

Forest EcoValue

Supporting multiple forest ecosystem services through new circular|green|bio markets and value chains

The **Forest EcoValue project**, co-financed by the Interreg Alpine Space Programme, aims to advance sustainable business models and payment schemes for the forest-based sector in alpine regions by enhancing the value of ecosystem services.

Forests play a key role to mitigate climate change by storing CO₂ and enhance resilience by offering multiple ecosystem services. For example, fostering socio-economic benefits, reducing air pollution, safeguarding biodiversity, regulating extreme weather events and halting land degradation. In addition, forest-related economic activities, such as the use of new forest-based materials and energy streams to replace fossil-based counterparts, can have significant climate benefits.

Forests of the alpine space are threatened by rural abandonment, climate change and territorial degradation that progressively lead to a pauperisation of natural resources and consequently to a decrease in the provision of forest ecosystem services. As a result, forest management costs are high, and public funds and revenues generated in traditional wood value chains are no longer a sufficient source of income in the region. As a consequence, the attraction of additional resources becomes an evident need.

Some compelling examples of alternative business models and payment schemes already exist. For example, the provision of forest carbon credits. It is necessary to explore such new business models and evaluate the economic importance of multiple forest ecosystem services.



MAIN PROJECT CHALLENGES

The Forest EcoValue project is based on the acknowledgment that restoring and maintaining healthy forests can generate benefits, such as green business models and sustainable job opportunities for alpine communities.

The Forest EcoValue project intends to tackle the degradation of forests of the alpine space and turn it into an opportunity by developing innovative, sustainable and win-win business models for the forest-based sector. In this regard, it is critical to involve different sectors (energy, construction, chemistry/pharma, food, recreation etc.), public authorities, private actors and citizens. All in all, the project will propose new frameworks to address public-private markets and payment schemes and maximise the value of forest ecosystem services towards regional value chains.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The project will focus on a subset of ecosystem services: **provisioning** (e.g. the production of biomass, raw materials and bio-based chemicals); **regulating & maintenance** (e.g. safeguarding biodiversity, reducing natural risks and sequestering CO₂); **cultural** (e.g. recreation, habitat experience and human health).

On the selected subset of forest ecosystem services (FES) the project will:

- ▶ Map and analyse the forests' capacity to deliver ecosystem services
- ▶ Identify and estimate the economic potential
- ▶ Suggest business models and markets frameworks
- ▶ Test the business models in the Living Labs by involving local stakeholders
- ▶ Draft innovative policies together with local stakeholders to foster alpine forests' management, FES markets and green value chains
- ▶ Disseminate transferable research methodologies, monetisation tools, business models and policy recommendations
- ▶ Ensure capacity building in the living labs

The proposed solutions will be tested in a network of 5 Living Labs in each participating country (Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia).



WP1 ► DEVELOPING AN ECOLOGICAL & ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

Two interrelated working groups will address the bio-physical and economic dimensions of FES, and release a common to manage data and research methods and set-up an effective market framework for the selected FES.

WP2 ► TESTING THE MARKET FRAMEWORK IN A NETWORK OF 5 LIVING LABS

Transferable guidelines and tools for the establishment of public-private markets for the selected FES in alpine communities • **Regional roadmaps** to be adopted by stakeholders in the Living Labs • **Regional feasibility assessment and recommendations** for the LL territories based on the pilot experience.

WP3 ► DISSEMINATION OF THE VALIDATED TOOLS AND PROPOSAL FOR POLICY ACTIONS


Multi-regional and multilevel **policy dialogue** on enabling FES markets • **Policy briefs** on how to facilitate the development of forest-based value chains in the alpine Region • **Regional capacity building workshops** in each Living Lab addressed to forest owners, companies and public authorities • Online **summer school** for small and mid-sized enterprises and public/private organisations in the alpine region.

The Forest EcoValue project supports the Macroregional Strategy for the alpine area **EUSALP** and aims to collaborate with its Action Groups on key domains related to sustainable forest management and ecosystem services valuation. Also, the Forest EcoValue project supports the objectives of the **alpine Convention**, particularly on mountain forestry, climate change adaptation and biodiversity protection.



PARTNERSHIP

The Forest EcoValue project brings together partners from 5 European countries and involves 10 organizations of very different types and with complementary skills: ecosystem services mapping, forest management, green economy value chains, environmental economics, financial modelling, policy analysis and capacity building.

-  Finpiemonte SpA – Regional financial and development agency / Coordinator
-  Lombardy Foundation for the Environment [FLA]
-  Lombardy Green Chemistry Association [LGCA]
-  BioBASE – Austrian innovation platform for bio-economy and circular economy
-  University of Graz, Institute of Environmental Systems Sciences
-  Slovenia Forest Service [ZGS]
-  Institute for Environmental Planning and Spatial Development GmbH & Co. KG [Ifuplan]
-  National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment [INRAE]
-  Regional Centre for Forest Property Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes [CRPF]
-  The French National Forest Office [ONF]

CONTACT DETAILS

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