

*Press release, 12.02.2008*

## The NENA network is born!

**NENA, a new network of innovation and sustainability oriented enterprises and umbrella organisations in the Alps, has been officially founded in Zurich in January 2008. During the last two years the network has been developed in an EU-cofunded Interreg Alpine Space project. The idea came about as part of the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps CIPRA's "Future in the Alps"-project.**

The better use of endogenous resources, sustainable production and innovation along the production and distribution chain offer new perspectives for alpine enterprises. Whereas cooperation platforms at regional, possibly national level exist, enterprises and their umbrella organisations only seldom cooperate with their counterparts across the boundaries. This is the chance that the NENA Network intends to offer its members: to raise competitiveness whilst orienting their activities towards more sustainability. As for other alpine wide networks the Alpine convention is a framework for the network aims and activities.

### Network aims

The aims of the NENA-network are to allow enterprises and their umbrella organisations to **exchange experiences** and to **share knowledge** as well as to carry out long term **co-operation** on specific topics and projects within the Alps. Furthermore NENA helps alpine enterprises to raise their **innovation potential** and their **competitiveness**, and to increase the contribution of alpine enterprises their umbrella organisations to **sustainable development in the Alps**.

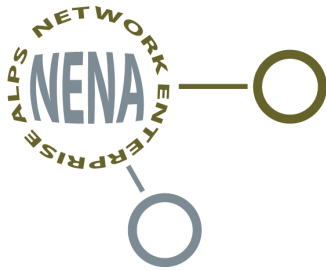
### Key topics

Some issues in the fields of renewable energy, energy efficiency and the wood production chain are the evaluation of public buildings, passive houses on high altitude (mountain huts), the financing of models for renewable energy, improving the value added chain of wood (80-100km), reducing transports, the Biomass mobilisation and the raise of awareness.

### Membership

Innovation- and sustainability-oriented **enterprises** and their **umbrella organisations** and other intermediary institutions related to the NENA topics can become members of the NENA network.

NENA offers its members the opportunity to be recognized as one of the innovation- and sustainability-oriented enterprises in the Alps. The membership also allows them to carry their voice further than their regional or branch-specific network in order to improve the frame conditions and to promote their activities and products. The members also profit from the experience of other innovative enterprises and umbrella organisations in the Alps.



### Network activities

In order to reach the above aims, the network will carry out following activities:

- providing relevant news and other information to the network members via a periodic **NENA-newsletter** and the NENA website
- promoting the network and its members via the **NENA website [www.nena-network.net](http://www.nena-network.net)** and other media
- offering opportunities for experience and know-how sharing through **meetings, workshops and excursions**
- dissemination of **good practice examples**
- **participation at fairs** related to the network topics
- offering a framework for designing and carrying out **joint projects**
- offering support for the network members with regard to the **search for funding** and with regard to **project management**.

### Outlook 2008 and 2009

Weaving a network can not happen in a day, and major challenges remain. During the beginning phase it is rather groups of enterprises or intermediary organisations who participate actively to NENA, being more familiar with the network culture. However, *in fine*, the aim is clearly to touch the enterprises, to give them a voice on the alpine sustainable development stage and to support them in finding innovative and sustainable development solutions in the Alps.

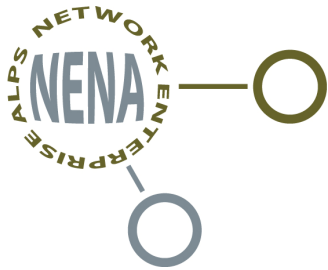
Above all, NENA has the ambition of rising, step by step, to the front of the stage as an information and cooperation platform for entrepreneur projects contributing to sustainable development.

2008 is already marked by common activities: events, trainings and publications, as well as contacts with further potential members. An operational office will also need to be organised with key competences: the international and entrepreneurial work cultures as well as strong knowledge of the fields of renewable energies and energy efficiency. CIPRA International will take part in this area of work. Finally, the network is already hard at work on the elaboration of a first common project to be submitted to the Interreg IVB Alpine Space Programm for co-funding.

“The secret of successful evolution of networks is cooperation”, states vice-chairman Willy Kuechler of the ITZ (InnovationsTransfer Zentralschweiz). “Cooperation is also the principle of success in science, economics and politics and all the welfare services.” He is convinced, “that the participating enterprises and organisations can really benefit from the NENA network”.

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***For further information about the NENA network and its project partners please visit [www.nena-network.net](http://www.nena-network.net).***