

- **Supporting digital tools and marketplaces:** Encourage the development of digital infrastructure that improves the visibility and traceability of Alpine textile products. Tools such as online directories, certification databases, and e-commerce marketplaces can help reinforce the value of local origin and sustainable production.

These measures align with AG2's mandate to strengthen Alpine innovation ecosystems and support resilient, place-based industries.

### Action Group 3 – Labour Market, Education and Training

Action Group 3 addresses the alignment of education and training systems with emerging labour market needs, especially those linked to green and digital transitions. In the context of the textile sector, AG3 can contribute by:

- **Facilitating specialised training and curricula:** Develop and promote educational modules focused on resource-efficient textile production, including circular economy principles, sustainable design, and Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) methodologies. These curricula should be embedded in vocational training and higher education institutions across the Alpine region. At the same time, the current scarcity of training initiatives dedicated to traditional textile techniques and aesthetics represents a critical gap. Addressing this shortcoming would not only safeguard the transmission of cultural heritage, but also ensure that new generations of professionals are able to integrate traditional knowledge into contemporary practices, thereby reinforcing the distinctiveness and long-term competitiveness of the Alpine textile sector.  
In line with these objectives, the AlpTextiles project has implemented concrete actions to bridge this gap. A MOOC focused on Alpine heritage was developed, offering accessible online training on traditional techniques, local materials, and cultural practices. Complementing this digital initiative, a Summer School was organized, bringing young participants into direct contact with Alpine manufacturing, hands-on textile production, and the region's cultural heritage. Together, these initiatives provide practical skills, foster understanding of traditional knowledge, and inspire the new generation of entrepreneurs and professionals to integrate heritage practices into sustainable and innovative textile production.

(Source: Marcella Oliviero: "The living textile heritage of the Alps and its sustainable circular future" Massive Online Open Course (MOOC))

(Source: Regione Lombardia & RAS: Alpine Icon, Textile Summer School)

- **Encouraging apprenticeships and mobility programmes:** Support the establishment of cross-regional mobility schemes and apprenticeship programs that facilitate the exchange of skills, foster intergenerational learning, and build a shared Alpine textile identity.



These actions support AG3's objective to create a skilled, adaptable, and regionally integrated workforce capable of driving sustainable innovation.

## Action Group 6 – Natural Resources and Cultural Heritage

Action Group 6 is dedicated to safeguarding and valorising Alpine natural and cultural assets. In relation to the textile sector, AG6 has a key role in:

- **Valorising Traditional Textile Knowledge as Cultural Heritage:** Advocate for appropriate recognition of the people involved; establish governance mechanisms grounded in dialogue with direct stakeholders; and support the documentation, preservation, and institutional endorsement of traditional Alpine textile techniques. This includes mobilizing public funding programs, cultural heritage registries, and sui generis intellectual property mechanisms to ensure the survival, support, and proper revitalization of these practices and their bearers, effectively balancing the protection of ancient heritage with sustainable innovation.
- **Valorising Alpine natural fibers and resources:** Enhance the sustainable use of regionally sourced fibers—such as wool, hemp, and flax—together with dyeing plants and other natural inputs, by explicitly linking their management to the safeguarding of Alpine landscapes and biodiversity. This entails promoting responsible pastoral and agricultural practices, including traditional systems such as the transhumance of sheep, which contribute to ecosystem balance and cultural continuity. At the same time, attention must be given to emerging challenges, such as ensuring the coexistence with large predators and adapting traditional practices to contemporary ecological pressures. Strengthening the value of Alpine natural fibers also means integrating them into innovative and circular textile supply chains, where their ecological qualities, territorial identity, and cultural significance become assets for regional development and international competitiveness.
- **Promoting Alpine textile crafts as assets for sustainable development:** recognize the social, cultural, and environmental value of local textile traditions, to be rediscovered in order to relocalize production chains and foster forms of sustainable tourism. These activities contribute to building a cohesive and conscious regional identity and reinforce the global distinctiveness of Alpine textile production.

By leveraging its cultural and ecological mandate, AG6 can enhance the visibility, protection, and economic potential of Alpine textile heritage.



## Crosscutting Priority 4

For the Alpine textile sector, CCP4 provides a strategic opportunity to combine sustainability, territorial identity, and innovation. Its application can be articulated through the following dimensions:

- **Valorisation of local flows and reduction of waste:** Implementing systems for the collection, reuse, and recycling of locally sourced natural fibers (such as wool and flax), along with textile residues, reduces dependency on imported raw materials and prevents waste. Mechanical and chemical recycling can play an important role in closing the loop of production.
- **Circular production models:** Promoting eco-design, modularity, repairability, and recyclability extends product lifecycles and facilitates reintegration into new uses and recycling processes.
- **Territorial branding and market identity:** Linking circular practices with territorial branding initiatives such as "Made in the Alps" strengthens consumer perception of authenticity and sustainability. Local brands can thus act as catalysts for SMEs, educating them in circular practices while enhancing competitiveness.
- **Cross-border cooperation and shared infrastructure:** Transnational projects can help establish shared facilities for wool collecting, washing, or recycling, addressing critical bottlenecks in fiber valorisation and optimising economies of scale.
- **Skills and training:** Circularity requires new expertise in sustainable design, life-cycle thinking, and material management. CCP4 encourages the integration of these dimensions into vocational training and higher education curricula, ensuring that the future workforce is equipped to apply circular principles in practice.

### 6. Implementation Roadmap

To operationalize the strategic recommendations outlined above, a phased implementation approach is proposed. This roadmap offers a timeline of priority actions that regional authorities and EUSALP actors can adopt to progressively build a sustainable, circular, and heritage-sensitive textile ecosystem in the Alpine region. References to relevant EU policy instruments and tools from the Annex (A.1–A.7) are included to ensure alignment with broader regulatory and sustainability frameworks.



## Short-Term Actions

- **Establish Regional Stakeholder Networks:** Create or strengthen local and transnational working groups that bring together public authorities, SMEs, bearer communities, artisans, cultural institutions, and research centers. Coordination with frameworks such as **CSRD (A.5)** can support structured reporting and transparency, helping stakeholders track environmental, social, and governance performance from the outset.
- **Launch Awareness Campaigns:** Develop communication strategies targeting both consumers and producers to raise awareness about the environmental and cultural value of Alpine textiles and fibers.
- **Conduct Policy Audits:** Review existing regional policies related to textiles, sustainability, and heritage to identify gaps and opportunities for alignment. Considering principles from **EPR (A.1)** and **SSbD (A.7)** can guide the integration of extended producer responsibility mechanisms and sustainable product design criteria into regional strategies, ensuring regulatory coherence and practical applicability.

## Medium-Term Actions

- **Initiate Collaborative Projects and Pilot Studies:** Scale up successful initiatives from the AlpTextyles pilots, fostering cross-sectoral partnerships and innovation labs across Alpine regions.
- **Alpine Label and certifications:** Strengthening the visibility and distinctiveness of Alpine textiles requires a dual approach combining voluntary labeling initiatives with formal certification schemes. The integration of **DPP (A.3)**, **PEF (A.4)**, and **EPR (A.1)** principles can enhance traceability, demonstrate environmental performance, and strengthen consumer confidence. While a flexible “Alpine Label” can highlight cultural heritage and local sustainability, formal certifications and geographical indications provide legal recognition, ensuring that SMEs capture fair market value and maintain authenticity across markets.
- **Support Skills and Training Infrastructure:** Invest in educational programs and technical centers that specialize in circular and traditional textile crafts.



## Long-Term Actions

- **Institutionalize Policy Frameworks:** Establish permanent policy instruments—such as regional textile strategies or integrated development plans—that ensure continuity and long-term support. Embedding **EPR (A.1), Taxonomy Regulation (A.6)**, and circularity principles within these frameworks guarantees alignment with EU sustainability objectives and reinforces the resilience of Alpine textile ecosystems..
- **Monitor and Evaluate Impact:** Develop indicators and data collection systems to track environmental, economic, and cultural impacts of Alpine textile value chains over time. Leveraging **DPP (A.3), PEF (A.4)**, and **CSRD (A.5)** enables robust monitoring, comparative analysis, and evidence-based adjustments to policies and initiatives, ensuring measurable progress toward sustainability goals.
- **Position the Alps as a Model Region:** Work toward international recognition of the Alpine region as a leading example of sustainable and heritage-sensitive textile production. Compliance with **SSbD (A.7), Taxonomy Regulation (A.6)**, and other EU instruments enhances credibility, attracting investment, partnerships, and global attention while showcasing the region's unique combination of environmental stewardship, cultural heritage, and circular economy practices.

## 7. Conclusion

The Alpine region stands at a crossroads: it can either continue to lose its rich textile heritage to globalized production models, or it can seize the opportunity to become a European leader in sustainable and heritage-driven textile innovation.

The evidence from AlpTextiles demonstrates that circular and place-based textile value chains are not only possible, but already emerging. Local materials, traditional knowledge, and regional collaboration form a strong foundation for re-territorialized production systems that meet growing consumer demand for authenticity and sustainability.

Now is the time for decisive, coordinated action. Regional authorities and EUSALP stakeholders must translate strategic vision into concrete support—through policy, funding, certification, and capacity building.

With the right investments and governance, the Alpine textile sector can serve as a model for Europe: a region where tradition drives innovation, where sustainability is embedded in identity, and where the future of textiles is rooted in place.



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3C approach

<https://www.culturalintellectualproperty.com/the-3cs#:~:text=The%203Cs%20stand%20for%3A%20Consent,a%20combination%20of%20the%20two>



## APPENDIX

## **A.1 EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility)**

In recent years, the European Union has placed significant emphasis on the implementation of extended producer responsibility (EPR) measures specifically designed for the textile industry. This strategic focus on EPR within the EU's policy agenda reflects a growing recognition of the urgent need to address the environmental impact of textiles. By advocating for the adoption of EPR, policymakers aim to establish a robust framework that not only mitigates the negative consequences of textile production but also emphasizes the importance of achieving circularity within the industry.

One of the primary objectives of integrating EPR into the textile sector is to catalyze a shift towards sustainable practices that prioritize environmental conservation. Through the effective enforcement of EPR regulations, the EU seeks to instill a culture of responsibility among textile producers, encouraging them to adopt eco-friendly approaches that minimize waste generation and facilitate efficient end-of-life management.

Furthermore, the role of EPR extends beyond environmental concerns; it also serves as a pivotal tool in supporting the EU Member States in meeting their obligation to implement separate collection systems for textiles by 2025. This alignment between EPR strategies and legislative requirements underscores the EU's commitment to fostering a more sustainable and socially responsible textile industry.

In essence, the integration of EPR mechanisms within the textile sector signifies a transformative shift towards a more sustainable and circular economy, where the principles of accountability, resource efficiency, and environmental stewardship converge to shape a brighter future for the industry.

## A.2 ESPR (Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation)

For small artisanal businesses and brands in the Alpine region, particularly those focused on high-quality, territorially-linked productions, the ESPR could represent both a challenge and an opportunity.

The Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) is a key component of the European Green Deal, which aims to transform the European Union into the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. This regulation is designed to establish a framework that sets ecodesign requirements for a wide range of product groups, significantly improving their circularity, energy performance, and other aspects of environmental sustainability. Under the ESPR, products placed on the EU market will be required to meet performance and information requirements that cover several key areas such as product durability, reparability, environmental footprint etc.

The emphasis on durability and reparability aligns well with the traditional values of quality and craftsmanship inherent in the Alpine region. By focusing on these aspects, small producers can differentiate themselves in the market, appealing to consumers who value sustainability and long-lasting products.



### **A.3 DPP (Digital Product Passport) in ESPR**

The Digital Product Passport (DPP) is an innovative tool mandated by the ESPR that aims to enhance transparency and sustainability in the production and consumption of goods.

It will serve four primary purposes:

1. Sharing key product-related information
2. Providing new business opportunities
3. Helping consumers make sustainable choices.
4. Allowing authorities to verify compliance

The standardization process for the DPP began in 2023 and is expected to be completed by 2025, with mandatory implementation scheduled for mid-2027. This timeline allows businesses to prepare for compliance while enabling the EU to achieve its sustainability goals.

The DPP offers a unique opportunity for small producers to showcase their commitment to sustainability and quality. By providing consumers with transparent information about the provenance of materials and the care taken during production, businesses can build stronger connections with environmentally-conscious customers. This transparency can be particularly beneficial for products linked to the territory and culture of the Alpine region, where heritage and authenticity are highly valued.

### **A.4 PEF (Product Environmental Footprint)**

The Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) method is based on Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) standards. These methods enable companies to measure and communicate their environmental performance reliably, allowing them to compete on the market based on verifiable environmental information. These methods build on existing internationally accepted practices, indicators, and rules, providing detailed instructions on how to model and calculate environmental impacts. By adopting the PEF method, companies in the textile industry can improve their environmental performance, reduce resource consumption, and minimize waste, thus aligning with the EU's broader sustainability objectives. The PEF provides a framework for enhancing the environmental credibility of products. Artisanal producers can use the PEF to highlight the environmental benefits of traditional, small-scale production methods that typically have a lower environmental impact compared to mass production. By emphasizing the sustainability of their production processes, small businesses can attract eco-conscious consumers who prioritize products with a reduced carbon footprint.



## A.5 CSRD (Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive)

The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), adopted in February 2022, marks a significant shift in how companies report on their environmental and social impacts.

Starting in 2023/24, companies will need to incorporate sustainability information into their management reports, rather than in separate documents, to ensure greater integration between financial and non-financial information. This approach is intended to increase transparency and comparability, enabling investors and other stakeholders to assess the impact of companies on people and the environment more effectively.

The CSRD will have significant implications for companies operating in the Alpine region, especially for those focused on small-scale, high-quality production, despite the potential difficulties, the CSRD also presents an opportunity for small Alpine producers to formalize and communicate their sustainability efforts. By adopting the CSRD reporting standards, companies can provide tangible evidence of their commitment to environmental and social responsibility, which is increasingly important to consumers and investors alike.

## A.6 Taxonomy Regulation

The EU Taxonomy Regulation provides a framework for identifying which economic activities can be considered environmentally sustainable. This regulation is aligned with the minimum reporting requirements outlined in the CSRD and focuses on six environmental objectives:

1. Climate Change Mitigation
2. Climate Change Adaptation
3. Sustainable Use and Protection of Water and Marine Resources
4. Transition to a Circular Economy
5. Pollution Prevention and Control
6. Protection and Restoration of Biodiversity and Ecosystems



By defining clear criteria for sustainability, the Taxonomy Regulation helps guide investment decisions, ensuring that capital flows are directed towards activities that contribute to the EU's environmental goals. For the textile industry, this means aligning production practices with these objectives, thereby enhancing sustainability and competitiveness in the global market.

The Taxonomy Regulation also opens up new opportunities for Alpine producers who focus on sustainable practices. By aligning their operations with the Taxonomy's criteria, small businesses can attract investment and funding aimed at promoting green economic activities. This alignment can also enhance their appeal to environmentally-conscious consumers who are increasingly demanding products that contribute positively to the environment.

## **A.7 Safe and Sustainable by Design (SSbD)**

The Safe and Sustainable by Design (SSbD) framework represents an emerging approach within the European Union aimed at integrating safety and sustainability principles directly into the design and development phases of materials, products, and processes. Its goal is to encourage businesses to proactively reduce environmental and human health risks while promoting the efficient use of resources throughout the lifecycle of products. The SSbD framework aligns with the European Green Deal's broader objectives and contributes to the EU's transition to a circular economy by emphasizing product durability, repairability, and recyclability. This approach seeks to ensure that sustainability is considered from the outset, guiding companies in making decisions that balance environmental, social, and economic factors.

This framework presents significant opportunities for Alpine textile producers. By incorporating SSbD principles, businesses can differentiate themselves in the market by offering products that meet the growing consumer demand for sustainable and safe textiles. This is particularly relevant in premium markets, where the combination of high-quality, locally produced goods with verifiable sustainability credentials can be a powerful selling point. SSbD principles allow traditional producers to integrate sustainability without losing the authenticity and unique value of their craftsmanship. For example, using locally sourced, natural materials that align with SSbD standards can help maintain the cultural heritage of textile production in regions known for their distinctive techniques and designs.





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AlpTextyles is an Interreg Alpine Space project that gathers the heritage of Alpine textile ecosystems  
to develop collaborative business and cultural solutions toward a circular and sustainable textile industry.

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