

## How can cross-border travel information in the Alpine region be improved? The LinkingAlps project aims to answer this question.

LinkingAlps is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund through the Interreg Alpine Space programme.

### Cooperation on EU Initiatives on Open Journey Planning

Many countries have digital travel information systems and route planners for public transport, which have become part of everyday life for many of us. By linking the information from different systems (so-called "linking of services"), users will be able to benefit from more comprehensive information in the future and receive multimodal, cross-operator and cross-border travel information. Via a harmonised interface, it is possible to make information accessible without physically integrating data into the individual systems.

Well-coordinated mobility offers, a transport offer tailored to the mobility needs of citizens and customer-friendly access to the various mobility offers in the region are the basis for modern, regional and municipal mobility systems. It creates the basis for sustainable mobility behaviour of citizens, commuters and also tourists. The prerequisite for this is an intelligent linking of the offers in order to be able to provide users with a seamless, clear and cross-modal (i.e. multimodal) mobility service.

Travel information-relevant data play an important role here. Examples of such data are route plans, i.e. directions from A to B, which are available today in numerous information systems, but also real-time information about delays or changes to individual means of transport on my route.

However, these are often locally or regionally limited, as travel information systems are typically designed for one transport operator, one transport association or fare association. This in turn means that the information is not universally available. Moreover, the integration of travel information from different sources (e.g. from different providers and from different countries and regions) is therefore becoming increasingly important.



Through a standardised interface, a so-called API (Application Programming Interface), a network of travel information services can be established that exchange information with each other. This enables new cooperation structures and roles between the information providers.

The approach of an open API for linking travel information services is in line with the requirements of the Delegated Regulation 2017/1926 on the provision of EU-wide multimodal travel information services, which complements the European ITS Directive 2010/40/EU. It sees the interconnection of services as a key technology to link isolated journey planners. The Regulation sets out requirements for the use of European standards for the provision of traffic data. In the area of service interconnection, it refers to a precursor technical specification (CEN/TS 17118:2017) that describes a universal API for distributed journey planning that can be applied by any local, regional or national system to make services accessible. The presented interface has gained acceptance in some implementation projects under the term "Open Journey Planning (OJP) approach".

LinkingAlps is in close cooperation with these other initiatives working on the OJP Approach, as it is essential for these initiatives to be compatible and not working against each other. The just started LinkingDanube project, which is funded through the Danube Transnational Programme has a high priority to be compatible with LinkingAlps, as some Partners are part of both projects. Also LinkingAlps has a close

cooperation with EU Spirit, which is a cross-border travel information service for customers of public transport. Up to now, providers from the following countries offer the EU-Spirit service:

- Denmark
- France
- Germany
- Luxembourg
- Poland

## Work in progress

Shortly after the kick-off, the partners started working on the content. The first step was an analysis of the existing journey planners. The action intends to summarize the main technical information on the participating systems involved in LinkingAlps as it is the basis for the interoperability of the OJP services and the development of the distributed system. A second task, which is currently under preparation, analysis the current uptake of travel information services. It aims to collect information about the current use of the participating systems (e.g. type of requested information, frequency of accesses, type of users and end users, etc.) and about potential OJP users' needs and requirements for multimodal travel information services.

The ex-ante analysis is based on the data collected through a questionnaire that was specifically designed and distributed to the six OJP implementers (SBB - Switzerland, VAO - Austria, STA - Bolzano Province, IT, LUR - Slovenia, ARIA - Lombardia Region, IT, CMT0/5T - Piemonte Region, IT) involved in LinkingAlps project and currently developing and managing the local JPs that will be linked together through the implementation of a distributed system based on OJP.

- Sweden

Through regular meetings the development of the different initiatives are discussed and valuable ideas and inputs are exchanged.

Furthermore Use cases were defined where the main achievements of the project can be demonstrated. The two main developed use cases (short distance travel and long distance travel) both cover different scenarios that provide the basis for demonstrating cross-border and transnational (multi-region) linking of services in the Alpine region. The defined scenarios provide the basis for end user application tests performed in the course of the demonstration and evaluation activities in Workpackage T2.

Also, the specification and the OJP LinkingAlps Profile are already very far developed and are about to implement by the OJP implementers (SBB - Switzerland, VAO - Austria, STA - Bolzano Province, IT, LUR - Slovenia, ARIA - Lombardia Region, IT, CMT0/5T - Piemonte Region, IT).

In addition to the technical implementation, also the organisational architecture is currently under development. First organisational requirements are already agreed on. Also Processes and Roles are currently designed, so that a sustainable LinkingAlps service can be guaranteed also after the end of the project.

All final Deliverables can be found on the LinkingAlps Website: <https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/linkingalps/en/project-results>

## Visibility and Outreach

The LinkingAlps partners were also very active in presenting the novel LinkingAlps approach at diverse conferences, meetings and workshops. Some highlights of the last 6 months include the presentation of LinkingAlps at the 'Austrian Tourism Mobility Day' on the 7th October 2020, an event which was jointly organised by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism (BMLRT) and the Austrian Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK) with the key purpose to bring together stakeholders from the mobility and tourism sector and foster an experience exchange as well as provide room to establish closer cooperation on local, regional, national and supra-national level.

Also LinkingAlps was presented at the meeting "Assessing the potential of technologies for the promotion of sustainable passenger transport in the Alpine region" which was organised by the Bavarian State Ministry of Housing, Building and Transport (StMB), who is also an observer of the LinkingAlps project. Many projects working on mobility solutions in the alpine region came together and discussed their main approaches and first results. The event took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2020 in Munich and was a great success for LinkingAlps.

In November 2020, LinkingAlps was presented at the 'Digital Transport Days' (18th November 2020) which was organised by the European Commission. This high-profile conference brings together key stakeholders who are driving the innovation of mobility in Europe and beyond.

Next to the high visibility of LinkingAlps at conferences and conventions, partners also take great efforts to promote LinkingAlps within the travel information sector. A key achievement of the last months was the establishment of cooperative links to other travel information networks such as EU-Spirit.



## Outlook on activities

In the coming months a range of project activities will happen, such as the 3rd PIM (Project Implementation Meeting) will take place on February and the 4th PSG Meeting in May.

The very active outreach and presentation efforts of the LinkingAlps partners also continues. Already fixed presentations of the LinkingAlps approach include presentations at the Hong Kong Smart City Conference on the 27th January and the ECOMM in June.

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Further Information

<http://www.alpine-space.eu/linkingalps>

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