conference and Interreg Council Wipptal) will engage in regular dialogue on the BBT's current status, at least once a year

Project brief	
Partners:	9
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Previous experience (project):	No
Project size (financial budget):	Small
Project partner languages:	German
Project language:	German
Project to be implemented:	No

Improvement of Staller Saddle area



Improvement of Staller Saddle area

As an Alpine pass, Staller Saddle represents a key connection between Italy and Austria. Developing and conserving this unique area requires thorough planning and coordination. Both sides face challenges in wastewater management and power supply. Traffic is a greater concern on the Italian side, and a proper solution has yet to be found for the “Hexenschenke” bar, which remained open until recently. An extensive master plan will contribute to infrastructure development and provide quality solutions.

“We want Staller Saddle to become a place of encounter shining a light on the historic aspects and the beauty of nature. Our goal is not to attract more visitors, but to enhance the qualities of Staller Saddle.” Carmen Aichner



Photo, from left to right: T. Marangoni (European Region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino), T. Schuster (Mayor of Rasen-Antholz/Rasun-Anterselva), G. Zingerle (Antholztal tourism association president), E. Kasslatter (coach), I. Hafele (Mayor of St. Jakob in Deferegggen), C. Aichner (Antholztal tourism association Managing Director), O. Trauner (Eastern Tyrol tourism association).

• Project lead:

Carmen Aichner, Antholztal tourism association Managing Director (South Tyrol)

• Coach:

Ellis Kasslatter

• Project partners:

- 1. Municipality of Rasen-Antholz/Rasun-Anterselva (South Tyrol)
- 2. Antholztal tourism association (South Tyrol)
- 3. Municipality of St. Jakob in Deferegggen (Tyrol)
- 4. Eastern Tyrol tourism association (Tyrol)

• External partners:

- 1. Raumschmiede ZT GmbH (Lienz, Tyrol)
- 2. Ingena ZT GmbH (Innsbruck, Tyrol)

Project results

- Master plan with three execution phases developed (2025–2034)
- Infrastructure concerns resolved (water, wastewater, power)
- Traffic improved with an intelligent traffic light system
- Public sanitary facilities and modern bar constructed
- Hiking trail across the military sites reflecting history and culture designed

Challenges

- Coordinating between two countries with differing legal framework conditions
- Sustainable planning for an ecologically sensitive alpine area
- Securing funds for the extensive infrastructure plans
- Balancing tourist exploitation and conservation of natural beauty

Project outlook

- Executing the three project phases by 2034
- Establishing a barrier-free loop trail (in line with conservation concerns)
- Developing cross-border infrastructure resilience (data, power network)
- Establishing Staller Saddle as a place of encounter highlighting history and nature

Project brief	
Partners:	4
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Previous experience (project):	No
Project size (financial budget):	Large
Project partner languages:	German, Italian
Project language:	German
Project to be implemented:	Yes

Cross-border cooperation of air rescue services



Project kick-off

- Defining challenges
- Differing legal framework conditions
- Considering cross-border barriers
- Considering operative and practical barriers

Stage 1

- Goals and expectations of the individual organisations involved
- Defining, aligning and discussing the project & formulating the specific goal
 - Visualising procedures
- Clustering different work packages

Stage 2

- Getting new project members on board
 - Defining stakeholders
 - Defining the specific goal

Stage 3

- Defining work packages
- Exploring framework conditions like time and place
- Outlining the basic timeline of a rescue exercise
- Outlining the structure of a manual for rescue exercises

Project closure

- Defining the exercise timeframe
- Participating staff/organisations
- Rescue exercise scenario

Cross-border cooperation of air rescue services

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In the Alpine region, rescue missions involving multiple casualties in rough terrain are steadily increasing—driven by climate change, more frequent extreme weather events and increasing leisure activities. In many cases, rapid rescue is the only way to save lives. Since resources are limited, in the European Region countries, cross-border cooperation is of crucial importance. Efficiently and effectively coordinated rescue missions require joint action and uniform standards and procedures.

"Our motivation is to continuously improve cross-border air rescue services in order to save lives even more quickly and effectively—anywhere, anytime." Stefan Viehweider



Photo, from left to right: S. Viehweider (HELI - Air Rescue South Tyrol), L. Moroder (South Tyrol Health Service), M. Leimegger (White Cross Rescue Association), K. Schwarzenberger (Christopherus Air Rescue Service), M. Thaler (Flugrettungsverein Air Rescue Service), G. Wurm (coach), T. Huber (Tyrol Mountain Rescue Service).

• Project lead:

Stefan Viehweider, South Tyrolean air rescue service HELI - Flugrettung Südtirol EO (South Tyrol)

• Coach:

Günther Wurm

• Project partners:

1. HELI - Air Rescue South Tyrol EO (South Tyrol)
2. South Tyrol Health Service (South Tyrol)
3. Christopherus Air Rescue Service (Tyrol)
4. White Cross Rescue Association (South Tyrol)
5. Mountain Rescue Tyrol (Tyrol)

Project results

- A cross-border air rescue exercise was planned and executed to identify possible weaknesses and develop algorithms, equipment and even more efficient procedures.

Challenges

- Coordination between different rescue services
- Differing legal frameworks
- Communication across languages and countries
- Adapting differing triage systems
- Meteorological conditions and topography
- Logistical challenges
- Resource management and availability
- Reducing response time

Project outlook

- Further improve joint standards
- Regular cross-border rescue exercises
- Integrating new technologies
- Strengthening international cooperation
- Creating a sustainable training programme

Project brief	
Partners:	5
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Previous experience (project):	Yes
Project size (financial budget):	Medium
Project partner languages:	German, Italian
Project language:	German
Project to be implemented:	Yes

Citizen-centred healthcare



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Citizen-centred healthcare

The project aims to strengthen networking and cooperation between patient ombudsmen services and self-help and patient organisations in Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino. Visible results include joint events and creation of collaborative informational materials. In addition, the collection and communication of cross-border health data is to be improved and data protection in digital health services optimised.

“We would like to inform citizens of their rights as patients and create a network between patient and self-help organisations.” Veronika Meyer



Photo, from left to right: V. Unterhofer (Department for Health Care, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano), N. Stingl (Patient Advocacy, Federal State of Tyrol), E. Viliotti (Health Council, Autonomous Province of Trento), F. Trotter (employee at Autonomous Province of Trento), G. Cattoi (employee at Autonomous Province of Trento), G. Bertotti (Ombudsman Office, Autonomous Province of Trento), K. Nail (Selbsthilfe Tirol self-help organisation), Maria Pflazner-Stockl (Selbsthilfe Tirol self-help organisation), C. Fuchsbrugger (coach), Esther Giovanett (Federal Association for Social Affairs and Public Health KDS), E. Berger (Federal Association for Social Affairs and Public Health KDS), N. Peri (Ombudsman Office, Local Parliament of South Tyrol), V. Meyer (Ombudswoman, Local Parliament of South Tyrol), M. Mayr (Department for Health Care, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano), H. Kuba (Selbsthilfe Tirol self-help organisation), G. Bernardi (Ombudsman, Autonomous Province of Trento), B. Rudisch (Patient Advocacy, Federal State of Tyrol).

- **Project lead:**
Birger Rudisch, Patient Advocacy, Federal State of Tyrol (Tyrol)
- **Coach:**
Christoph Fuchsbrugger
- **Project partners:**
 1. Patient Advocacy, State of Tyrol (Tyrol)
 2. Ombudsman Office, Local Parliament of South Tyrol (South Tyrol)
 3. Ombudsman Office, Autonomous Province of Trento (Trentino)

4. Selbsthilfe Tirol self-help organisation (Tyrol)
 5. Health Council, Autonomous Province of Trento (Trentino)
 6. Federal Association for Social Affairs and Public Health KDS (South Tyrol)
- **Stakeholders:**
 1. Office of the Provincial Councillor for Health Care, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano (South Tyrol)
 2. Department for Health Care, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano (South Tyrol)

Project results

- Establishment of a stable network between the patient ombudsmen services and self-help and patients’ organisations, visible at a joint event on 26th October 2025 in Innsbruck and a co-edited information brochure.

Challenges

- Linguistic barriers
- Project management
- Different technical resources for virtual communication
- Geographical distance
- Financing results across provincial and federal borders
- Different levels of organisations and responsibilities of Ombudsman Offices and self-help organisations

Project outlook

- Developing a health care network across the entire European Region in the long term
- Improved consultation for patients on their rights and available support programmes
- Model project for other border regions with similar challenges in their health care systems
- Providing information in simple language

Project brief	
Partners:	6
Prior acquaintance before the project:	No
Previous experience (project):	No
Project size (financial budget):	Medium
Project partner languages:	Italian, German
Project language:	Italian, German
Project to be implemented:	Yes

University sports



Project kick-off

- Defining target group
 - Defining goals
 - Defining next steps

Stage 1

- Assessing status quo
 - Identifying potential measures
- Developing a survey to study the target group and their needs

Stage 2

- Securing survey approval from different offices
 - Exploring further funding options

Stage 3

- Securing survey approval from different offices
 - Exploring further funding options

Project closure

- Survey ready for final approval and distribution (including schedule)
 - Deriving potential measures for later project stages

University sports

University staff are exposed to a sedentary lifestyle, increasing the risk of non-communicable diseases. Most physical activity programmes at universities address students, offering only limited opportunities for staff members.

This project seeks to reduce staff time spent sitting, through targeted measures like advice, training videos and group challenges. Access to this content is provided on a joint European Region web platform or mobile app. This approach will enhance social support for physical activity—not just at individual universities, but across the whole European Region.

"While organisational structures may differ, the needs of people are similar. Through cooperation we can find joint solutions and overcome obstacles." Paolo Bouquet



Photo, from left to right:
A. Mulè (Free University of Bozen/Bolzano), S. Vettorato (University of Trento), A. Origo (coach), S. Schöttl (University of Innsbruck). Not pictured: P. Bouquet (University of Trento), A. Carraro (Free University of Bozen/Bolzano), M. Kopp (University of Innsbruck)

• Project lead:

Paolo Bouquet, University of Trento
Sabrina Vettorato, University of Trento

• Coach:

Alessandro Origo

• Project partners:

1. University of Trento (Trentino)
2. Free University of Bolzano (South Tyrol)
3. University of Innsbruck (Tyrol)

Project results

- Working group on the topic
- Survey to determine target group needs
- Institutions' interest in continuing work on this topic

Challenges

- Adapting to the specific conditions in different university environments
- Handling limitations and obligations resulting from work contracts
- Obtaining the necessary agreement from different offices to distribute the survey

Project outlook

- Distributing the questionnaire
- Joint physical activity initiative for university staff
- Looking for appropriate funding

Project brief	
Partners:	3
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Previous experience (project):	Yes
Project size (financial budget):	Small
Project partner languages:	German, Italian, English
Project language:	English
Project to be implemented:	No

Crazy Bike painting contest



Crazy Bike painting contest

Stakeholders develop a concept for the first “Crazy Bike” painting contest edition for the 2025/2026 school year, to be held at primary schools in South Tyrol and Tyrol. Children can design their dream bike, with creativity and originality scoring particularly highly. The winning bikes for each country will be selected from the entries. They will be recreated in detail, presented to the public and then handed over to the winners. This initiative seeks to make children enthusiastic about bikes as a climate-friendly and cool means of transport.

“Turning bikes into icons. That is what we want to achieve with the Crazy Bike painting contest in Tyrol and South Tyrol. Children and adolescents should consider the bike a cool means of transport, enabling them to get around independently in everyday life.” Andrä Stigger



Photo, from left to right:
D. Trafoier (Südtiroler Transportstrukturen transport services company), F. Mair (Burggrafenamt/Burgraviato district), B. Zisser (coach), A. Stigger (Tyrol Climate Alliance).

- **Project lead:**
Andrä Stigger, Tyrol Climate Alliance (Tyrol)
- **Coach:**
Barbara Zisser

- **Project partners:**
 1. Tyrol Climate Alliance (Tyrol)
 2. Südtiroler Transportstrukturen transport services company (South Tyrol)
 3. Burggrafenamt/Burgraviato district (South Tyrol)

Project results

- Instructional material regarding cycling for the 3rd and 4th years of primary school created
- The concept for a cross-border drawing and painting contest was created, along with an effort and cost estimate
- Networking for further projects to increase road safety in the school environment established

Challenges

- Finding funding options for a cross-border drawing and painting contest

Project outlook

- Carrying out a cross-border drawing and painting contest regarding cycling (Crazy Bike) in Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino in the 2026/2027 school year, including a big closing event with pupils from all participating countries.

Project brief	
Partners:	3
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Previous experience (project):	Yes
Project size (financial budget):	Medium
Project partner languages:	German, Italian
Project language:	German
Project to be implemented:	Yes

We are European Region



Project kick-off

- Defining the framework conditions and goals
 - Planning of biannual event
- Design phase by Offices of the State Parliament
- Contribution of technical departments and scientific expertise



Stage 1

- Identifying an economic participant in accordance with the project goals



Stage 2

- Development of several variants by service provider



Stage 3

- Project partners assess the options developed
 - Analysis of each option's pros and cons



Project closure

- Fundamental decision in favour of option focusing on parliamentary work in the European Region
- First edition of the simulation game planned for 2026/2027 (during Tyrol's presidency of the joint parliamentary sessions)

We are European Region

On 15th June 2023, the joint session of the local parliaments of Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino unanimously agreed to launch "We are European Region". This biannual simulation game intends to promote democratic education in the respective regions. With support from local technical departments and universities, the Office of the State Parliament (Tyrol) and the General Secretariats of the Provincial Parliaments (South Tyrol and Trentino) will bear responsibility for formulating the concept of this simulation game.

"Everything starts with education—'We are European Region' raises democratic awareness in Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino." Maximilian Oswald



Photo, from left to right: P. Caldonazzi (Provincial Parliament of South Tyrol), M. Oswald (Office of the State Parliament of Tyrol), C. Bertolini (Provincial Parliament of Trentino), E. Alber (external partner), B. Jäger (coach), H. Seehauser (Provincial Parliament of South Tyrol).

• Project lead:

Maximilian Oswald (Office of the State Parliament of Tyrol)

• Coach:

Barbara Jäger

• Project partners:

1. Office of the State Parliament of Tyrol (Tyrol)
2. Provincial Parliament of South Tyrol (South Tyrol)
3. Provincial Parliament of Trentino (Trentino)

• External partner:

1. EURAC Research—Institute for Comparative Federalism (South Tyrol)

Project results

- The first edition of the simulation game focusing on parliamentary activities in the European Region is anticipated to be held in 2026/2027

Challenges

- **Coordination of existing initiatives:** The simulation game “We are European Region” adds to existing education initiatives focusing on the three local parliaments’ democracy and autonomy. It is important to create synergies and avoid overlaps with existing formats.
- **Coordination between the three regions:** Varying education systems, institutional structures and political cultures in Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino require well-coordinated action and flexible concepts.
- **Multilingualism:** The European Region’s linguistic diversity poses a particular challenge. The design of materials and procedures needs to enable an equal and inclusive participation in several languages (German and Italian).
- **Didactic alignment:** A pedagogic concept must allow for equal access and learning outcomes for students from three different school systems.

Project outlook

- Instead of merely understanding political processes, participants should be able to actively shape them. The simulation game provides room for free learning experiences, knowledge sharing and communal political education. Introducing their own perspectives and experiences, adolescents will expand their knowledge by cooperating with experts in democratic education and cross-border, participatory governance.
- In the context of this simulation game, they will receive new insights while connecting familiar concepts with existing initiatives and the democratic reality in the European Region. This will create a dynamic learning field, equipping young citizens with the skills necessary to assume responsibility, participate and explore how democracy works across borders.

Project brief

Partners:	3
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Previous experience (project):	Yes
Project size (financial budget):	Small
Project partner languages:	German, Italian
Project language:	German, Italian
Project to be implemented:	Yes

International humanitarian law



Project kick-off

- Getting to know the project partners and identifying expectations
 - Defining short-term and long-term goals
 - Defining the target group



Stage 1

- Identifying core issues for the project
 - Outlining partners’ expectations
- Identifying the participating partners and their respective roles
 - Defining the schedule
 - Defining the budget



Stage 2

- Defining the details of project activities (such as logistics, available resources)
 - Confirming academic accreditation of activities
- Exploring funding options: Consultation and adaptation of project elements



Stage 3

- Further research on funding options: Deep dive into non-European funds
 - Making further adjustments and revising project details
 - Maintaining project partner engagement



Project closure

- Finalising the funding application

The project establishes an innovative bridge between theory and practice of international humanitarian law by connecting university students and Red Cross volunteers. It trains active citizens, future knowledge advocates and values and leaders who inform their communities and promote active engagement. A combination of lectures, an intensive Summer School and an excursion to Geneva will strengthen cooperation between humanitarian stakeholders and researchers in the European Region.

"The core value of a project on international humanitarian law with its social and human dimension is now more important than ever—along with its potential to be replicated and expanded. This is an essential and urgent task that requires immediate action. It's a duty that we all share as inhabitants of this planet." Asja Gabardi



Photo, from left to right: A. Gabardi (Italian Red Cross, State Committee at the Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano), V. Mengin (coach), S. Baroncelli (Free University of Bozen/Bolzano). Not pictured: G. Demarco (Italian Red Cross, State Committee at the Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano), M. Andergassen (Italian Red Cross, State Committee at the Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano), P. Hilpold (University of Innsbruck), M. Amoroso (University of Trento), O. Cruder (Italian Red Cross, State Committee of the Autonomous Province of Trento), G. Kammerer (University of Innsbruck), M. Pertile (University of Trento), M. Beretta (Italian Red Cross, State Committee of the Autonomous Province of Trento), E. Zomer (Italian Red Cross, State Committee of the Autonomous Province of Trento).

• **Project leads:**

Asja Gabardi, Italian Red Cross, State Committee of the Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano (South Tyrol)
Giancarlo De Marco, Italian Red Cross, State Committee of the Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano (South Tyrol)

• **Coach:**

Verena Mengin

• **Project partners:**

1. Italian Red Cross, State Committee of the Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano (South Tyrol)
2. Italian Red Cross, State Committee of the Autonomous Province of Trento (Trentino)
3. Free University of Bozen/Bolzano (South Tyrol)
4. University of Innsbruck (Tyrol)
5. University of Trento (Trentino)

Project results

- A detailed and viable project idea for the identified funding source was developed
- A comprehensive and timely funding application with a project plan ready for implementation was created

Challenges

- Aligning the expectations of project partners (regarding topics, funding, timeframe and available resources)
- Developing strategies to ensure ongoing participation of Red Cross volunteers and students during the project course
- Coordinating ongoing involvement of project partners through steady and reliable communication
- Selecting the appropriate funding option

Project outlook

- Developing an innovative teaching method that combines theory with practice and seeks to train people to act as catalysts and advocates of knowledge and values. This involves an innovative approach that blends academic lectures with practical learning (based on practitioner reports, role plays, case studies, simulations ...).
- Promoting greater community involvement among young people and encouraging active citizenship to strengthen their position as multipliers of knowledge and values.
- Improving permanent cooperation between universities and the Red Cross Committees by fostering stable and structured synergies.

Project brief	
Partners:	5
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Previous experience (project):	Yes
Project size (financial budget):	Medium
Project partner languages:	Italian, German
Project language:	English
Project to be implemented:	pending

PAR-TY-CO: Particle Technology Hub



Project kick-off

- Getting to know the project partners (skills/networks/opportunities)
 - Analysing strengths and weaknesses (SWOT analysis)
 - Identifying areas of action and project scope

Stage 1

- Drafting project design
- Analysing stakeholders
- Project scope: Defining and refining range and limitations



Stage 2

- Project contents: Defining deliverables
- Work packages: Draft definition, initial cost estimates and discussion, feasibility analysis
 - 1st and 2nd level observations
- Discussion regarding expert consultation



Stage 3

- Project contents: defining and refining deliverables
 - Work packages: Final touches
 - Detailed planning
 - External expert: Vision board creation
- Project partners: Aligning perspectives/expressions of intent regarding work packages/defining responsibilities
 - Specification sheet: Draft



Project closure

- Joint submission of Interreg application

PAR-TY-CO: Particle Technology Hub

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This project aims to improve connections and exchanges between stakeholders in the field of particle technology (such as wastewater, waste management, microplastics, energy generation, food production) by ensuring all partners can rely on the necessary infrastructure (such as measurement devices), staff and expertise. In particular, this includes a digital platform to capture, connect, display and harness cross-border resources and to remove institutional obstacles. Based on this, new cross-border projects can be launched.

"Across the entire European Region, we have well-established local expertise and infrastructure in the field of particle technology. However, many stakeholders are working in silos. With this project, we want to create a hub that brings these stakeholders closer together and reduces institutional obstacles to future cooperation." Martin Pillei



Photo, from left to right: T. Senfter (MCI), B. Messner (MCI), N. Bleck (external partner); not pictured: M. Pillei (MCI), T. Kofler (MCI), S. Gell (MCI), A. Gronauer (Free University of Bozen/Bolzano), C. Ebner (University of Innsbruck), T. Lichtmannegger (University of Innsbruck), A. Bockreis (University of Innsbruck).

• Project lead:

Thomas Senfter, MCI (Tyrol)

• Coach:

Liebgard Fuchs

• Project partners:

1. Free University of Bozen/Bolzano (South Tyrol)
2. University of Innsbruck (Tyrol)
3. Management Center Innsbruck (Tyrol)

• External partners:

1. Nicolas Bleck (Tyrol)

Project results

- Consensus regarding project scope (expectations, contents, goals, keystones, costs, staff, duration, responsibilities)
- Basis for Interreg application

Challenges

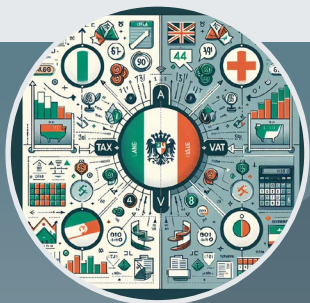
- Initially—vague understanding of project contents
- The illustrator provided by Fit4Co CBO played a key role by creating a vision board that presented the project content in a comprehensible and coordinated manner

Project outlook

- We will submit our project as an Interreg application labelled PAR-TY-CO (Particle Technology Cooperation) in the second quarter of 2025

Project brief	
Partners:	3
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Previous experience (project):	No
Project size (financial budget):	Large
Project partner languages:	German
Project language:	German
Project to be implemented:	Yes

Glossary of financial law (Italian–German)



Glossary of financial law (Italian–German)

The project seeks to introduce a joint bilingual glossary for taxation to streamline interaction between citizens/taxpayers and administrations. This seeks to assist German-speaking South Tyrolean taxpayers and Austrian businesses interested in the Italian market to comply with their tax duties.

“Developing an Italian–German glossary regarding tax legislation within the European Region represents a key step in bringing the administrations closer and making interactions with citizens and taxpayers smoother.” Giulio Righele



Photo, from left to right: N. Ralli (Eurac Research, Institute for Applied Linguistics), I. Stanizzi (Eurac Research, Institute for Applied Linguistics), A. Scafariello (Office for Revenue, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano), C. Fuchsbrugger (coach), L. Castlunger (Office for Revenue, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano), F. Masina (Italian Revenue Agency), P. Rossi (South Tyrolean Collection Agency), E. Happacher (University of Innsbruck), G. Righele (Italian Revenue Agency). Not pictured: M. Holzer (Italian Revenue Agency), D. Egger (Office for Revenue, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano), A. Lenz (Office for Revenue, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano).

- **Project lead:**
Giulio Righele, Italian Revenue Agency, Provincial Directorate Bozen/Bolzano (South Tyrol)
- **Coach:**
Christoph Fuchsbrugger
- **Project partners:**
 1. Italian Revenue Agency, Provincial Directorate Bozen/Bolzano (South Tyrol)
 2. Office for Revenue, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano (South Tyrol)
 3. Office for Linguistic Issues, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano (South Tyrol)
 4. University of Innsbruck, Department of Italian Law (Tyrol)
 5. EURAC Research, Institute for Applied Linguistics (South Tyrol)
 6. South Tyrolean Collection Agency (South Tyrol)
- **Stakeholder:**
 1. Austrian Economic Chamber, Advantage Austria Milano

Project results

- Project draft created, work method discussed
- Getting to know each other, establishing contacts and forming a possible expert group on the topic

Challenges

- With partners representing administrations working at different levels, in different areas and countries, project communication and execution were slowed down
- Difficulties securing funding and defining the partners’ roles—despite strong commitment and interest

Project outlook

- Launching a pilot project with a test session to introduce the glossary, awaiting funding to involve all partners

Project brief	
Partners:	6
Prior acquaintance before the project:	No
Previous experience (project):	Yes
Project size (financial budget):	Small/Medium
Project partner languages:	German, Italian
Project language:	Italian
Project to be implemented:	pending

Connected human resource development in state administrations



Project kick-off

- Identifying common issues
- Agreeing on first cooperation steps

Stage 1

- Attending counterparts' education and stakeholder events
- Gaining insight into other administrative cultures and technical exchange

Stage 2

- Developing cross-border offers for employees (office visits, job shadowing, internships, etc.)

Stage 3

- Developing a qualification package for "European Region skills"

Project closure

- Yearly meeting of the offices for human resources development on 27th and 28th November 2025

Connected human resource development in state administrations

The relevant officials for human resource development in Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino maintain professional contact and engage in regular technical exchanges. Based on this, the three administrations would like to further deepen this cooperation and create appropriate offers for vocational training and development, as well as networking opportunities for officials in the three regions.

"The Fit4Co project, 'Connected human resource development in state administrations' strengthens cross-border cooperation in the European Region and creates new impetus for modern, future-oriented administrations and human resource development. Regular exchanges and joint initiatives promote mutual learning and support effective administrative coordination across borders. Human resource development tandem." Laura Hackl



Photo, from left to right: L. Hackl (Department for Organisation and Human Resources, Federal State of Tyrol), K. Meusburger (Department for Organisation and Human Resources, Federal State of Tyrol), G. Sölva (Department for Human Resource Development Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano), M. Laimer (Department for Human Resource Development, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano); not pictured: A. Zanon (Department Support Office, Autonomous Province of Trento), J. Martinelli (Department Support Office, Autonomous Province of Trento).

• Project lead:

Laura Hackl, Department for Organisation and Human Resources, Local Government of Tyrol (Tyrol)

• Coach:

Barbara Jäger

• Project partners:

1. Department for Organisation and Human Resources, Federal State of Tyrol (Tyrol)
2. Department for Human Resources Development, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano (South Tyrol)
3. Department Support Office, Autonomous Province of Trento (Trentino)

Project results

- As part of the Fit4Co project, the relevant officials for human resource development of the Local Administrations Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino have strengthened their professional contacts and introduced regular technical exchanges. The three administrative teams seek to further deepen cooperation.
- Planning and hosting the European Region conference for human resource development 2025, scheduled for 27th and 28th November 2025, is one key outcome of closer cooperation between officials responsible for human resource development. This event helps to promote strategic exchange between senior leadership and operational cooperation in working groups.

Challenges

- Linguistic barriers
- Differing starting positions regarding staff, financial and structural resources
- Differing organisational classification and strategic direction of human resources within the three state administrations

Project outlook

- For further collaboration, the goal of strengthening cooperation between the departments for human resource development of the three local administrations will be key.
- Building on the trust built so far, they intend to develop further initiatives that go beyond technical exchange and include concrete actions and projects.
- Step by step, this intends to establish a solid foundation for sustainable, well-structured and hands-on cooperation for human resource development in the European Region.

Project brief	
Partners:	3
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Previous experience (project):	Yes
Project size (financial budget):	Small
Project partner languages:	German, Italian
Project language:	German, Italian
Project to be implemented:	Yes

To achieve the Fit4Co CBO's goals, we provided ongoing support from project coaches and evaluated activities in the first phase, running from October 2024 to July 2025.

Process support—Train the Trainer

Collaboration between cooperation tandems and project coaches is a vital element of Fit4Co CBO. To best prepare the coaches for their tasks and to ensure constructive meetings and smooth collaboration, they received valuable input on Fit4Co CBO and the cooperation tandems via the Train the Trainer programme. There were two such meetings: During the kick-off webinar, they were introduced to the project and offered an overview of its organisation and execution. The in-person project kick-off for Fit4Co CBO in Toblach/Dobbiaco underscored the importance of dialogue and cooperation. So, the main focus was on the clarification of roles and the rules of cooperation, as well as on the European Region's framework conditions and their procedures.



"Train the trainer" Mag. Sabine Volgger of Calvis preparing the coaches for supporting the project tandems.

Process evaluation

For the first time, we added a process evaluation element to the project to support successful execution of Fit4Co CBO and gather direct feedback during its course. This enabled the Fit4Co CBO team to make timely adaptations and derive insights for any potential future editions of Fit4Co. Two target groups were identified: project participants directly engaging with the project in cooperation tandems and project coaches supporting cooperation tandems. Spanning from October 2024 to June 2025, the evaluation period ran alongside the first phase of Fit4Co CBO. A total of eight surveys were conducted using the tool Microsoft Forms. To remove linguistic barriers, participants were able to complete the questionnaires in German and Italian. The surveys included both closed and open questions. On average, it took the participants five minutes to respond to the questions asked. Project participants were asked to complete four online surveys, with the last one in July 2025 having multiple versions for project tandems that were withdrawn, completed or still active. The survey timing was linked to the structure of the first phase. This enabled project participants to gather feedback with their project coaches after the individual workshops held in October, March and July.

Feedback from project coaches was collected via two online surveys. The project coaches were asked for interim feedback in November. As a further step, an evaluation meeting was held in December. This gave all stakeholders an opportunity to take stock and address the latest challenges and open questions regarding future processes. In July 2025, project coaches submitted their final feedback.

After concluding the first phase, 7 out of 19 tandems proceeded to the project's second phase, while two tandems withdrew.



Evaluation meeting in Waaghaus in Bozen/Bolzano: coaches share their initial feedback on project tandem activities.

Insights from project participants' evaluation

The main findings of the process evaluation fall under five core topics:

Importance of cross-border cooperation:

Question: To what extent do you consider cross-border cooperation to be important for your project idea?

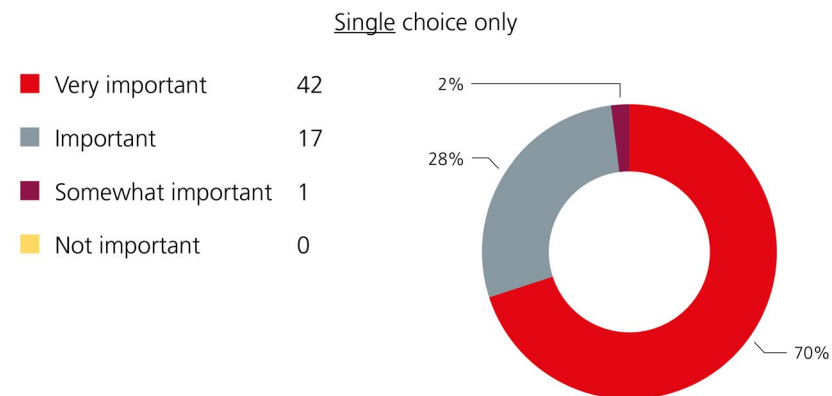


Fig. 3: Importance of cross-border cooperation; Oct 2024
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In October 2024, project participants were surveyed about their main reason for participating in Fit4Co CBO: **Interest in cross-border cooperation** and **Networking opportunities** represented the key motivations for participating in the project. Another question from the survey clearly highlighted the **critical importance of cross-border cooperation**: 70% of respondents consider it critically important, with another 28% concurring.

Overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers

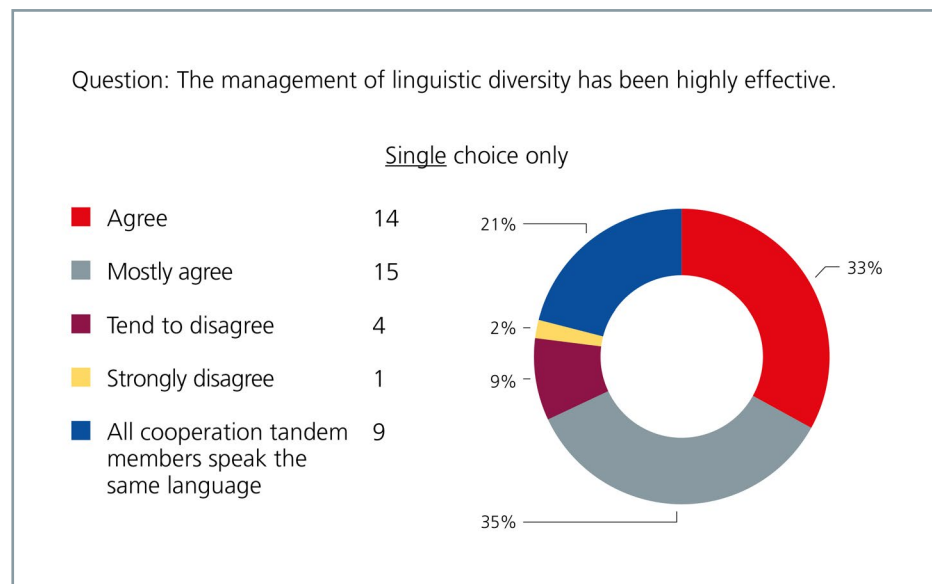
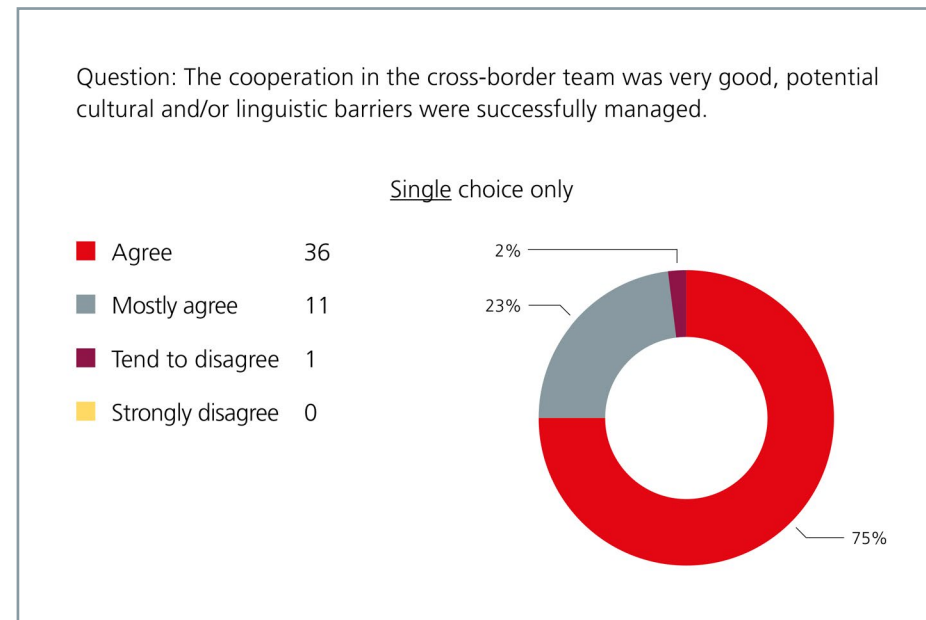


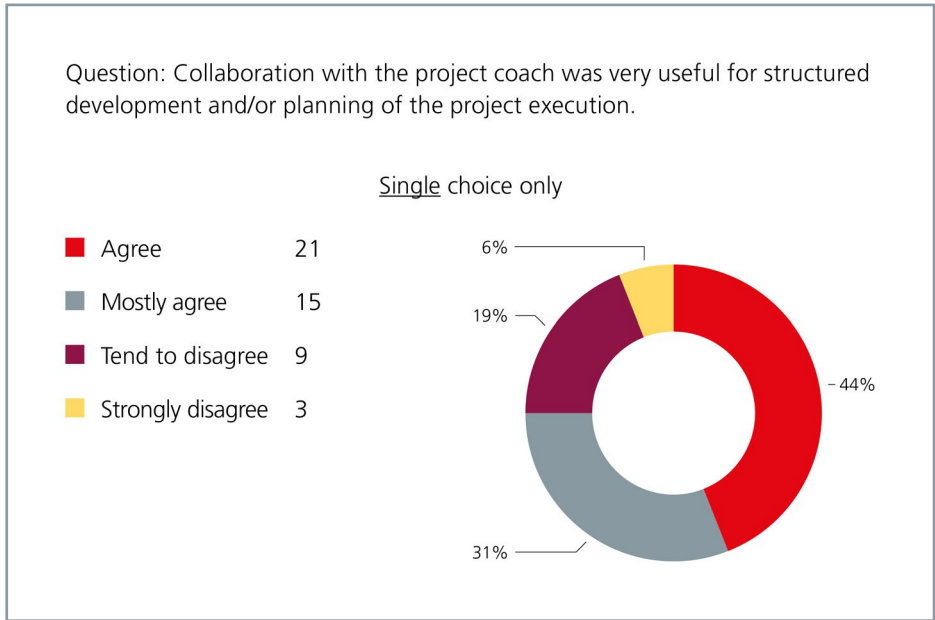
Fig. 4: Handling multilingualism; Nov 2024
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In the context of Fit4Co CBO, cross-border barriers can frequently be linguistic and cultural in nature. In general, the parties concerned managed to overcome these. **Communication across multiple languages** proved to be effective. During the survey conducted in November 2024, about one third of respondents stated that communication **worked very well**. Since members of some cooperation tandems spoke the same language, 21% were unable to answer this question.



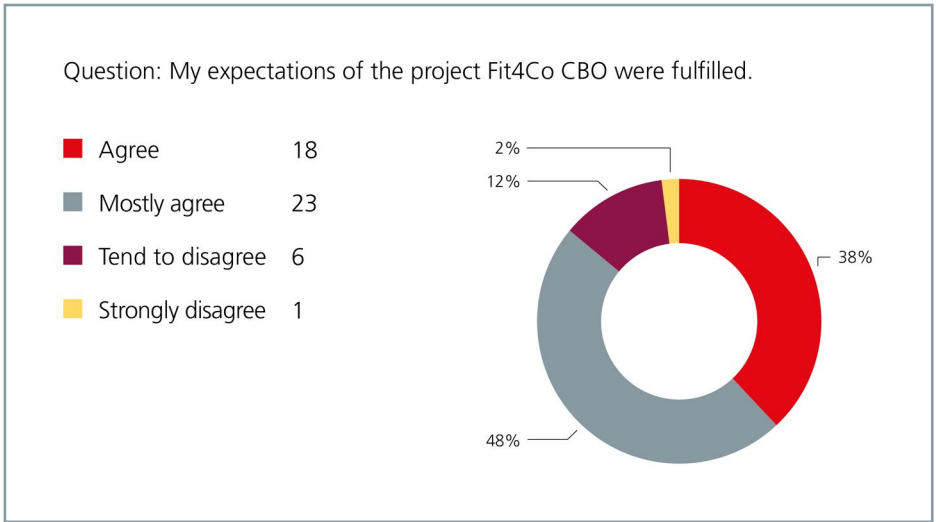
Overcoming cultural/linguistic barriers; Jul 2025
© clavis kommunikation GmbH

Surveys from July 2025 painted a similar picture. 98% of respondents did not consider linguistic and cultural barriers to be a problem and said that cooperation was effective. Only one in 48 respondents indicated in one survey in July 2025 that linguistic and cultural barriers were partially present.



Survey July—Cooperation project coaches; Jul 2025
© clavis kommunikation GmbH

The importance of supporting the cooperation tandems with project coaches was confirmed in the study: according to a survey from November 2024, 95% of respondents said the process support and workshop sessions were both professional and well planned. In July 2025, 75% agreed with the statement that collaboration with the project coaches was highly or largely helpful.



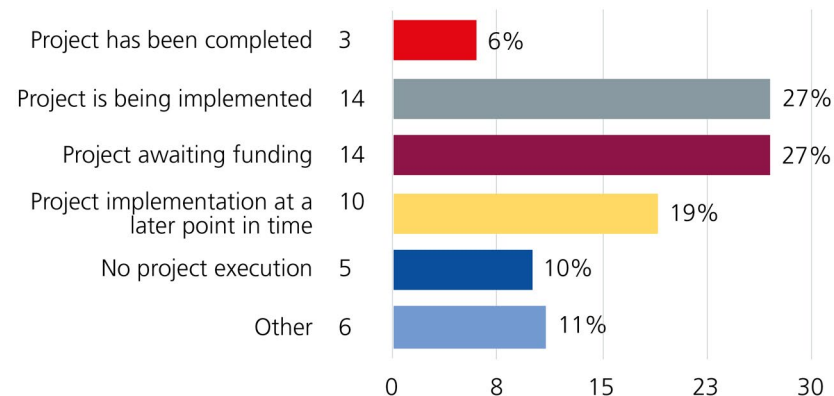
Project expectations met; Jul 2025
© clavis kommunikation GmbH

The project participant's expectations were surveyed on several occasions. October 2024's survey showed that the main expectations were to increase chances of implementation and to firm up project ideas. According to online surveys from July 2025, 38% of respondents felt their expectations were fully met, while 48% considered them largely met.

Quality and opportunities for implementing cooperation projects

The success of Fit4Co CBO shows in its implementation ratio. After the first phase, in July 2025, 27% of respondents stated that their project is being implemented. 6% have already completed their project. Another 27% are awaiting funding approval. 19% will implement their project at a later point in time and only 10% will refrain from executing the project.

Question: To what extent has the developed project been successfully implemented—or initiated—with high quality in terms of timeline, budget framework, and outcome?



Project implementation; Jul 2025
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4 Introducing EGTC Euregio Senza Confini Fit4Co CBO Tandems

Although both EGTCs began with a shared bottom-up approach, they adopted different operational strategies. The EGTC Euregio Senza Confini launched a pilot initiative that aimed to identify and overcome cross-border obstacles within its territory.

To achieve this, two public calls for proposals were issued, through which six obstacles to cross-border cooperation were selected. Each obstacle was submitted by a “cross-border tandem”, a small partnership consisting of one Italian and one Austrian partner. Within each tandem, one partner acts as the main applicant, while the other serves as a co-applicant. Exceptions are made for entities that are inherently cross-border in nature—such as EGTCs—which represent both territories. Each tandem received a direct financial allocation of €40,000.00 to be used for external services, including targeted analyses, specialised technical consultancy, organisation of cross-border meetings, and interpretation and translation services.

The approach adopted by the EGTC Euregio Senza Confini effectively responds to the concrete needs of the area and its local communities, promoting clear, practical, and sustainable solutions to the challenges faced in border regions.

These are the six selected cross-border obstacles, each covering a different topic:

1. Protection of Alpine pastures in the border area
2. Plöcken Pass—studies for developing alternative road options
3. Overcoming obstacles to improve effective EGTC action
4. Pilot system for managing territorial knowledge: school mobility
5. Capacity building for joint EU projects between Villach and Udine
6. Procedural and operational fragmentation in combating the illegal trade of animals, food and increased zoonotic risk

1. Protection of Alpine pastures in the border area

Brief description of the obstacle identified

In Carinthia, there are five Alpine pastures that are traversed by the Italian border and that are used for pasture that feeds Austrian livestock. Due to differences in agricultural subsidy systems, economic incentives exist in Carinthia but not in Friuli Venezia Giulia, which puts the survival of these Alpine pastures at risk. In the long-term, agricultural activity will depend on the availability of subsidies. This risks losing an area of significant productive, agricultural and recreational value for the municipalities on both sides of the border.



© Office of the Agricultural Authority of Carinthia

Description of past and current measures taken regarding funding and measures to remove this obstacle

To overcome this obstacle, a legal opinion was commissioned as part of Fit4Co CBO which analyses the European legal framework and the guidelines for supporting agriculture in Friuli Venezia Giulia and Carinthia. Furthermore, proposals for modifying applicable regulations and guidelines are being assessed to allow subsidies to be granted in Friuli Venezia Giulia as well. Based on this report, a formula is being developed to ensure that financial support for pasture management can be provided in Italy, through an agreement and collaboration between the relevant offices for agricultural subsidies in the two regions.

• Tandem members

Main applicant: Office of the Carinthian State Government, Agricultural Authority of Carinthia

Co-applicant: Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Central Directorate for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Project results

As an outcome of the project, the commissioned legal opinion is expected to develop a solution that allows Austrian farmers managing pastures on Italian land to access subsidies. The overall objective is to elaborate written proposals for amending the specific regulations and guidelines for supporting agriculture.

Project outlook

Looking ahead, the aim is for the competent offices for agricultural subsidies to incorporate the opinion’s findings into their specific funding requirements, thereby putting the project results into practice. This will make managing Alpine pastures at the border between Friuli Venezia Giulia and Carinthia more attractive, result in more livestock being kept on Alpine pastures and conserve the valuable cultivated landscape.

Project brief	
Cross-border obstacle:	No access to subsidies for farmers of Carinthia managing Alpine pastures in Friuli Venezia Giulia
Partners:	2
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Budget:	€40,000.00

2. Plöcken Pass—studies for developing alternative road options

Brief description of the obstacle identified

On December 2nd and 3rd, 2023, the state highway SS 52 bis Carnica at Plöcken Pass in the municipality of Paluzza was hit by a landslide, blocking the most important connecting road between Italy and Austria. The disruption had significant consequences for businesses and day-to-day life in the mountain municipalities of the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia and in the Federal State of Carinthia—especially for commerce and tourist transport, which is of crucial importance for the socio-economic balance of this region.



© Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia

Description of past and current measures taken regarding funding and measures to remove this obstacle

A number of different studies are currently underway to identify alternative and sustainable transport solutions for the area. Key studies include a geological study exploring alternative routes, while another study assesses environmental impacts and procedural risks. A technical consulting firm is also planning an Alpine tunnel. In addition to that, an ongoing assessment looks at the potential development of a multimedia product to display the three route options as well as the implementation of information and public outreach activities.

• **Tandem members**

Main applicant: Office of the Carinthian State Government, Department 9 - Streets and Bridges

Co-applicant: Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Central Directorate for Infrastructure and Territory

Project results

Three alternative routes to the current line of the cross-border transport connection consisting of state highway SS 52 bis Carnica and federal highway B 110 Plöcken Pass were analysed:

- a) Base tunnel
- b) Summit tunnel
- c) Road option/alternative route

Multiple detailed studies on the tunnels are underway, alongside in-depth analyses of relevant hydrogeological aspects, with particular attention to the border region’s Karst aquifers.

Project outlook

To further pursue the solutions developed so far, it is necessary to initiate a comprehensive process of participation and dialogue in the area that welcomes local authorities, citizens, stakeholders and other relevant players. This process can also be supported by organising public meetings and by facilitating targeted information events to outline the various options developed, the expected benefits, as well as the impact of planning decisions in a transparent manner. At the same time, the development of a strategy for research and for the appropriate access to funding—from both public and private sources—will be a decisive factor in supporting the implementation of complex infrastructure projects. While these do require substantial investment, they will guarantee high standards in terms of safety, reliability and sustainability in the long run. Only with a participatory approach and a solid economic basis will it be possible to translate the planned solutions into concrete, effective and broadly accepted measures.

Project brief	
Cross-border obstacle:	Landslide at Plöcken Pass: Disruption of the cross-border transport connection
Partners:	2
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Budget:	€40,000.00

3. Overcoming obstacles to improve effective EGTC action

Brief description of the obstacle identified

The barrier concerns the difficulties faced by the EGTC in accessing funding and implementing projects. Frequently, the EGTC is excluded from eligibility in calls for bids, leading to concerns about procedural coherence. Even after approval, problems can arise during execution—resulting from the international nature of the structures, particularly with seconded staff based and/or employed in different countries. Since control systems do not recognise cross-border staff—the main strength of the EGTC—they diminish their effectiveness and impact.



© Brandnamic

Description of past and current measures taken regarding funding and measures to remove this obstacle

The EGTC is conducting a series of interviews with its members to identify existing problems. As a next step, a survey aims to explore best practices in other EGTCs that share the same problems as Alpine Pearls. This foundation enables the development of concrete operational proposals that will be presented to representatives of the key European funding programmes and to the European Committee of the Regions. A final report will be prepared to provide guidance on addressing these barriers.

- **Tandem members**

Main applicant: EGTC Alpine Pearls mbH

Co-applicant: Due to the cross-border nature of the EGTC Alpine Pearls, representing the Italian and Austrian areas, it participated as the sole legal entity.

Project results

Overcoming this barrier will have a direct impact on the cooperation opportunities of the cross-border areas as part of the programme Interreg Italy–Austria as well as on the opportunities of the EGTC Alpine Pearls to participate in other cooperation programmes—including those of trans-national nature. An efficiently functioning EGTC ensures that these challenges can be overcome—in particular, sustainable transportation between the areas forming the EGTC Alpine Pearls.

Project outlook

The solutions developed can make a contribution to the macro-regional strategy for the Alpine region (EUSALP) by offering a platform for defining joint goals and their effective implementation through transnational cooperation. Ultimately, matters concerning optimal staff utilisation and the removal of administrative barriers benefits both other EGTCs working across the European Union as well as any other entities aiming to facilitate cross-border cooperation.

Project brief	
Cross-border obstacle:	Difficulties faced by the EGTC in accessing funding and executing projects
Partners:	1
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Not applicable
Budget:	€40,000.00

4. Pilot system for managing territorial knowledge: school mobility

Brief description of the obstacle identified

The obstacle lies in the absence of a standardised cross-border database collecting information on economic, social, environmental and governance phenomena, and on student mobility, in the HEurOpen area, which includes the municipalities of Carnia and Val Canale–Canal del Ferro–Gemonese in Friuli Venezia Giulia and the Hermagor region in Carinthia (Austria). A common tool is essential to leverage opportunities for collaboration among cross-border stakeholders and to develop joint projects.



© Mountain Community of Carnia

Description of past and current measures taken regarding funding and measures to remove this obstacle

To overcome this obstacle, the proposal is structured into two actions. The first involves the development of a dashboard containing the main data and indicators related to the HEurOpen cross-border area. The second entails a pilot study focused on the school sector, which will include the collection, interpretation, and description of data, verification of compliance with different privacy regulations, checking compatibility with the partners’ information systems, as well as an analysis aimed at ensuring durability and the possibility of replication.

• **Tandem members**

Main applicant: Mountain Community of Carnia

Co-applicant: LAG Hermagor Region

Project results

The creation of the dashboard will facilitate the analysis of obstacles in the economic, social, environmental, and governance fields by administrators, stakeholders, and citizens, supporting more informed decision-making processes and more effective strategies. The pilot study in the school sector will address the challenges related to the management of local data, which are subject to different regulations and procedures in the two cross-border countries, with the aim of identifying concrete and shared solutions.

Project outlook

The results of the pilot study may also be useful for updating the educational strategies of the partner regions, for example to address ongoing demographic changes and mitigate their impact. Moreover, thanks to the dashboard, the model developed through the study can be adapted to other areas of importance for the cross-border region. To ensure the tool’s long-term effectiveness, the partners will need to commit to regularly updating the relevant data and providing the necessary resources.

Project brief	
Cross-border obstacle:	Different approaches to territorial knowledge management in Italy and Austria
Partners:	2
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Budget:	€ 40,000.00

5. Capacity building for joint EU projects between Villach and Udine

Brief description of the obstacle identified

Besides linguistic and cultural barriers, the different administrative structures, procedures and budgetary systems in Villach and Udine represent a significant obstacle to cross-border cooperation. There is a lack of a common basis of knowledge, skills, methods and contacts, which is necessary to successfully develop, present and implement EU-funded projects. This lack limits opportunities for effective and sustainable cooperation.



© Municipality of Udine

Description of past and current measures taken regarding funding and measures to remove this obstacle

With the support of external experts, workshops, training courses and sectoral working groups will be organised, composed of representatives from the two municipalities, who will analyse administrative differences and develop common solutions. The aim is to create a “toolbox” for EU projects, develop common project ideas and strengthen expertise in areas such as infrastructure, environment, culture and communication. This will create a solid basis for successful future project proposals.

• Tandem members

Main applicant: Municipality of Udine

Co-applicant: Municipality of Villach

Project results

The project will promote a better mutual understanding of administrative structures and create a shared body of knowledge. Employees from both cities will acquire new skills in EU project development and will be able to formulate initial project ideas. In this way, the chances of success for future funding applications will be increased. Furthermore, the project will lay the foundations for sustainable cooperation and a strengthened partnership between Villach and Udine.

Project outlook

The foundations created will be further leveraged in future EU projects. The knowledge acquired will be documented and transformed into guidelines to ensure sustainability and make it accessible to other cities as well. Expansion of the partnership into other thematic areas is foreseen. The initiative could become a good practice within the European Region and contribute in the long term to cooperation and development in the Alpine-Adriatic area.

Project brief	
Cross-border obstacle:	Administrative structural differences and lack of common capacity for EU projects
Partners:	2
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Budget:	€ 40,000.00

6. Procedural and operational fragmentation in combating the illegal trade of animals, food and increased zoonotic risk

Brief description of the obstacle identified

In the cross-border area between Friuli Venezia Giulia and Carinthia, there has been an increase in the illicit trafficking of animals and food, managed by transnational criminal networks, with impacts on public health (zoonoses), food safety, the market, and animal welfare and potential scenarios of bioterrorism and fraud. The main obstacle is of legal and administrative nature and lies in the limited cross-border integration of operational procedures, which are essential to prevent and counter cross-border health threats, as envisaged by Decision No. 1082/2013 of the European Parliament.



© Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia



Description of past and current measures taken regarding funding and measures to remove this obstacle

Addressing fragmentation in combating the illegal trade of animals and food between Friuli Venezia Giulia and Carinthia through shared protocols, interoperable databases, and common digital platforms will strengthen institutional cooperation, increase the efficiency of controls, safeguard the agri-food supply chain, reduce health risks, enhance security and mutual trust, and provide a replicable model of sustainable cross-border governance.

• **Tandem members**

Main applicant: Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Central Directorate for Health, Social Policies and Disabilities

Co-applicant: Office of the Carinthian State Government, Department 5 - Health and Care

Project results

The expected results include overcoming fragmentation in cross-border controls between Friuli Venezia Giulia and Carinthia through shared protocols, interoperable databases and common digital platforms. This will lead to greater efficiency, cost and duplication reduction, strengthened institutional cooperation, protection of the agri-food supply chain, consumer safety and public health, while enhancing the security and attractiveness of the territory.

Project outlook

Future developments envisage the expansion of cross-border cooperation between Friuli Venezia Giulia and Carinthia through shared protocols, continuous training, interoperable digital tools, and constant monitoring. The solution, sustainable over time thanks to the Biocrime Center and consolidated institutional partnerships, can be integrated into broader territorial strategies and replicated in other areas of the EGTC Euregio Senza Confini, involving new stakeholders and civil society.

Project brief	
Cross-border obstacle:	Procedural and operational fragmentation in combating the illegal trade of animals, food and increased zoonotic risk between the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia and the Land Carinthia
Partners:	2
Prior acquaintance before the project:	Yes
Budget:	€ 40,000.00



1 programme

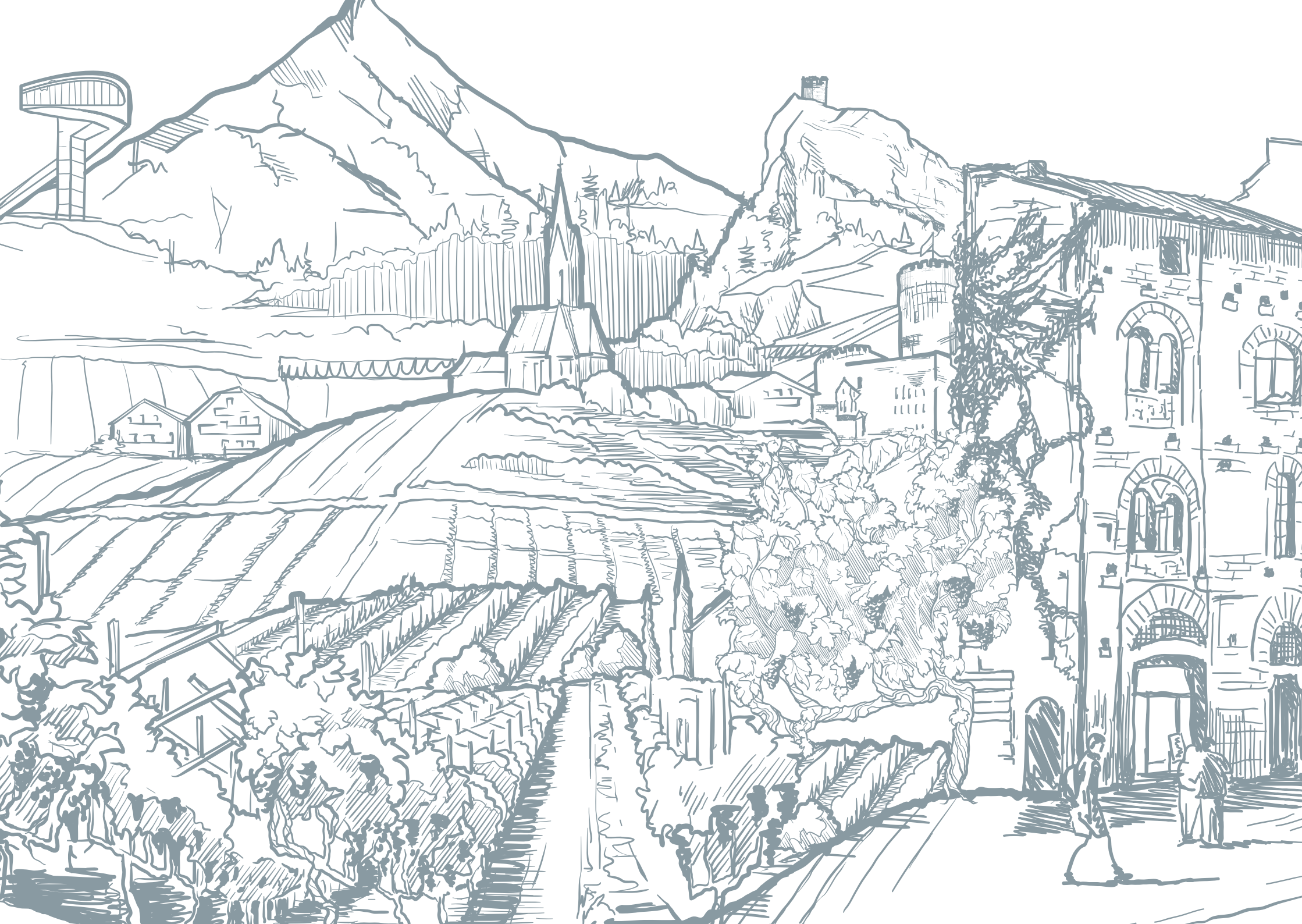
2 European Regions

6 regions

25 project tandems

300+ participants

Thank you!





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REGIONE DEL VENETO

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