

ISCAR annual report 2023

In 2023, ISCAR embraced renewed vigor and once again actively engaged as a partner to the Alpine Convention in pursuing its objectives under the presidency of Prof. Leopold Füreder (Austrian Academy of Sciences & University of Innsbruck), the vice-presidency of Dr. Janez Nared (Slovenia) and lead by the office in Berne through Dr. Stefanie Gubler (hosted by the Swiss Academies of Sciences). After 6 years of presidency, Prof. Leopold Füreder hands over his role to Dr. Janez Nared in January 2024. We express our sincere gratitude to Leopold Füreder for his lengthy and dedicated commitment to ISCAR.

The ISCAR's objectives are specified in the 1999 ISCAR convention and are further detailed in the focus activities 2023 - 2026 of ISCAR, which are aligned with the multi-annual work program 2023-2030 of the Alpine Convention. In the following paragraphs, selected ISCAR activities of 2023 are reported in detail.

All partners and delegates of ISCAR are listed here: <http://iscar-alpineresearch.org/about/members-guests/>.

ISCAR roundtable and session at the ESEH Conference "Mountains and Plains" (Bern, 22-26 August 2023)

In a roundtable organized by ISCAR on the "Past, present, and future of mountain research networks", a selected group of interested participants engaged in a thoughtful discussion on the significance and role of mountain research networks in the face of contemporary global challenges such as climate change and biodiversity crises. The discourse underscored the pivotal role of such networks in fostering interdisciplinary research aimed at addressing these intricate challenges. Additionally, the conversation delved into the crucial aspect of research communication and outreach and explored strategies for effectively addressing this need. The roundtable was chaired by Dr. Stefanie Gubler (head of ISCAR office) and co-chaired by Dr. Valerie Braun (Institute of Interdisciplinary Mountain Research (IGF), Austria).

Further, the Research Commission of the Swiss National Park (FOK) jointly with ISCAR organized a thematic session "On the history of nature conservation and rewilding in Switzerland and Europe in general" with the presentation of three papers. The initial presentation was delivered by Dr. Valerie Braun (ISCAR-P) on "Timelines of tension: trajectories of nature park creation in the Tyrolean Alps," followed by Dr. Anna-Katharina Wöbse (University of Giessen, Germany) discussing "Follow the tracks! Rewilding Europe in the 20th century." The sequence concluded with Tamara Estermann (Swiss National Park) presenting "Two Glances at the Landscape: Rephotography in the Swiss National Park." The session was chaired by Dr. Stefanie Gubler (head of ISCAR and FOK office).

ForumAlpinum 2024: The Alps - a Refuge of Bio- and Geodiversity!?

The concept of organizing another ForumAlpinum has been under consideration for some time, and it materialized during the first virtual meeting of ISCAR in 2023. The idea resonated with the two Slovenian members of ISCAR, Prof. Irma Potočnik Slavič and Dr. Janez Nared, who committed to the initiative in partnership with the Slovenian presidency of the Alpine Convention 2023/2024. As a first step, an organizing committee was set-up. It is chaired by Prof. Irma Potočnik Slavič (Univ. of Ljubljana) and supported by ISCAR vice-president Dr. Janez Nared (ZRC SAZU), by ISCAR president Prof. Leopold Füreder, by the Slovenian presidency of the Alpine Convention - The Slovene Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning, the Triglav National Park and by the ISCAR office. The organizing committee announced the ForumAlpinum in

September 2023. It will take place from 12th to 14th June in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, and will go hand in hand with a policy event on Biodiversity in the Alps hosted by the Slovenian presidency of the Alpine convention.

The ForumAlpinum 2024 is titled **»The Alps - a Refuge of Bio- and Geodiversity!«** and will focus on biodiversity and geodiversity which are under severe threat - worldwide and especially in sensitive ecosystems like the Alps. The ForumAlpinum aims at identifying hot spots of bio- and geodiversity, their monitoring and management in the Alps, analyze land use conflicts and their impact on bio- and geodiversity, and assess the relevance of bio- and geodiversity protection in the regional, national or international context to discuss possible solutions. The ForumAlpinum will foster the publication of scientific papers in journals such as *eco.mont - Journal on protected mountain areas research and management* or the *Journal of Alpine Research* | *Revue de géographie alpine*, *Acta geographica Slovenica*, among others.

The call for contributions distributed among all Alpine countries resulted in 55 abstracts. The scientific program of the conference will be elaborated under the lead of the scientific committee chaired by Dr. Valerie Braun in the first trimester of 2024.

Further Information: <http://forumalpinum.org/>

AlpWeek 2022 and 2024

To illuminate the various aspects of change in the Alps, the seventh edition of the AlpWeek "Alps in Transition" took place in Brig from 5th to 7th September 2022 under the Swiss presidency of the Alpine Convention. ISCAR contributed to the conceptualization and organization of the AlpWeek 2022 through its commitment in the organizing committee. This involved conceptualizing content and redesigning the website. Numerous workshops, excursions, three keynotes, and a panel discussion on the politically highly relevant topic of photovoltaic installations in the alpine region took place. ISCAR and FoLAP actively contributed to the integration and exchange of networks in the field of Alpine research through the initiation of workshops and a panel discussion.

The upcoming AlpWeek "Alps in our hands" in 2024 is scheduled to be held from September 23 to 25 in Nova Gorica. ISCAR is providing support through hosting the [website of the AlpWeek](#) and participating in the organizing committee.

Projects, Initiatives, Workshops

Research in Alpine Protected Areas (ISCAR-P): The focus of ISCAR-P activities was twofold: First the function as editorial board of the indexed Journal *eco.mont - Journal on protected mountain areas research and management* (<http://ecomont.mountainresearch.at>). There has been one virtual Editorial Board meeting in April 2023. In 2023, two volumes have been published. The editorial office with Valerie Braun, Margreth Keiler and Günter Köck is located at the IGF in Innsbruck. A special issue is planned in 2025 in close coordination with the ForumAlpinum 2024.

Alpine Convention & EUSALP: Meetings, contributions of ISCAR

Alpine Convention: As observers of the Alpine Convention, scientists from the ISCAR network and the ISCAR office participated in the meetings of the Permanent Committee, the Compliancy Committee and in meetings of the working groups and platforms of the Alpine Convention. In cooperation with bodies of the Alpine Convention, the above-mentioned policy event Biodiversity in the Alps is being integrated into the ForumAlpinum 2024 and, together with the Alpine networks (CIPRA, Alliance in the Alps, etc.) and the Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, the AlpWeek 2024 is being prepared. Further, ISCAR is giving continuous support to many of the Alpine Conventions activities such as the [Young Academics Award 2024](#). Further, three Swiss scientists are supporting the development of the 10th Report on the State of the Alps on "Quality of Life" in advisory roles.

EU Strategy for the Alpine Region EUSALP: ISCAR (Prof. Leopold Füreder) is collaborating as observer in two (of nine) EUSALP Action groups: Action group 1 on Research and Innovation (Lead: Anna Giorgi, also

Italian ISCAR delegate) and as mentioned above in Action group 7 on Ecological Connectivity (Lead: Bavaria and Slovenia).

Collaboration

The Berne office of ISCAR stayed in close contact with the MRI office and participated in the activities of the Network of European Mountain Explorers (NEMOR). In addition, ISCAR office collaborated within the network of European mountain networks consisting of "Science for the Carpathians", "Scientific Network for the Caucasus Mountain region" as well as NEMOR / EUROMONTANA and the MountMed Institute. The collaboration started in 2022 at the International Mountain Conference in Innsbruck (ISCAR office represented by Anea Schmidlin and Prof. Leopold Füreder) and was continued through various online meetings in 2023.

Further, the ISCAR office (Dr. Stefanie Gubler) was directly involved and supported the development of the project AlpsLife, a project that has been submitted to the Interreg Program Alpine Space under the lead of EURAC and the Alpine Biodiversity Board of the Alpine Convention.

ISCAR supports the *Journal of Alpine Research* | *Revue de géographie alpine* through participation at the production of the journal. In 2023, the journal published 2 thematic issues:

- A "varia special issue" (111-1): <https://journals.openedition.org/rga/11109>
- An issue dedicated to "The glaciated Slopes of the High Alpine Mountains: Holocene Evolution and Impacts of the Current Climate Crisis" (111-2): <https://journals.openedition.org/rga/11570>

A special issue on "The digital transition and use of mountain spaces" will be published current 2024.

Partners, Meetings, Members, Office

Convention Partners: The extension of the ISCAR convention for the period 2023–2026 has been endorsed by the following partner institutions: Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Dipartimento per gli affari regionali e le autonomie (Italy), Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften (Austria), Bayerische Akademien der Wissenschaften (Bavaria, Germany), Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Slovenia), Akademie der Naturwissenschaften Schweiz and Schweizerische Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften (Switzerland). The signature of the French partners is currently pending.

Changes in the Committee: The following additional members of ISCAR could be gained during 2023: Roland Pail (TU Munich, Germany), Elisa Ravazzoli and Andrea Omizzolo (both EURAC, Italy). Thomas Spiegelberger has announced his resignation from ISCAR due to a change in employment.

Committee Meetings: ISCAR assembled for three meetings: Two were held virtually on 15th of February and 17th of May. A retreat took place in Innsbruck, Austria on 30th of November / 1st of December. Further, Živa Novljan from the office of the Alpine Convention participated in the retreat. A variety of other meetings in smaller groups took place to organize the ForumAlpinum and the round table at the ESEH conference (see above).

The office in CH-Berne gave administrative and organisational support to main ISCAR activities through the office manager Stefanie Gubler (employment approx. 15% for ISCAR) and Anne-Catherine Minnig (approx. 5% during 6 months in 2024). The office continuously seized opportunities for project coordination and cooperation. Further, ISCAR website has been renewed in 2023.

Other information can be found on the ISCAR homepage: <http://www.iscar-alpineresearch.org>

Financial report

Revenues (in CHF)

Revenues (CHF)	Planned Budget	Effective budget	Remarks
ISCAR-Partners	12'000	7'612	IIRSTEA and UFR (F): no payment of contribution received until 31 st of December 2023 (1920 CHF each)
		*1833	*payment of contribution 2023 received from UFR respectively UGA on 1 st of February 2024
Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences	10'000	10'000	
Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT)	10'000	10'000	
Total (CHF)	32'000	27'612	*Total of revenues including contribution 2023 from UFR respectively UGA received on 1 st of February 2024
		*29'445	

Expenditures (in CHF)

Expenditures	Budget	Salaries	Non-personnel costs	Remarks
Management ISCAR	12'000	9'394	1'416	The latter non-personnel costs are travel expenses
AlpWeek/Intermezzo	3'000	692	-	
Forum Alpinum	5'000	995	-	
Contribution to ESEH Conference, Aug 23	5'000	-	5'000	
MRD-Membership fee	4'800		4'569	
Journal of Alpine Research membership fee	2'200		2'141	
Total expenditures		11'081	13'126	
Total (CHF)	32'000	24'207		Sum of effective expenditures

Balance (in CHF)

Balance by 31.12.2023 (CHF)		3'405	Reserves for Forum Alpinum etc.
*Balance by 1.2.2024 (CHF)		*5'238	

Further information

Remark: Between 2019 to 2022, no annual report of ISCAR has been elaborated.

Innsbruck / Ljubljana / Berne, 14. February 2024

Leopold Füreder, Janez Nared and Stefanie Gubler

*Supplement dated 19. September 2024, Elisa Frank, Berne

Delegates and Guests 2023

Austria	Jörg Böckelmann	Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften	National contact
	Leopold Füreder	Institute of Ecology University of Innsbruck	Member / Chair
	Roland Psenner	University of Innsbruck	Member
	Valerie Braun	Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften	ISCAR-P
France	Anne Dalmasso	Université Grenoble-Alpes	National contact
	Cristina Del Biaggio	Institut d'Urbanisme et Géographie Alpine (IUGA) / Université Grenoble Alpes	Member
	Thomas Spiegelberger	Mountain Ecosystems IRSTEA	Member
Germany	Bianca Marzocca	Bayerische Akademien der Wissenschaften BAdW	National contact
	Hans-Peter Bunge	LMU München	Member
	Roland Pail	TU München	Member (since 11/23)
Italy	Paola D'Avena	Dipartimento per gli affari regionali e le autonomie	National contact
	Massimo Pecci	Ente Italiano Montagna EIM	Member
	Andrea Omizzolo	Eurac Bozen	Member (since 11/23)
	Elisa Ravazzoli	Eurac Bozen	Member (since 11/23)
Slovenia	Stanovik Branko	Department for International Relations and Scientific Coordination of SASA, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts	National contact
	Janez Nared	Anton Melik Geographical Institute, ZRC SAZU	Member
	Irma Potočnik Slavič	University of Ljubljana	Member
Switzerland	Jürg Pfister	Akademie der Naturwissenschaften Schweiz (SCNAT) / Swiss Academy of Sciences	National contact
	Markus Zürcher	Schweizerische Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften (SAGW) / Swiss Academy of the Humanities and Social Sciences	National contact
	Christian Preiswerk	Akademie der Naturwissenschaften Schweiz (SCNAT) / Swiss Academy of Sciences	Observer/guest
	Christian Rohr	University of Bern	Member
	Stefanie Gubler	Akademie der Naturwissenschaften Schweiz (SCNAT) / Swiss Academy of Science	Office manager