

Inspire Policy Making with Territorial Evidence

EXPERIENCE FROM ALPINE REGION WORKSHOP //

ESPON tool for mapping soft territorial cooperation areas and initiatives

Monitoring and Tools // March 2022

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The information contained herein is subject to change and does not commit the ESPON EGTC and the countries participating in the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme.

The final version of the report will be published as soon as approved.

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1 Sustainable Mobility in the Alpine Region

As a high mountain region in a central location, the Alpine region has to address a series of challenges in the transport sector. In addition, the Alpine region is the 'contact area' of several nation states, which is a particular challenge for policy formulation and implementation at the regional, domestic as well as the European level.

Especially the current problems in transalpine traffic, which are expected to increase in the future (see Figure 1), but also the accessibility of high alpine valleys and the multimodal shift, call for a supraregional networking of actors (practice and policy) in the field of 'sustainable mobility'. The focus must be on linking supra-regional mobility approaches with regional solutions and pilot projects, to address the enormous challenges for future 'sustainable mobility' in the Alps.

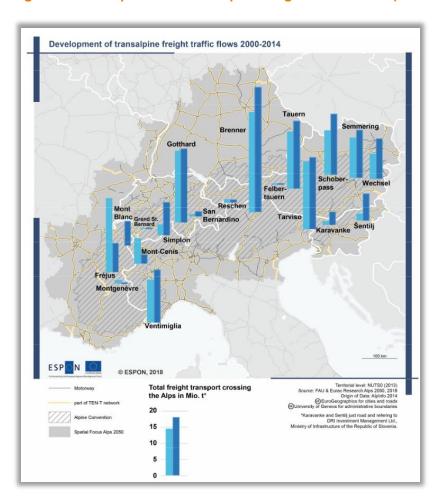


Figure 1: Development of transalpine freight traffic flows (ESPON Alps2050 Atlas¹)

¹ https://www.espon.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/ESPON_Alps_2050_FR_annex_ATLAS.pdf

Already today, there are strong efforts to implement sustainable mobility, especially in the context of the Alpine Convention (e.g. the Transport Working Group²), the EUSALP (e.g. the Action Group 4 – Mobility³), the Green Deal (e.g. Inventing a strategy for sustainable and smart mobility⁴) and other domestic programmes (e.g. Coordination Office for Sustainable Mobility (COMO) in Switzerland⁵). The Alpine region has a limited share of potential settlement areas and is characterised by barrier effects – which both lead to an important particular challenge for sustainable mobility. For implementation approaches, this means that there will be political long term processes with high complexity on the strategic level, where 'soft spaces' play an important role.

This is where the ESPON ACTAREA Web Tool, as a mapping approach for soft territorial cooperation areas and initiatives, comes into play. With the help of this interactive web application, high-ranking experts on mobility from the entire Alpine region were asked to reflect on the current situation of alpine transport infrastructure and to formulate possible future scenarios.

The ACTAREA tool is supposed to support debates on territorial development involving heterogeneous information about certain topics linked to a spatial information. The Alpine region is amongst the first regions (with the Greater Region & Mëllerdall Region) to apply the new tool. This helps to address the question of how to achieve sustainable mobility across borders, at multiple scales, and for multiple transport modes.

Therefore, a workshop in autumn 2021 served two purposes:

- a. Firstly, the aim was to elaborate a thematic output for "sustainable mobility" in the Alpine area. This topic is high on the agenda of several cooperation formats, in particular the Alpine Convention and the EUSALP. The Swiss presidency of the Alpine Convention agreed to support this workshop.
- b. Secondly, the workshop allows testing the functionality of the developed tool. Therefore, on the one hand, the perspective of the facilitator and on the other hand the perspectives of the participants were queried in order to get a comprehensive picture and to understand the potential and the limitations of the tool and to formulate potential improvements of the tool.

 $^{^2 \, \}underline{\text{https://www.alpconv.org/en/home/organisation/thematic-working-bodies/detail/transport-working-group/} \\$

³ https://www.alpine-region.eu/action-group-4-mobility

⁴ https://transport.ec.europa.eu/index_en

⁵ https://www.bfe.admin.ch/bfe/en/home/supply/statistics-and-geodata/geoinformation/geodata/mobility/como-projects.html

2 Workshop organisation

The workshop was firstly organised on 15th October 2021 as an online format via zoom. The initial approach was that each workshop participant creates an account on the platform with their own email address and then take part in the workshop. Each participant should have the opportunity to test the ACTAREA tool and explore the web application from the driver's seat perspective.

However, in order to prevent technical difficulties or compatibility problems (e.g. functionality of different browsers and operating systems), alias-accounts were created for all participants. The login information was then shared in the run-up to the workshop with all participants. This also facilitated the workshop follow-up by the organisers. Using the login information from the alias-accounts the facilitator allows access to the different user interfaces. This opportunity has two advantages: The workshop facilitator has the possibility to help with upcoming problems during the workshop and can trace the participants' inputs after the workshop.

The group of participants included a variety of very topical experts, which were invited by the Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE). In order to get a geographically balanced picture, experts from all national contexts of the Alps were invited. In addition, the invitation process focussed a good mix of practice-oriented participants and participants from a more political context.

Despite thorough preparation and reflection of possible technical problems, the workshop on 15th October 2021 had to be reorganised on 19th November 2021, due to technical issues (for details see chapter 4.3). In order to avoid further technical problems for the second trail, the possibility of the driver's seat perspective was cancelled. For the second workshop round, four breakout groups were set up, which where moderated each by one moderator and one facilitator. The participants were asked to formulate thematic and geographical input that was implemented by the facilitator in the tool, but the participants were not allowed to use the tool by themselves.

Directly after the workshop, in the first step, the compiled result maps from the individual subgroups were shown and discussed. Therefore, one moderator used the 'consensus-map tool' within the ACTAREA web application and did a quick merge from all group results. The maps were not reworked systematically and must be seen as a summary in form of 'heatmaps' (real consensus maps would reflect a common view, based on synthetic discussions in the group, leading to an explicit consensus of the workshop). In a second step, the maps were compiled, revised, and returned to workshop participants as compilations in an online survey for commenting.

Finally, the results of the workshop, the reworked maps, as well as the information from the online survey were given to the Swiss Federal Office for regional development (ARE) to allow its use in different contexts of policymaking. Additionally, the information from the workshop participants regarding the experience with ACTAREA were given to ESPON to develop improvements (see chapter 4.4).

3 Workshop objective, starting point and questions

With a transnational group of experts on Alpine mobility, new concepts, visualisations and mappings were developed. The outcome is supposed to contribute to political processes on several levels. As mentioned before, the aim was to provide perspectives for sustainable mobility on the transnational scale and test the ACTAREA web tool and give feedback to ESPON.

A generalised map of the EUSALP perimeter was the basis of the process, as shown in Figure 2. In order to avoid an information overload or to bias the participants input, the map was kept as abstract as possible. The role of generalised maps is to allow participants to help them to locate information, but not to guide or confuse them with unnecessary information in the map.

The perimeter of the EUSALP is the outer area definition, and the perimeter of the Alpine Convention indicates the mountain area in a morphological sense. The largest cities are included in order to provide a general orientation.

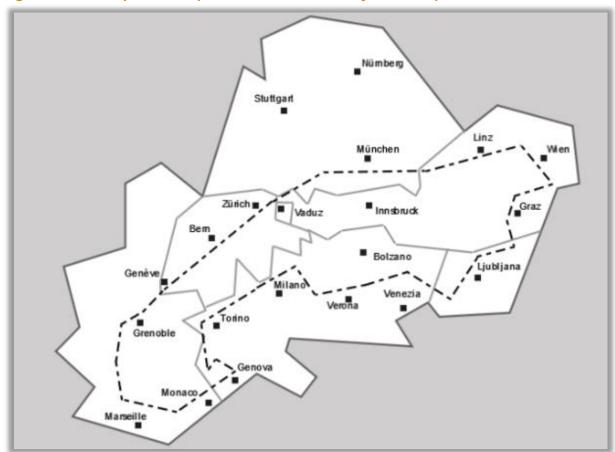


Figure 2: Base map for the Alpine 'Sustainable Mobility' workshop

Based on the generalised base map, the participants were asked to answer various questions about sustainable mobility in the Alpine region (see Annex). The aim was to use the questions to identify

important points for political processes. Thereby, various aspects in the field of sustainable mobility were addressed: e.g. bottlenecks, pioneer-projects or bicycle mobility.

More concretely, the participants were asked to give input on the following questions that were briefly explained by the moderator:

Question 1: Where are the participants' organisations located?

This question served two purposes. It helps the participants to become familiar with the technical tool and it contributes to the understanding of the thematic maps, as the geographical patterns might be distorted due to unequal spatial distribution of the participants.

Question 2: Where do you see the one or two most important bottlenecks of accessibility?

This question targets the participants' view of where the main bottlenecks of accessibility are. Accessibility is understood in a broad sense that includes the different modes of transport (road, rail, multimodal) and accessibility (slow connections, congestion, missing infrastructure connections, etc.).

Question 3: Where do you see the one or two most important bottlenecks of sustainability?

The participants were asked to name their most important bottlenecks for sustainability in the Alps. Again, the term "sustainability" is understood in a very open, broad sense including lacking alternatives to individual transport, inefficient infrastructure etc.

Question 4: Where do you see the highest potentials for implementing 'next generation pioneer projects'?

As sustainable mobility is often a more technical topic and discussions can benefit from "thinking outside the box", the question addresses key issues in the debate, ranging from utopian ideas to more established technical innovations.

Question 5: Where would you build a new Alpine crossing?

At first glance, the question of new Alpine crossings addresses a taboo in terms of the Alpine Convention Transport protocol. However, it must not be understood in terms of classic road transit, but rather in terms of innovative and gradual measures. The aim is open and broadly addressed and leaves room for rather futuristic ideas from the participants.

Question 6: Where do you see the highest potential for bicycle mobility?

Bicycle mobility has great potential for modal shift. It is a challenge to discuss this on such a large scale, but current developments show that especially pop-up paths and transit capacity expansions are prominent examples of cycling as a path for sustainable mobility.

For each question, different drawing tools were available within the ACTAREA web application, which were then applied by the moderator with guidance from the participants. One has to mention, that the results from the different groups were already some kind of consensus maps from each breakout group, because there had been some discussions going on in the different sessions during the workshop.

Additionally, beside the content-related information, the participants were asked to comment on the general performance of the web application. There were comments and questions form the participants during the workshop, comments on ACTAREA after the workshop, as well as comments within the online survey in the roll-up of the workshop.

4 Experience with the use of the tool and possible improvements

4.1 Feedback loop

One of the two aims of the workshop was to test the ACTAREA web tool and give feedback. Therefore, in the follow-up process of the workshop, the participants were asked to comment on the concrete results, but also on the ACTAREA web tool. Two questions were addressed in the feedback loop to get insights how the participants see the quality of the tool:

- Where do you see the largest potentials for the use of the ACTAREA tool?
- Where do you see the most important limitations of the ACTAREA tool?

For the answers, see the annex. Moreover, not only the participants had experiences with the performance of ACTAREA. A significant factor for the future use of the web application is the handling for moderators and the complexity for the use of the tool in different practical contexts. The workshop creation process must be clear and user-friendly. In the following section, the impressions of the participants and the facilitators are described, and possible improvements are formulated.

4.2 Potentials of the tool

From the point of view of the facilitator and workshop organiser, ACTAREA is a very good tool to get systematic, consistent information in a given spatial setting. The number of participants does not matter and there is the possibility to form subgroups, which facilitates moderation. A huge potential is the gathering of directly located information and a visualisation directly from the participants' perspective. One of the key strengths is visualising complex contexts and information by using tailored and generalised

background maps. Nevertheless, it retains the possibility of including "real" maps (e.g. OpenStreetMap or Google) through the background.

Another clear advantage of the web application is that participants can get in the 'driver seat', so they can put in their own ideas while having 'fun' with the tool and its visualisation functions. As this was technically not possible for this workshop due to technical problems, we cannot go more into depth for this function.

In the follow-up of the workshop, the participants formulated the following potentials of ACTAREA from their view:

- "Either in live applications where many people work in it, or as kind of a survey out of individual group work this might be very interesting, since usually in a workshop not everyone gets to sit in the driver's seat and make decisions themselves and if they are, they see what others already put in. ACTAREA Tool would solve those issues."
- "Another strength is that you can upload whatever map/picture or screenshot you want with a spatial dimension to exactly your need."
- "Understanding for mobility challenges in the Alps region inter-connection between different kinds of projects tool for innovative mobility solutions."
- "Collecting ideas, identifying areas with multiple challenges and/or opportunities."
- "In representing through simple maps, the main aspects related to cross-border and alpine issues. Dissemination should be the main target for this tool."
- "The ACTAREA tool seems to be a wonderful instrument in order to visualise brainstorms among parties on a shared geographical area. In particular it is useful for planning, that is mapping issues and possible areas of interventions."

4.3 Limitations of the tool

Besides the potential of ACTAREA, there are still some limitations due to the state of the beta version of the tool. In general, one has to decide which scale should be addressed. There is a difference between a local or regional level and a transnational or supra-regional level. With this choice, the frame of how to address things is somehow predefined. For example, the exact location of specific topics is easier on a fine scale (e.g. neighbourhood, town, district). More general topics ask for larger scales (e.g. a border region, a macro region, a continent).

Nevertheless, as mentioned before, there are also some limitations due to the state of a beta version of the web application. By the time of the workshop, the use of the tool and the technical issues were not stable enough. For example, emails from ACTAREA went into spam-folders and a reset of the password was not possible. However, the main functions were working.

Another difficulty is that if many participants work with ACTAREA at the same time and the more questions the moderation use for the workshop, the slower the web application gets. At a certain stage it is not possible to work with the tool in bigger workshop formats (This problem was the reason for cancelling the first workshop and setting up a second one). In addition, the PDF-creation had to be reworked. The aim has to be that the facilitator and the participants have the possibility to download maps from the ACTAREA platform, and that they can easily work with and use them for different contexts. By now, the PDF-creation is too complex and leads to large file sizes, that take too much time to download and work with them.

Again, in the follow-up of the workshop, the participants were asked about their opinion to the current limitations of the tool. One has to mention that these critiques refer to the beta-version of the tool that was further developed afterwards, partly addressing these points.

- "It will not be possible to integrate all relevant projects."
- "If only a first snapshot is generated after a short discussion / exchange, it definitely needs more
 refinement. Because the "quick and dirty" results leave too many open questions and it is difficult
 for someone who has not participated to "feel" the intentions and subtleties behind."
- "The detail of the representation is not sufficient if a technician wants to see in-depth aspects related to cross-border issues. Major issues may be represented, but so far it is difficult to frame them correctly."
- "Complexity of application, especially in preparation of the workshop. I have an outside view, but the idea seems rather straightforward, as does the drawing part - however, the application (for the moderation level) seems not."
- "It might simplify other aspects of project development, like considering finer geographical differences and obstacles or social variables. It should be used as a starting tool for a more concerted approach."

4.4 Potential improvements of the tool

The workshops in the Greater Region and in the Mëllerdall Region as well as this one in the Alpine Region, had the additional objective of identifying weaknesses and adaptation options for ACTAREA as an open-source web application. In addition to the potentials and limitations, suggestions have been developed for the remaining implementation phase of the ACTAREA project:

Firstly, in general, ACTAREA needs to become a stable web application that does not slow down or even cause technical problems with increasing numbers of participants or layers (the number of questions and tools that are implemented in the workshop by the facilitator). The tool, in its final version, has to be able to allow workshops with many participants "in the driver seat", as it is not possible yet. That should be the main objective of the developers. If these problems continue to reduce the stability of the web application, all the advantages and potentials of the tool cannot unfold. The dissemination of

ACTREA among practice partners can only succeed if the use of the tool is simple, intuitive and without stability problems.

Secondly, the developers should consider some specific improvements. In the final version, the password reset option as well as email receptions has to be reworked. Right now, the mails from ACTAREA are directly directed into spam folders and so are not intuitively to find by the participants. In addition, the consensus map section has to be further improved, so that the production of results maps within the ACTAREA web tool is usefully and easy to handle. Finally, the PDF creation has to be further improved, so that the information from the workshop processes can be used without copying or screenshotting afterwards. For this purpose, it would be useful to have a result template of what such a PDF must contain and in which composition it should be mapped.

A series of specific issues and needs for improvement were identified and reported to Ibisdev, who took corrective measures:

- The application slowed down with a high number of participants (approx. 20 persons) and finally stopped working.
- The password reset did not function correctly.
- Invitation mails tend to be stopped by spam filters.
- Some of the consensus map functionalities did not work
- The pdf exports with process inputs and synthesis results were of insufficient quality.

Annex: participant inputs and comments

Question 1: Where are the participants' organisations located?

This map simply shows the location of the institutions that were represented by the participants of the workshop. That kind of question is helpful for two reasons:

- a) It helps the participants to be familiar with the technical tool, and
- b) It later helps to understand the thematic maps as the geographical patterns might be biased in one way or another.

Figure 3: original results compilation of Question 1 with all group content (not processed)

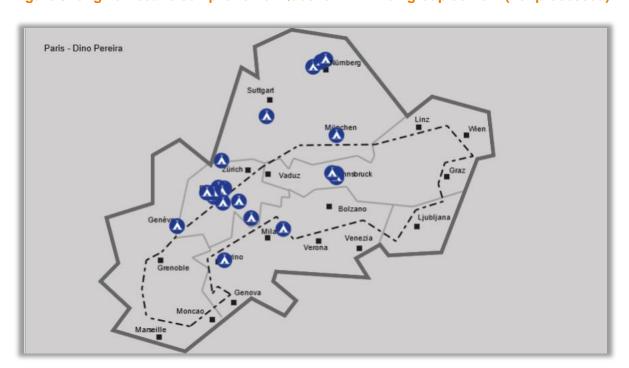
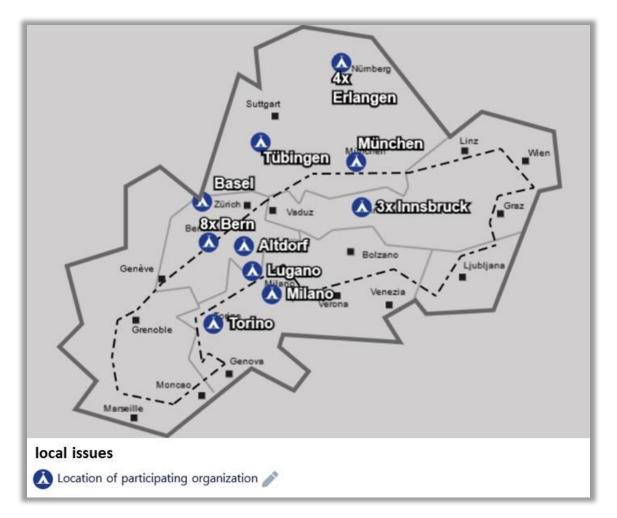


Figure 4: post-processed compositions of Question 1



Comments of the workshop participants on the result map Figure 4 (online survey after the workshop):

- Especially b) is very important and seemed to explain most of the inputs...
- Here could a distinction be helpful what kind of organisation is participating?
- Agree with the reasoning definitely makes sense and is a good way to start / warm-up
- It would be interesting to be able to distinguish via different icons the characteristics of the locations (e.g. big city vs. town)

Question 2: Where do you see the one or two most important bottlenecks of accessibility?

The map visualises the participants' view of where the most important bottlenecks of accessibility are located. Accessibility was understood in a broad sense here, including different modes of transport (road, rail, multi-modal) and accessibility (slow connections, traffic jams, lacking connections etc.). This map – as the following ones – comprises three categories:

- a) Local issues with a concrete localisation (e.g. construction site)
- b) Overarching issue where typical examples can be shown (e.g. accessibility issues in larger metropolitan regions), and
- c) General issues where mapping does not make much sense (cross-border ticketing that is debated across the whole Alpine space).

Figure 5: original results compilation of Question 2 with all group content (not processed)

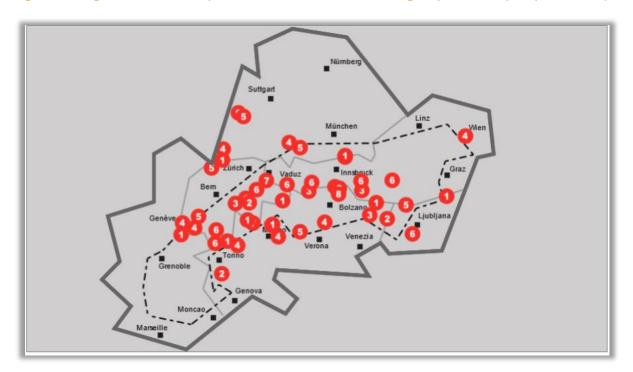
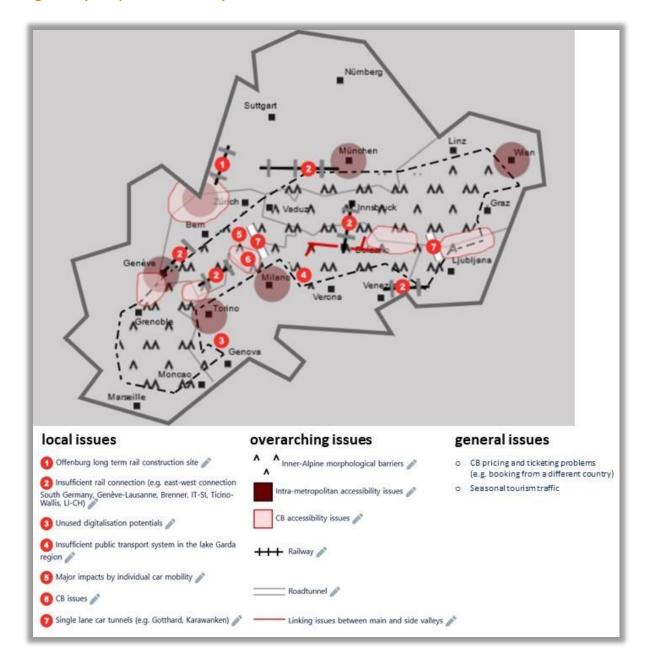


Figure 6: post-processed compositions of Question 2



Comments of the workshop participants on the result map Figure 6 (online survey after the workshop):

- It would be helpful to scale up the map
- A very complex question, the term "bottlenecks of accessibility" sounds strange to me (bottlenecks - leading to congestion etc.) are usually where we witness a lot of traffic and where accessibility is rather high). And bottlenecks are usually local whereas accessibility challenges are more a regional phenomenon. For me, the question was not clear enough. Nevertheless, through the evolving discussion, it became clear and there was opportunity to complete/add examples

• The division between overarching issues and local issues is very useful to guide the consultation of the map. I would have added "Insufficient rail connection" as an overarching issue.

Question 3: Where do you see the one or two most important bottlenecks of sustainability?

The participants were asked to locate their most important bottlenecks for sustainability in the Alps. Again, sustainability is understood in a very open, broad sense. The map visualises the debates. Again, some general discussions can hardly be mapped like e.g. 'lacking last mile offers' in the inner-Alpine area.

Figure 7: original results compilation of Question 3 with all group content (not processed)

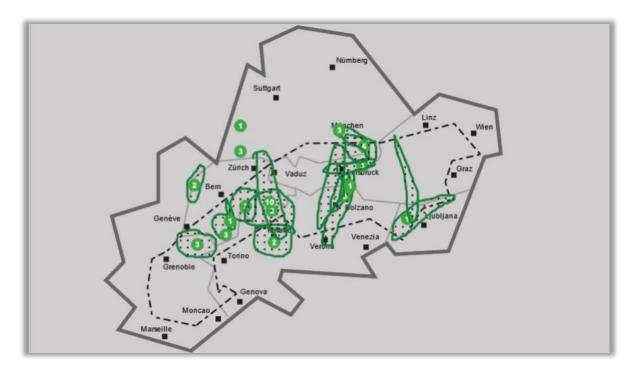
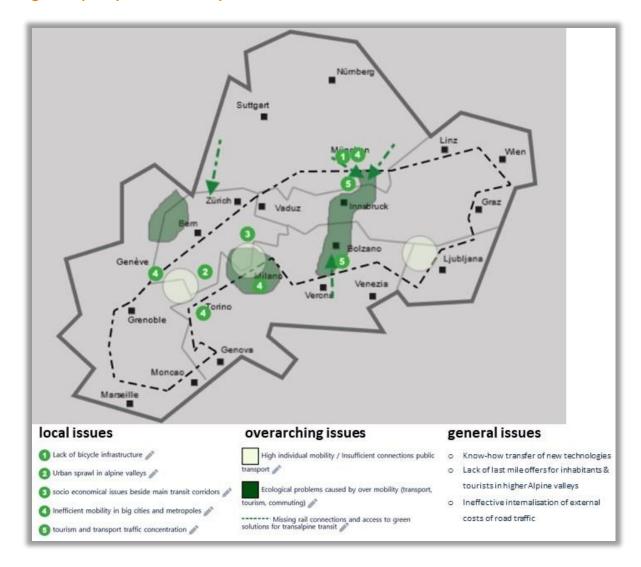


Figure 8: post-processed compositions of Question 3



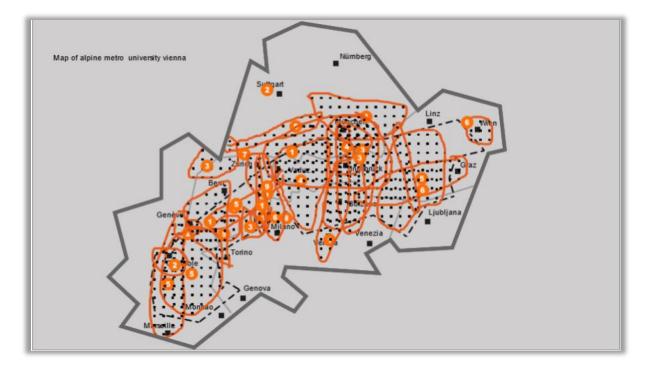
Comments of the workshop participants on the result map Figure 8 (online survey after the workshop):

- Very "Swiss & German" view... But we have discussed this before. It really depends on an
 equally distributed list of participants to have a "fuller" picture. Even though e.g. Brenner would
 always be an issue.
- Just thinking loud: Is there a possibility to vote, highlight or make clear that Brenner had been mentioned several times so it is relatively more important than other issues?
- Again the word "bottlenecks" ... maybe speaking of hotspots or areas would have made it easier
 to grasp the question immediately. As with the previous question, during the discussion it became clearer and the range of issues became broader (it was dominated first by transportation
 challenges, probably due to the discussion before).

Question 4: Where do you see the highest potentials for implementing ,next generation pioneer projects'?

Sustainable mobility often is a rather technical topic and the discussions can profit from ,thinking out of the box'. The map visualises key topics of the debate, ranging from utopian ideas such as cable-car networks to more established strategies such as new multi-modal hubs.

Figure 9: original results compilation of Question 4 with all group content (not processed)



local issues overarching issues general issues CB pioneer project areas (e.g. alternative commuting O Establish test regions for autonomous driving Multimodal hub Milano: Combine Highspeed train with local rail, bikes and alternative mobility devices e people&goods transport, free public transport) 🧳 o Develop Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) as a new paradigm in mobility services Alternative technologies for trucks o Improve automatisation/digitalisation in multimodal terminals cessibility innovation for metropolitan/commuting Address bottleneck 🎤 o Enable the use of synergies of multimodal hubs for everyone (tourists/commuters/inhabitants) CB Cablecar networks for commuting o Rely on barriers for freight transport to get traffic from road to rail (e.g., Blockabfertigung' at DE-AT border or ,Brennerpass') o Rural high alpine areas: face depopulation by establishing projects for Development of road mobility 🥜 o Commuting areas: Develop alternative ideas and approaches for commuting mobility and traffic High speed bike connections 🥜

Figure 10: post-processed compositions of Question 4

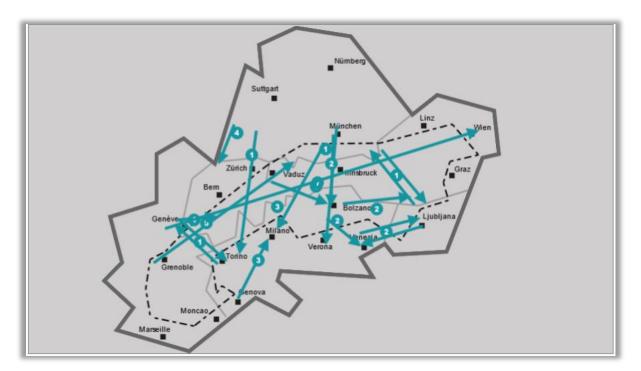
Comments of the workshop participants on the result map Figure 10 (online survey after the workshop):

- Probably most crazy map: there are so many possibilities. I like the representation. Probably the question would need more moderation in the future - and still then it is not as easily representable in a map compared to the bottleneck topic.
- projects situated near the Alps should be shown for example Mainz Automatic Train Operation Technologies for Cargo. The Alps are interconnected with their surroundings.
- It's difficult to read this map, or to understand the spatial distribution of actions (why just there? etc.) but the individual ideas make for an interesting list.
- Missing connection with bike lane from Austria to Udine, Friuli and Veneto.
- With less local issue categories the map is very easy to read!

Question 5: Where would you build a new Alpine crossing?

The question for new Alpine crossings is a rather provocative and does not address classical road transit but rather innovative and incremental measures. The map illustrates the discussions of the workshop, focussing on airship transport, rail improvements, new bike tunnels etc.

Figure 11: original results compilation of Question 5 with all group content (not processed)



local issues overarching issues general issues Improved or new Alpine Crossings & o Reuse tunnels for bike mobility Implementation area for airship transport (e.g. flying O Improve east-west connections (rail) Expansion of rail transport inkulusive tunnel o Improve access routes to the existing High-speed underground connections (north-south) // highspeed linkages (e.g. Brennertunnel, Underground freight transportation system (east-west) Gotthardtunnel, Rhine-Alpine-Comidor) o Preserve natural barriers as protection 3 Improve train connections Zürich-Bolzano and Munichdilano with central crossing terminal 🥒 from .over-mobility' 👩 Establish large bike tunnels (e.g. Gotthard) 🥒 o Improve underground highspeed

Figure 12: post-processed compositions of Question 5

Comments of the workshop participants on the result map Figure 12 (online survey after the workshop):

connection system in general

- Very interesting and useful
- This was / is interesting because I learned about some projects and ideas I never heard before. On the other hand, a follow-up discussion should focus on prioritisation and questions like "how sustainable would this be ..." etc.

Question 6: Where do you see the highest potential for bicycle mobility?

Bike mobility has a large potential in processes of modal shift. It is not trivial to visualise this on the trans-Alpine scale, but the map shows that it is possible. Pop-up paths and capacity enhancements in transit are just some examples.

Figure 13: original results compilation of Question 6 with all group content (not processed)

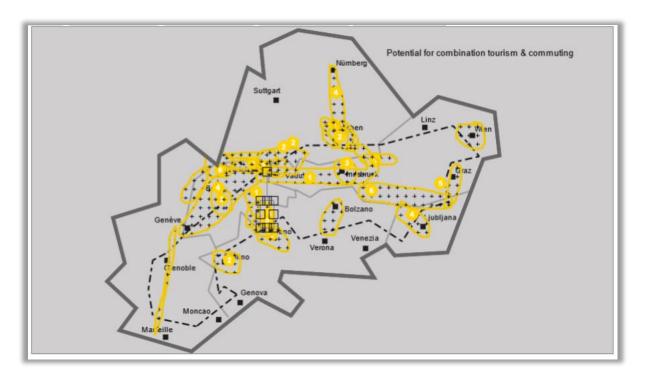
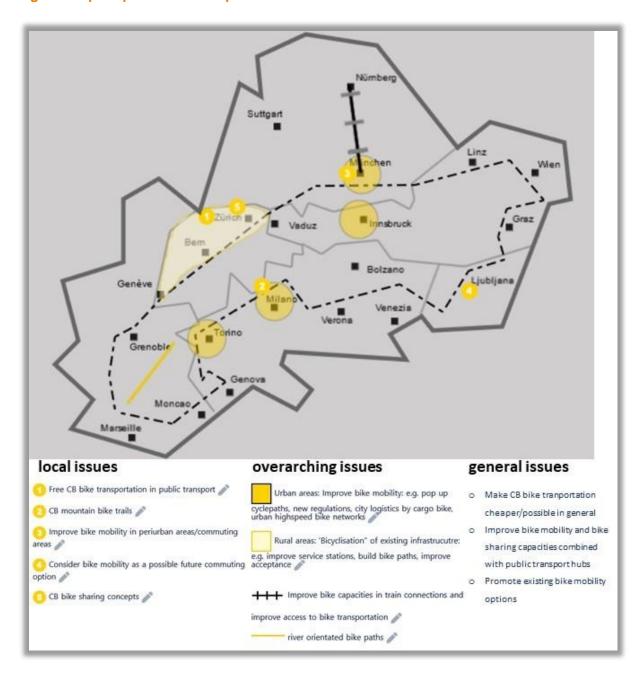


Figure 14: post-processed compositions of Question 6



Comments of the workshop participants on the result map Figure 14 (online survey after the workshop):

- As you described, not easy... Also here the overarching stuff is rather anecdotal.
- Why not using two colours for E-Bike and traditional bikes?



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