S. Kreft & P. Ibisch:
Introduction to module 3 "The role of protected areas – management and networking in the Alps"

International conference
Ecological networks in the Alps – a response to climate change that will conserve biodiversity?
Nationalpark Berchtesgaden & ALPARC, 15-16 October 2009, Berchtesgaden/Germany.

Summary:

Both the impacts of climate change and the corresponding societal reactions regarding adaptation and mitigation will increase the existing pressure on nature conservation even more. This requires conservationists to formulate and implement a holistic and effective strategy, i.e., to align all goals and measures of conservation according to *one* goal – making nature conservation more resilient and adaptive to climate change. This goal shall be supported by as many stakeholders in conservation and other sectors as possible.

Climate change creates a diversity of general conservation needs for action:

1. Reduce and mitigate climate change as much as possible.: prioritise conservation of ecosystems which (potentially) interact more directly/ intensively with the atmosphere: mainly forests, peatlands and other wetlands.
2. Enhance resilience and adaptive capacity of biodiversity.
3. Accept/ accompany/ support change of biodiversity.
4. Integrate non-knowledge (incl. uncertainty) consciously and in a competent manner into management.
5. Systematise management planning and diversify management options
   (compare Ibisch & Kreft, ANLiegen Natur 32: 1-23, 2008).

Accordingly, adaptations to climate change should happen on all strategic levels of conservation action:

1. Goal matrices,
2. implementation concepts and planning,
3. political and legislative framework,
4. concrete conservation measures and interventions,
5. monitoring and control of success,
6. communication

   (Ibisch & Kreft, ANLiegen Natur 32: 1-23, 2008).

A brief survey of the projects presented during the module 3 "The role of protected areas – management and networking in the Alps" at the conference reveals that all projects (hypothetically) combined address the action levels 2-6, representing a comparatively high degree of strategic holism. However, the necessity of adaptations on the fundamental level 1, the definition of goals and selection of conservation targets, appears not to be considered explicitly by neither of the projects, rendering conservation efforts in the Alps partially non-adaptive and thus vulnerable to climate change. It is recommended, first, to facilitate interaction between and integration of the projects, and second, to discuss possible needs of adaptating conservation goals and targets to climate change.