



Cooperation initiative of the ALPARC network for awareness raising and empowerment of outdoor participants in Alpine protected areas and beyond.

CHARTER OF COOPERATION

(draft version)

EMPOWER TOGETHER

Preamble

In 2017, nature-based leisure activities and outdoor sports boom in the Alps, both in summer and in winter. This trend also affects more and more remote natural areas and protected areas. The number as well as the spatial and temporal extent of these activities have increased significantly in recent years. Activities have diversified due to economic and societal changes (trends such as trail running, increasing number of high-performance competitions) and new technologies (e.g. e-MTBs, freeride skis, hiking and camping equipment), and continue to do so. For the future, experts expect further growth in nature-based leisure activities and outdoor sports (hereafter **OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**).

A lack of knowledge, the increase in the proportion of beginners in the various activities and the increase in performance-oriented individual sports continue to increase negative effects on wildlife and natural areas. The presence and activities of outdoor participants, sports persons and visitors (hereafter simply **OUTDOOR PARTICIPANTS**) rises pressure on Alpine fauna and habitats both in the protected areas of the Alps and beyond. Especially in winter or at the time of reproduction Alpine wildlife is exposed to related impacts.

For more than 20 years, numerous protected areas (hereafter **PAs**), wildlife managers, environmental organizations, Alpine clubs and national governments have used information and awareness-raising tools across the Alps to reduce the impact of outdoor activities; and this from simple leaflets to large-scale communication campaigns (such as in Switzerland, the German Alps and Vorarlberg). These initiatives, however, do not cover all Alpine protected areas or other sensitive areas. In addition, regional and local initiatives are diversified with regard to their professionalism, means invested, strategic orientation, use of tools and messages. They thus lack coherence and sometimes efficiency, and do not achieve a comprehensive and similar effect among their target groups. In some states, there are still few actions in awareness raising and communication carried out today.

Throughout the Alps, outdoor activities, species, natural milieus as well as linked challenges for wildlife and nature are essentially the same. Many ALPARC members have therefore expressed the desire to work together in the field of awareness raising to create positive synergies and enhance the success of regional and local initiatives. The **BE PART OF THE MOUNTAIN** initiative (hereafter **BPM** or **THE INITIATIVE**), which is based on this Charter of cooperation (→ a joint declaration on cooperation), is the direct expression of the desire to collectively communicate using similar tools and messages and capitalize on local and regional experiences through exchange.

Article 1: Definitions

Outdoor activities concerned: BPM's first actions address particularly winter outdoor activities, i.e. ski mountaineering, free-riding and snowshoeing. In the future, we would like to enlarge the scope and address all outdoor activities that are practiced in natural areas of the Alps (all seasons, all Alpine natural milieus, individual and group activities and sports competitions). BPM should also particularly address and anticipate new trends in sports and leisure activities outdoors.

BPM Members: Public and private organizations (non-profit) as well as individual persons from the fields of nature protection and outdoor activities from the eight Alpine countries, which are aware of the environmental challenges of outdoor activities and wish to cooperate in terms of awareness raising: Alpine protected areas, other protected areas, wildlife managers, Alpine clubs and other federations, environmental organisations, local authorities as well as individual persons such as mountain guides, biologists, environmental education staff or sensitized ambassadors for outdoor sports (pros). The conditions for membership are set out in Article 6.

ALPARC members are automatically member of the initiative.

BPM Partner organisations: Private companies and foundations can become partners of the initiative BPM, operating in the outdoor or environmental sector and which agree upon the vision, values and goals of the BPM initiative. The conditions for partner organizations are set out in Article 7.

The Alps: the focus of action of BPM is the official perimeter of the Alpine Convention, reflecting the biogeographical perimeter of this European mountain range. Cooperations, however, with other mountain ranges and stakeholders are possible.

Article 2: Leitbild/Vision

The members of the initiative have developed the following Leitbild (vision) for coping with outdoor activity – nature conflicts in the Alps:

Man is part of the Alpine nature / environment. We are convinced that alpine natural areas and the practice of outdoor activities in these areas provide many benefits for humans and society, i.e. health and well-being, but must be protected in order to preserve their social and environmental value today and for future generations.

Therefore, outdoor participants in the Alps should be aware of nature and wildlife and its needs, and behave responsibly to protect them. Many negative behaviors and actions are caused by a lack of knowledge. We believe that by informing, educating and inspiring outdoor participants, we can protect Alpine nature without diminishing the beneficial effects of outdoor activities. We believe that by pooling our knowledge and resources, we can go farther in terms of awareness raising and promotion of behavioral change, thus improving the coexistence of outdoor activities, nature and wildlife in the Alps.

Article 3: Objectives

In order to protect wildlife and natural areas in the Alps from negative impacts of outdoor activities, BPM aims at

- contributing to behavioral change of outdoor participants on international level through awareness raising and empowerment for Alpine nature.
- promoting the transnational exchange and transfer of knowledge, tools and methods in terms of communication and awareness raising.
- supporting existing national and regional initiatives and achieving a greater visibility of the issue and possible solutions, without creating competition between or decreasing visibility of existing efforts.
- improving the cooperation between stakeholders of the fields nature protection, environmental education and outdoor activities.

Article 4: Missions

- Raise awareness and empower outdoor participants with the same knowledge, common tools and methods
- Develop new shared methods and tools of awareness raising and empowerment
- Exchange knowledge, methods and tools via different channels
- Develop new partnerships and cooperations to achieve the initiative's objectives

Artikel 5: Membership

This article summarizes the conditions and commitments member organisations should agree upon when signing this Charter.

By signing this charter, the member organization officially becomes a member of the initiative BPM. The member organization identifies with and agrees to actively contribute to its vision, objectives and missions. In particular, the member organisation commits itself to

- to make use of and promote BPM's goals, messages and tools in its own awareness raising and communication activities.
- to use the BPM logo, subject to the terms of use (see Appendix in English).
- to actively participate in the exchange of the initiative (telephone conferences, workshops).
- to actively contribute to the development of common tools and their dissemination.
- to continue, or if not yet implemented, to initiate a program of awareness raising in its own perimeter of action.
- Membership ends when? Members can quit initiative at any time... (?)
- Develop a short list of criteria for the approval of member organizations?

Article 6: Partners

By signing a partnership agreement, private organizations / companies can become an official partner organization of the Initiative BPM. The organization supports the vision, objectives and missions of BPM and contributes its values. The partner organization commits itself to support the objectives, missions and concrete measures of BPM in an appropriate form. The conditions of support are subject of a detailed partnership agreement.

- Develop a short list of criteria for selection of partners?
- What does BPM offer in return for support?

Article 7: Organisation and resources

- Coordination of BPM: ALPARC operational unit (or change BPM lead every two years...?)
- Steering group (1-2 persons from member organisations from each Alpine country, reflecting different types of organisations)
- 1-2 meetings per year, 3-4 phone conferences
- Management of funds? (if acquired)
- Number and role of partner organisations: limit number? Do they have decisional power?

Article 8: Duration

No officially determined duration of the initiative from the start. It is an experiment and based on voluntary engagement of the members.