



# ALPINE WATER – BLUE SPACES

## Background:

Water is one of the most important physical and aesthetic landscape elements. Humans have always been attracted by rivers, lakes and the sea. What impact do aquatic environments have on people's health? While the health benefits of green spaces are quite well explored, little analysis has been made of "blue spaces" and even less of "Alpine" blue spaces. Blue spaces have occasionally featured in public debate as far as the risks are concerned, e.g. drowning or microbial contamination. However, a stay in a blue space environment can promote health and well-being. The evidence is still insufficient as far as the underlying mechanisms are concerned.

## Studies of medical evidence:

- Indication: public health (Grellier et al., 2017): evidence level IV
- Indication: well-being; combating stress (Franco et al., 2017): evidence level IV
- Indication: well-being; mental health (Gascon et al., 2017): evidence level IV
- Indication: well-being (de Bell et al., 2017): evidence level IV

## Conclusion:

The water resources of the mountains are of vital importance to both society and the ecosystem. The increasing demand for water and the effects of climate change are leading more and more to water use conflicts. Overcoming these conflicts while at the same time maintaining the ecosystem are major challenges. Alpine destinations can use their various forms of blue space to develop evidence-based health tourism products and integrate these into economic value chains. The healing potential and the resulting health tourism potential are still underestimated and should be the focus of further research.

## Health tourism potential:

- Take account of existing blue spaces for hiking tours, excursion destinations, etc.
- Make blue spaces accessible while also checking possibilities for people of limited mobility.

