

## EU ARDIA-Net project successfully started with the participation of BIOPRO

**The bioeconomy and the healthcare sector are seen as strategically important future sectors in the EU's Strategy for the Alpine Region. BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH is the lead partner in the EU-cofinanced ARDIA-Net project, which got underway in October 2019. The aim of the project is to develop a transnational funding programme for research, development and innovation (R&I) for regional and local authorities in the Alpine macroregion. The project is aimed at establishing the legal framework as well as the blueprints for managing the programme.**

The Alpine region is a multi-faceted region that is unique in Europe. It is a historically significant settlement area that is home to almost 70 million people, a transit corridor for European traffic streams, a holiday destination for millions of people and, last but not least, a unique natural space. The Alpine region represents a microcosm of global developments. It can serve as a model for addressing climate change issues, demographic change and future energy security. Solutions to these urgent questions should not be considered in isolation. For example, the European Union's (EU) cohesion policy seeks to find regional answers to global challenges through international cooperation.

### The bioeconomy and the healthcare sector are strategically important sectors of the future

Smart specialisation strategies (S3) were designed for different Alpine regions to promote innovation and competitiveness by transforming economic structures. These transformations will come about by identifying regional specificities and combining existing skills. Results from the Interreg S3-4AlpCluster project have recently shown that the Alpine region needs a transnational funding programme to initiate interregional research and innovation projects. Targeted networking through research and innovation projects between excellent regional actors is urgently needed to tackle societal challenges in the Alpine region. Ideally, this would be done through an interregional and transnational R&I funding programme thematically tailored to the needs of the Alpine region. Based on the results of the innovation strategies (S3), the ARDIA-Net consortium has decided to focus on the circular bioeconomy and the healthcare sector, two areas of particular importance for the Alpine region.

The aim of the ARDIA-Net project is to develop a transnational funding programme for research, development and innovation (RDI) for regional and local authorities in the Alpine macroregion, which, in addition to the legal framework, comprises blueprints for managing the programme.

ARDIA-Net thus closes a gap in the European funding landscape, giving the 48 regions of the Alpine region an opportunity to tackle common challenges. In terms of content, the ARDIA-Net framework programme will build on already established research, technology and innovation strategies (also smart specialisation strategies, S3), thus guaranteeing that specific funding lines are regionally relevant.

The ARDIA-Net project sets out to perform a reality check of this concept for an S3-oriented, transnational R&I funding programme with the active participation of various regional actors. The goal is to establish how such a funding programme can be implemented, theoretically and practically, during the approximately three-year run time of the project. For this purpose, eight project partners from the Alpine region with the necessary research and innovation funding expertise, and which are already part of local and regional government, research and business networks, have joined forces.

Concrete implementation of the project is divided into three work packages. First, the partners will seek to identify existing region-specific funding programmes and analyse their legal basis. This will serve as the starting point for targeted synchronisation of existing funding programmes across regional borders. Existing transnational cooperations in the Alpine region in the circular bioeconomy and the health sector are also important here. Workshops will then be set up to determine the needs of regional actors when it comes to a uniform R&I funding programme. The end goal is to develop a blueprint for a transnational R&I funding programme, which will then form the basis for discussion in the third and final work package between regional/national funding agencies and political decision-makers to plan the actual implementation.

## Project start and partner structure of ARDIA-Net

The ARDIA-Net project began on October 1, 2019 and will run for a period of around three years. It is funded by the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) (total budget, € 1,376,414, 85% co-financed by the EU; project end: June 2022). The kick-off meeting was held in Stuttgart on November 12, 2019. BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH is the lead partner in the ARDIA-Net project. BIOPRO is co-financed by the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Housing. The seven other partners are: Bavarian Research Alliance GmbH (Germany), Business Upper Austria - OÖ Wirtschaftsagentur GmbH, Innovations- und Technologietransfer Salzburg GmbH (both from Austria), Lombardy Green Chemistry Association (Italy), Poly4Eml hosted by Anteja ECG d.o.o. (Slovenia), University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland - School of Engineering and Architecture of Fribourg (Switzerland) and SC Sviluppo Chimica S.p.A. (Italy).

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- ▶ Interreg Alpine Space
- ▶ EUSALP EU Strategy for the Alpine Region
- ▶ Smart Specialization Strategies (S3)

# Interreg Alpine Space



European Regional Development Fund



## ARDIA-Net

Developing an Alpine Space Research, Development and Innovation Area



