



Chambéry, October 5 2016

## InnovAlps closing and distinction of the pilot regions for their commitment to innovation and sustainability

ALPARC, the Alpine network of protected areas, has officially recognized the commitment of three Alpine nature park regions to innovation and sustainability in regional development. On the occasion of the InnovAlps final conference in Leuk-Susten (Valais, CH) on 29th and 30th of September, the Regional nature park Pfyn-Finges (CH), the Natural park region Tiroler Lech (AT) and the Regional natural park of the Baronnies provençales (FR) have been distinguished as the first pilot regions for innovative regional development. All three are characterized by different innovative projects, which demonstrate the actors' willingness to experiment, a high degree of creativity and integrated view on regional development.



Left to right: Véronique Hannyoyer, Günter Salchner (both Regionalentwicklung Ausserfern), Gilberte Bremond (Parc naturel régional des Baronnies provençales), Peter Oggier (Naturpark Pfyn-Finges), Andreas Weissen (ALPARC treasurer)

Over the last 14 months, the InnovAlps project has searched for new and alternative approaches to rural development in Alpine protected areas. Coordinated by ALPARC, the project gave special

attention to projects that aim at establishing regional cooperation between protected area managements and stakeholders from tourism, agriculture, business and other stakeholders of regional development. The project has identified more than 25 innovative approaches in Alpine protected area regions. In addition, the project provided the three selected natural park regions with the opportunity to participate in a transnational exchange. In spring 2016, a series of three workshops took place, in which the pilot region partners were able to get to know all the other regions mutually, especially their projects in the fields of nature tourism, regional production, environmental education and innovation.

25 participants from four Alpine countries attended the final conference in the nature park Pfynges. It was the last official event of the project. It provided the opportunity to review the lively exchanges that took place during the pilot region workshops and to present the project results. The invited speaker Jonas Wyssen, a graphic and interaction designer from Zürich, helped with his presentation the participants to see their work and the topic of innovation in nature parks under a different angle. The innovative approaches identified by ALPARC were presented in the evening with a vernissage of a specially developed poster collection. The presentation of the project results – success factors and constraints of innovation in nature parks among others - and the lessons learned from the exchanges for the pilot regions provided an overview of the accomplished work. In the following discussion round, project ideas for the future cooperation within the ALPARC network were exchanged and debated, e.g. in the fields of soft route tourism and regional production.

ALPARC is coordinating the project InnovAlps on behalf of the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment FOEN. The three natural parks had been selected as pilot regions for the project in cooperation with the national Austrian, French and Swiss park networks. The project will end by the end of October this year. A final report will summarize the work.

#### **Author/Contact**

Dr. Dominik Cremer-Schulte  
Project manager regional development, ALPARC  
[dominik.cremer-schulte@alparc.org](mailto:dominik.cremer-schulte@alparc.org)  
[www.alparc.org/innovalps](http://www.alparc.org/innovalps)

#### **Photo**

©Naturpark Pfynges