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Press release „Final Conference of the AlpES Project on 21st and 22nd November 2018 in Innsbruck/A“.

Nature providing services in the Alps

Whether mountain forests that protect us from avalanches and clean our air, or rivers and alpine pastures that provide us drinking water, energy or nourishment: in the AlpES Project ten partner organisations from six alpine countries have evaluated and documented ecosystem services for the past three years. They will present their results on 21st and 22nd November 2018 at a Final Event in Innsbruck/A. Press representatives are kindly invited to attend.

In the Alpine space too, ecosystem services make a significant contribution to the local quality of life. Springs that provide clean drinking water, trees that ensure a pleasant microclimate in the city, or simply the views of a landscape that prompts us to dream – all of these goods and services can be categorised under the concept of ecosystem services. The AlpES (Alpine Ecosystem Services) project is devoted to Alpine ecosystem services and aims to strengthen their importance and appreciation in regional and trans-national environmental policies. Ten partners from France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Austria and Slovenia participated in the project, which will end in December 2018. The AlpES partner organisations include public research institutions, administrative bodies and a private environmental planning and consulting company.

When forests protect

In Liechtenstein one focus is on the protective function of forests against avalanches, mudslides and rock falls. Heike Summer of Liechtenstein's Office for the Environment highlights the particular importance of this ecosystem service for the Principality: «A large proportion of our forests are located on hillsides. Intact protective forests therefore make an indispensable contribution to reducing the potential for damage, both in the Rhine Valley and in mountain regions, as well as reducing the need to construct additional technical measures.»

WebGIS map providing an overview

One of the project goals was to develop a freely accessible WebGIS map that displays an overview of ecosystem services in the Alps. The data collected from all test regions has been fed into the system and users can select among eight different ecosystem indicators. The view changes according to the selection of these indicators. The map can be accessed at www.alpes-webgis.eu (en).

Understanding ecosystem services and decision making

Consulting the map also shows where there is a need for action; for example, in the Austrian municipality of Hallstatt there is a protection forest against landslides and avalanches. A further example is the large fresh water consumption in metropolitan areas on the edges of the Alps, such as in Milan, or in touristic regions with ski resorts, where drinking water is used for artificial snow-making.

Findings like these form a sound basis for political and economic decision-making.

Programme of the Final Conference in Innsbruck

Markus Reiterer, the Secretary General of the Alpine Convention, will open the Final Conference organised by AlpES and the SPARE Project (Strategic Planning for Alpine River Ecosystems) on Wednesday November 21st at 17:00.

Visitors can learn more about the participating test regions at info stands. On Thursday November 22nd from 9:00 onwards, the lead partners from AlpES and SPARE will shortly present their projects, followed by talks and workshops. Press representatives are kindly invited on both days.

Date: 21st November 2018 (17:00-20:00), 22nd November 2018 (9:00-17:00)

Venue: Haus der Begegnung, Rennweg 12, 6020 Innsbruck, Austria

Registration: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/FinalEvent2018-AlpES-SPARE>

About AlpES: www.cipra.org/en/alpes, www.alpine-space.eu/AlpES (en)

This press release and printable press photos are available for download at:

<https://www.cipra.org/en/media-releases>

For further questions please contact:

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AlpES – mapping, maintenance and management

The Alpine Space (AS) is an important provider of ecosystem services (ES). These ES are one of the main pillars of a Green Economy in the Alps, a key driver of Alpine development and the focus of the next State of the Alps report. The population and different economic sectors such as tourism, forestry, agriculture, energy and transport in- and outside the AS derive benefits from ES. AlpES builds on and provides testing and implementation opportunities for the ES concept, which is already established at EU level and can help in resolving conflicts among different interests, particularly in transnational contexts. AlpES lasts from December 2015 to December 2018 and is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund through the Interreg Alpine Space programme. www.alpine-space.eu/AlpES

CIPRA, a diverse and multifaceted organisation

CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, is a non-governmental umbrella organisation with national representatives and one regional representative in the seven Alpine countries. It represents more than 100 associations and organisations. CIPRA works towards achieving sustainable development in the Alps; it also strives to preserve the natural and cultural heritage, maintain regional diversity, and bring about solutions to cross-border problems in the Alpine region. www.cipra.org