



International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps
Internationales Wissenschaftliches Komitee Alpenforschung
Comité scientifique international recherche alpine
Comitato scientifico internazionale ricerca alpina
Mednarodni znanstveni komite za preučevanje Alp

ISCAR annual report 2024

In 2024, ISCAR was able to continue the momentum of the previous year and carry out a number of activities under the presidency of Janez Nared (ZRC SAZU, Slovenia), the vice-presidency of Andrea Omizzolo (Eurac, Italy), and the support of the office in Berne (hosted by SCNAT and SAGW) headed by Elisa Frank. Janez Nared took over as president in January 2024 and led ISCAR through a very active year. In particular, ISCAR was able to showcase and strengthen its most important "brand" with ForumAlpinum 2024, held in Kranjska Gora in June, back-to-back with the Alpine Biodiversity Conference of the Alpine Convention. AlpWeek 2024 in Nova Gorica in September provided an opportunity for cooperation with the other observer organizations of the Alpine Convention.

The objectives of ISCAR are specified in the [ISCAR Convention](#) of 1999 and are further detailed in the ISCAR [focus activities 2023-2026](#), which are aligned with the Multi-Annual Work Programme 2023-2030 of the Alpine Convention. In the following paragraphs, selected ISCAR 2024 activities are reported in detail. Further information can be found on the [ISCAR homepage](#), including a [list](#) (see also p. 9) of all founding partners and committee members of ISCAR.

Activities and Collaborations

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

[ForumAlpinum](#) is a scientific conference, organized by ISCAR in collaboration with national partners, aiming to promote international research cooperation on topics of relevance to the entire Alpine Arc. The 2024 edition in Kranjska Gora focused on biodiversity and geodiversity, which are under severe threat - worldwide and especially in sensitive ecosystems such as the Alps. Designed as an interface between the scientific community and policy makers, ForumAlpinum 2024 took place back-to-back with the Alpine Biodiversity Conference of the Alpine Convention from 12th to 14th June.

To organize the back-to-back events and to anchor them locally, the Alpine Convention (Slovenian Presidency and Permanent Secretariat), the Triglav National Park and ISCAR formed a joint Organizing Committee. It was chaired by ISCAR committee member Irma Potočnik Slavič (Univ. of Ljubljana), supported by ISCAR president Janez Nared. The Scientific Committee was in charge of planning and organizing the ForumAlpinum day. It was chaired by ISCAR committee member Valerie Braun (IGF/ÖAW). Irma Potočnik Slavič, Janez Nared, Živa Novljan (PSAC) and Elisa Frank completed the Scientific Committee, which formulated the call, organized the review of the submitted papers, compiled the programme and was responsible for the publication of the proceedings.

At ForumAlpinum 2024, more than 40 contributions identified hotspots of bio- and geodiversity and explored their monitoring and management in the Alps. Divided into 9 sessions, the contributions analyzed land-use conflicts and discussed the relevance of bio- and geodiversity protection in finding possible solutions. Highlights of the conference were the keynote speeches by Kurt Hanselmann and Špela Čonč as well as the poster session where young researchers could present their work. Participants came from all Alpine countries and from different disciplines. They

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took advantage of ForumAlpinum for a fruitful interdisciplinary dialogue and actively participated in the science-policy dialogue by attending the presentations and workshops of the Alpine Biodiversity Conference of the Alpine Convention on the first day of the joint event. The excursions on the last day offered the opportunity to discover how bio- and geodiversity shape the region around Kranjska Gora and the Soča Valley.

All ForumAlpinum 2024 contributions are documented in the [proceedings](#), which are available online. In line with the back-to-back events, all contributions include a paragraph on policy implications. ForumAlpinum also encouraged 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.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to all the organizations that made the joint event ForumAlpinum and Alpine Biodiversity Conference 2024 possible! Namely: the Slovenian Presidency of the Alpine Convention/Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia, Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SAZU), Triglav National Park, Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU), University of Ljubljana – Faculty of Arts, Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW) – Institute for Interdisciplinary Mountain Research (IGF), Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT) and Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAGW).

AlpWeek 2024

The [AlpWeek](#) is an international event co-organised by the leading Alpine organisations committed to mountain protection and sustainable development. This year's event focused on biodiversity and ecosystems, climate change, and quality of life, aligning with the Alpine Conference's Multi-Annual Work programme (2023-2030).

Twenty years after the first AlpWeek, the 8th edition was dedicated to the sustainable development of the Alpine region. Held in Nova Gorica, it brought together a diverse array of participants including policy makers, researchers, non-profit organizations, civil society representatives, and local residents to reflect on the achievements of the past two decades. The international event provided a platform to assess the progress made in safeguarding the Alpine region's biodiversity, combating climate change, and improving the quality of life for Alpine communities. Participants actively engaged in discussions and workshops focused on shaping the next 20 years of sustainable development. In this regard, AlpWeek 2024 was not only a celebration of past achievements but also a catalyst for future action – true to the AlpWeek theme "Alps in our hands". A [report](#) of the 8th AlpWeek is available online.

ISCAR contributed to AlpWeek 2024 by participating in the organizing committee and content group. In addition, ISCAR provided support by hosting and maintaining the AlpWeek website. Several ISCAR committee members were present in Nova Gorica and engaged in discussions with other participants, while ISCAR office manager Elisa Frank was part of the event staff.

Organizers: Alliance in the Alps, Alpine Town of the Year, CIPRA International, CIPRA Slovenija, Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, Interreg Alpine Space, ISCAR, Posoški Development Center, WWF as well as Go!2025 Nova Gorica, Kulturni Dom Nova Gorica and the Italian Ministry for the Environment and Energy Security (MASE)

The AlpWeek 2024 was financially supported by the Slovenian Presidency of the Alpine Convention.

Submissions for IMC 2025

In fall, ISCAR was involved in the preparation of two submissions to the Call for sessions and workshops of the International Mountain Conference IMC 2025, to be held in Innsbruck next September:

- Focus Session 3.160: [Migration and Border Dynamics along the Alpine Arc](#) (Andrea Omizzolo as convenor, Elisa Ravazzoli as co-convenor)

- Workshop 3.121: *The science-policy interface for regional mountain governance* (convened by Raphaël Lelouvier from PSAC, ISCAR president Janez Nared as co-convenor)

Several ISCAR committee members (Valerie Braun, Andrea Omizzolo, Samuel Nussbaumer) submitted sessions and workshops to IMC 2025 on behalf of their host institutions.

Workshop “Scientific writing for young researchers”

ISCAR committee member Valerie Braun (IGF/ÖAW) is preparing and hosting a workshop for the finalists of the Young Academics Award 2024 of the Alpine Convention (see below) during the Alpine Conference in January 2025. The workshop is also open to interested students from Slovenia. The editors of *Acta Geographica Slovenica*, represented by editor Rok Ciglič and editorial board member and former ISCAR member Mimi Urbanc, and *eco.mont – Journal on Protected Mountain Areas Research and Management*, represented by Valerie Braun, are organizing a workshop on how to prepare an article for a scientific journal. The focus will be on young researchers and their first steps in scientific publishing. The editors present will talk about their daily work and will be available to answer questions about publishing. Sincere thanks to the involved editors as well as to PSAC for supporting the event.

Alpine Convention

As observer organization of the Alpine Convention, scientists from the ISCAR committee, the ISCAR network and the ISCAR office participated in meetings of the Permanent Committee and in meetings of the thematic working bodies of the Alpine Convention. On behalf of ISCAR, three scientists from Switzerland (Angelika Abderhalden, Carolina Adler, Florian Knaus) supported the preparation of the 10th Report on the State of the Alps on “Quality of Life” in advisory roles.

In cooperation with the Slovenian Presidency and the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, the above mentioned joint event Alpine Biodiversity Conference and ForumAlpinum 2024 was successfully organized to foster the science-policy interface. Together with other observer organizations of the Alpine Convention, the Slovenian Presidency and the Permanent Secretariat, the AlpWeek 2024 was realized (see above). Furthermore, ISCAR gave continuous support to the *Young Academics Award 2024* by providing a jury member (ISCAR committee member Elisa Ravazzoli, Eurac) and experts from its network for the review. With 31 submissions and 13 finalists, the Young Academics Award 2024 was very well received. ISCAR committee member Valerie Braun (IGF/ÖAW) is organizing and hosting a workshop for the finalists of the Young Academics Award during the Alpine Conference in January 2025 (see above).

At the end of 2024, ISCAR officially invited the Alpine Convention to nominate a representative of the Permanent Secretariat as an observer to ISCAR (in line with paragraph 2.1 of the ISCAR Convention). The invitation was accepted by the PSAC: Živa Novljan was officially nominated on 7 January 2025 to strengthen the exchange and cooperation between the two organizations.

Alpine Journals

ISCAR maintains relationships with several journals relevant to alpine research. Under the leadership of Valerie Braun (ISCAR committee member, IGF/ÖAW and co-editor of *eco.mont – Journal on Protected Mountain Areas Research and Management*), a meeting of journal editors was organized at ForumAlpinum, where editors of different Alpine journals (*Journal of Alpine Research* | *Revue de géographie alpine*, *Acta Geographica Slovenica*) could discuss current opportunities and challenges. The exchange was highly appreciated by the editors and will be continued.

ISCAR supports the journals *Mountain Research and Development* and *Journal of Alpine Research* | *Revue de géographie alpine* (with ISCAR committee member Cristina Del Biaggio, UGA, as co-editor) through a membership. In 2024, MRD published *four open issues*, while JAR | RGA published one *Varia issue* and two special issue: *Yet Another Transition? Mountain Areas’ Conflicts and Trajectories Facing Socio-Ecological Changes* and *Negotiating One’s Place in the Mountains: Radical Perspectives*.

Activities 2024 of ISCAR Committee members in the field of Alpine research

The ISCAR Committee is composed of researchers who conduct Alpine research from different disciplinary perspectives. The following list contains selected activities in 2024 (publications, presentations, conferences, other events, etc.) of all Committee members, which show their broad inter- and transdisciplinary commitment to Alpine research:

- eco.mont – Journal on Protected Mountain Areas Research and Management (Valerie Braun, IGF/ÖAW, as co-editor): [Issue 16-1](#) and [Issue 16-2](#)
- Member of the steering committee of the [Labex ITTEM – Innovations et transitions territoriales en montagne](#): Cristina Del Biaggio, UGA
- Member of the jury of the [Alpine Town of the Year](#): Cristina Del Biaggio, UGA
- Journal of Alpine Research | Revue de Géographie Alpine (Cristina Del Biaggio, UGA, co-editor): [Special issue 112-1](#) “Yet Another Transition? Mountain Areas’ Conflicts and Trajectories Facing Socio-Ecological Changes”, [Varia issue 112-4](#), [Special issue 112-3](#) “Negotiating One’s Place in the Mountains: Radical Perspectives”. JAR | RGA also maintains various other sections online: [Transitions](#), [Book reviews](#), [Localities](#), [Mountains in fiction](#).
- Session “[Living Well in Mountains](#)” at the 22nd Swiss Geoscience Meeting, Basel, 8–9 Nov 2024, co-organized by CIRM, MRI and FoLAP (Elisa Frank, FoLAP, as co-organizer)
- [Im Fluss – Dans le courant](#), an evening event organized by several Swiss Alpine organizations at the ALPS Swiss Alpine Museum with contributions in Pecha Kucha style as part of the [Reading Mountains Festival](#) of the Alpine Convention on occasion of the International Mountain Day, 11 Dec 2024 (Elisa Frank, FoLAP, as co-organizer)
- Janez Nared (ZRC SAZU) took part in the activities of the [Youth Parliament to the Alpine Convention](#), helping them to shape postulates on Quality of Life, Kamnik, 12 March 2024
- Paper on transformative research in the Alps with several researchers ([abstract on pp. 612–613](#)), submitted to a journal (Janez Nared, ZRC SAZU, as co-author)
- Session [Observing and measuring glacier changes from the Little Ice Age to the present based on in situ and remote sensing data](#) at EGU General Assembly 2024, Vienna, 14–19 April 2024 (Samuel Nussbaumer, UZH/WGMS, as session co-convenor)
- [BeyondSnow](#) – Enhancing the Resilience of Alpine Space Snow Tourism Destinations and Communities to Climate Change (2022–2025), a project in the Interreg Alpine Space Programme (Andrea Omizzolo, project manager for [Eurac, lead partner of the Project](#))
- Mass balance estimation of the Alpine glaciers from GRACE and GRACE-Follow On gravity missions (Roland Pail, TU Munich, a related paper of his Ph.D. candidate Shuxian Liu is currently in review: Liu S., Pail R. (2025): The glacier changes in the Alps from the GRACE and GRACE Follow-On Missions. JGR: Earth Surface, in review).
- Pohorje Mountains E-Tourist Guide for Generations 65+, part of the initiative “[Modra fakulteta](#)” (more information on the Pohorje Mountains E-Tourist Guide on p. 56) of the University of Ljubljana where people aged 55+ co-create courses with university teaching staff and students (Irma Potočnik Slavič, Univ. of Ljubljana, as member of the teaching staff)
- Christian Rohr (Univ. of Berne) has been hosting [Mateja Šmid Hribar](#) (Anton Melik Geographical Institute, ZRC SAZU), financed by a Slovenian Scientific Exchange Program for the period of Sept to Dec 2024 at the Institute of History, University of Berne. Besides deepening the cooperation on Alpine “new” commons (with a focus on Switzerland and Slovenia) in general, this research stay aimed at preparing a concept for an exhibition on these “new” commons to be shown at different locations in both countries (e.g. ALPS Swiss Alpine Museum in Berne, Val d’Anniviers, Slovenian Alpine Museum in Mojstrana). The responsible scholars for this traveling exhibition, which will start in 2026/2027, are Mateja Šmid Hribar (Ljubljana), Martin Stuber and Christian Rohr (both Berne).

Collaboration with various other mountain research networks

The ISCAR office in Berne stayed in close contact with the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) office and participated in the activities of the Network for European Mountain Research (NEMOR), of which ISCAR is a member of the Steering Committee. NEMOR is planning to submit a proposal to the MSCA Doctoral Network, for which ISCAR was able to provide two institutions from Slovenia interested in participating in the application (Department of Geography, Univ. of Ljubljana and Anton Melik Geographical Institute, ZRC SAZU).

Thanks to ForumAlpinum, contact was established with AlpPlan (alpine spatial planning network) from the Academy for Territorial Development in the Leibniz Association (ARL). ISCAR office manager Elisa Frank exchanged with Constantin Meyer, AlpPlan office manager, and Hubert Job, chair of AlpPlan, to explore possibilities for cooperation in the future.

In December 2024, Janez Nared presented ISCAR and its activities to the plenary of the Forum Landscapes, Alps and Parks (FoLAP). FoLAP is an inter- and transdisciplinary platform in the field of research into landscape, the Alps and protected areas of the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT) and the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAGW). Organizationally located at SCNAT, FoLAP is also the unit that hosts the ISCAR Office.

ISCAR Founding Partners, Committee Meetings, Committee Members, Office

Founding Partners

The extension of the ISCAR Convention for the period 2023–2026 has been endorsed by the following founding partners: 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 still pending, but contacts with the French founding partners have been successfully re-established in 2024.

Research in Alpine Protected Areas (ISCAR-P)

In 2007, ISCAR established the ISCAR-P Working Group to foster research in Alpine protected areas and the journal *eco.mont* (founded in 2008). One of the tasks of ISCAR-P was to support *eco.mont* and its editorial board and give scientific advice to the Research Symposium Hohe Tauern. ISCAR-P was chaired by Günter Köck (until 2022) and Valerie Braun (until 2024).

In order to simplify ISCAR's organizational structure without losing the close cooperation between ISCAR and the journal *eco.mont* and thus research in protected mountain areas, the committee decided to dissolve ISCAR-P and integrate the connections between ISCAR and *eco.mont* into other existing formats: The ÖAW nominated Valerie Braun as official Austrian member to the ISCAR committee, and Elisa Frank (ISCAR office manager) joined the editorial board of *eco.mont*.

Changes in the Committee

In October 2024, Valerie Braun (IGF/ÖAW) was nominated by ÖAW as Austrian member to the ISCAR Committee (see above). With the help of Christian Rohr (Univ. of Berne, ISCAR committee member for Switzerland/SAGW), glaciologist Samuel Nussbaumer (Univ. of Zurich/World Glacier Monitoring Service) could be gained to run for the vacant seat of a second Swiss member of the ISCAR committee. Samuel Nussbaumer was elected by the SCNAT Board in December 2024. At the end of the year, Janez Nared was also able to make contact with researchers at INRAE and Marc Fuhr, director of the LESSEM unit (Laboratoire Ecosystèmes et Société En Montagne) at INRAE, is willing to join the ISCAR Committee from 2025.

At the end of 2024, ISCAR officially invited the Alpine Convention to nominate a representative of the Permanent Secretariat as an observer to ISCAR (in line with paragraph 2.1 of the ISCAR

Convention) in order to strengthen the exchange and cooperation between the two organizations. PSAC nominated Živa Novljan, who will thus join the ISCAR committee as an observer from 2025.

Committee Meetings

ISCAR committee met three times: Two meetings were held virtually on 1 March and 8 October. An in-person meeting was held in Kranjska Gora on 13 June during ForumAlpinum. A number of other meetings were held in smaller groups to organize ForumAlpinum and other activities.

ISCAR office

The office in Bern (hosted by SCNAT and SAGW) provided administrative and organizational support for the main ISCAR activities through the office managers Stefanie Gubler (employment approx. 15% for ISCAR until January 2024) and Elisa Frank (employment approx. 15% for ISCAR from February 2024) as well as Anne-Catherine Minnig (selectively for the maintenance of the ForumAlpinum and AlpWeek websites). The office has continuously seized opportunities for project coordination and collaboration.



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Financial report 2024

Revenues (in CHF)

Revenues	Planned	Effective	Remarks
ISCAR Founding Partners	12'000	9'210	ÖAW (€4'000=CHF 3'696), DARA (€4'000=CHF 3'686), UGA (€2'000=CHF 1'828)
Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAGW)	10'000	10'000	
Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT)	10'000	10'000	
Interest rate	-	0.57	
Withdrawal from ISCAR Reserves	20'000	15'032.56	planned and effective withdrawal from ISCAR Reserves for ForumAlpinum 2024 and AlpWeek 2024 *
Total	52'000	44'243.13	

Expenditures (in CHF)

Expenditures	Planned (salaries + non- personnel costs)	Salaries (effective)	Non-personnel costs (effective)	Remarks
Management ISCAR	16'300 (15'000+1'300)	15'044.49	480.25	non-personnel costs: travel expenses (meetings AC), bank fees
AlpWeek 2024	8'500 (3'000+5500)	4'492.95	4'898.50	non-personnel costs: travel expenses, cash contribution to the AlpWeek's 2024 budget (€5000)
ForumAlpinum 2024	24'100 (8'600 + 15'500)	8'485.16	6'435.83	non-personnel costs: rooms, catering, excursions, keynote speakers, travel expenses
ISCAR-Workshops	4'600 (4'300 + 300)	-	-	
MRD Membership fee	2'400	-	2'247.75	membership fee (USD 5'000) divided half-and-half with FoLAP
Journal of Alpine Research Membership fee	2'200	-	2'158.20	
Total		28'022.60	16'220.53	
Total (salaries + non-personnel costs)	58'100	44'243.13		

Balance (in CHF)

Balance by 31.12.2024	0 *
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ISCAR Reserves (in CHF)

Reserves by 31.12.2023	45'500	
		effective withdrawal from ISCAR
		Reserves for ForumAlpinum 2024
Balance 2024	-15'032.56	and AlpWeek 2024 *
		Reserves for future ForumAlpinum,
Reserves by 31.12.2024	30'467.44	AlpWeeks etc.

* For the financial support of the two conferences ForumAlpinum 2024 and AlpWeek 2024, CHF 15'000 and 5000 respectively have been planned to be withdrawn from the current reserves of CHF 45'500 in the budget. To achieve a balanced outcome, only CHF 15'032.56 were needed. They were thus noted as revenues. Since the reserves are on the bank account of ISCAR anyway, this did not result in a financial transfer, but in a change of the reserves.

Ljubljana / Berne, 7 March 2025

Janez Nared and Elisa Frank

Members, national contacts and guests 2024

Austria	Jörg Böckelmann	Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW)	National contact
	Leopold Füreder	Department of Ecology, University of Innsbruck	Member
	Roland Psenner	Department of Ecology, University of Innsbruck	Member
	Valerie Braun	Institute for Interdisciplinary Mountain Research (IGF), Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW)	Member (since 8/24 delegated by ÖAW, before ISCAR-P)
France	Julie Sorba	Université Grenoble-Alpes (UGA)	National contact
	Cristina Del Biaggio	Institut d'Urbanisme et de Géographie Alpine, Université Grenoble-Alpes (UGA) / Labex ITTEM	Member
Germany	Bianca Marzocca	Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BAdW)	National contact
	Roland Pail	Institute of Astronomical and Physical Geodesy, TU Munich	Member
Italy	Paola D'Avena	Dipartimento per gli affari regionali e le autonomie (DARA)	National contact
	Massimo Pecci	Dipartimento per gli affari regionali e le autonomie (DARA)	Member
	Andrea Omizzolo	Institute for Regional Development, EURAC Research	Member (vice-president)
	Elisa Ravazzoli	Institute for Regional Development & Center for Climate Change and Transformation, EURAC Research	Member
Slovenia	Stanovik Branko	Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SAZU)	National contact
	Janez Nared	Anton Melik Geographical Institute, ZRC SAZU	Member (president)
	Irma Potočnik Slavič	Department of Geography, University of Ljubljana	Member
Switzerland	Jürg Pfister	Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT)	National contact
	Lea Haller / Beat Immenhauser	Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAGW)	National contact
	Samuel Nussbaumer	World Glacier Monitoring Service (WGMS) / Department of Geography, University of Zurich	Member (from 12/24)
	Christian Rohr	Institute of History, University of Berne	Member
	Stefanie Gubler	Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT)	Office manager (until 1/24)
	Elisa Frank	Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT)	Office manager (from 2/24)