



European Union Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP)

Annual Forum 2022

SHORT TIMBER SUPPLY CHAINS IN TIMES OF CLIMATE AND GEO-POLITICAL CRISES 23rd of November, 11:30 – 13:00

The Task Force on Multifunction Forestry and Sustainable Use of Timber (TF MFSUT) organized this workshop focusing on the short timber value chains in times of climate and geo-political crises. The driving questions we dealt with were: how may stakeholders and associated service providers trigger the transition of communities to become more sustainable and greener through the cascading use of timber?

In four thematic working-groups we confronted the participants with the following aspects:

- Innovative and short forest - timber value chains to design vital rural areas.
- Adaptive forest management for coping with current and long-term uncertainties.
- Cross-sectoral and transdisciplinary communication to enhance mutual understanding for sustainable transition pathways in using timber.
- Current and future generations looking at traditional and innovative practices in EUSALP, and their trade-offs in rural and urban forestry to keep the forest heritage alive.



Source ©EUSALP



Organizers of the Workshop:

Sylvain Guetaz (AG2 subgroup “Wood”) and Wolfger Mayrhofer (AG6) and the EUSALP Task Force “Multifunctional Forests and Sustainable Use of Timber” (TF-MFSUT) gathering AG2, AG6, AG7, AG8 and AG9 co-led by Gian Antonio Battistel and Christian Hoffmann (AG6).

For the introduction, we could win four experts that gave a comprehensive picture about Forestry in Trentino, its relevancy within EUSALP and the latest developments of projects dealing with Forestry in the Alpine Space Program.



Source: Servizio Foreste-Provincia Autonoma di Trento

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Extreme events and climate change need shared dialogue and strategic vision to guide future management choices.

I bring greetings from the head of the Forest Service and thank you for the invitation to this working session. It represents a great opportunity for Trento province whose Alpine forests were heavily affected by the 2018 Vaia windstorm and are now suffering the indirect consequences such as attacks by bark beetles.

Extreme events are unmistakable signs of climate change.

Forest Services are called to operate with the dynamics of this disrupting change in mind.

They must accompany the adaptation process that will inevitably impact the Forest-based sector from one side, but also stimulate the valorization of manifold ecosystem services, timber included.

The current energy crisis makes it even more urgent to have a discussion and policy measures that can trigger and guide future management choices.

The Forest Service of Trento therefore wishes for this day full of speeches and activities a fruitful exchange of ideas that can be pooled by all stakeholders to build collaborations with a shared dialogue and strategic vision.



Source:

<https://www.alpconv.org/de/startseite/kontakt/>

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Fulfilling the key role Alpine forests play in both climate mitigation and adaptation strategies is an example of a complex challenge that can only be met with interdisciplinary approaches.

Within EUSALP the forestry-wood sector is a strategic priority policy area with a cross-sectoral character. That is why the EUSALP Task Force “Multifunctional Forests and Sustainable Use of Timber” (TF MFSUT) has been established in early 2019 with the objective of fostering a cross-cutting and interactive cooperation among the EUSALP Action Groups 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9 regarding relevant topics. As the current mandate of the TF MFSUT ends in 2022 and as the TF has proven its utility in the past, the leaders of AG 6 are in favor of enabling the TF to continue working and giving it a mandate to do so. This requires that the members of the TF identify suitable activities that the leaders of the participating Action Groups coordinate and that the planned activities are then anchored in the work plans of the individual Action Groups.



Source: EUSALP

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Action Group 2 aims at identifying key Alpine economic sectors which would benefit from action at macro-regional level, and to implement concrete measures to improve their economic and social environment.

The added value comprises a better use of Alpine specific resources and potentials in the identified strategic sectors with focus on the improvement of framework conditions and opportunities for SMEs.

EUSALP has the ambition to make a substantial contribution to the European Green Deal through an “Alpine Green Deal”. An important element in this respect is the “Innovation Hub for green business models”. For this Innovation Hub a list of issues has been set up in the frame of the AG2 activities:

- smart industry,
- bioeconomy,
- tourism,
- forest, wood, and timber industry, and in the coming months - circular economy.

For two years we worked in two directions concerning wood and forests:

- promote the regional and local labelling in the timber industry and especially for wood construction, for instance, by supporting the “Fortea” expertise,
- support actions in the field of multifunctionality of the forests because they are not only an economic resource but also an issue for our future, in terms of biodiversity, risk mitigation, leisure, and climate change.

The thematic approach promoted by the new generation of ASP offers new opportunities for all the 9 EUSALP AG:

- climate resilience and green alpine region,
- carbon neutral and resource sensitive region, for instance through circular economy, - innovation and digitalization supporting a green alpine Region.

This is meant to strengthen the coherence between program and strategy goals and to support the path towards a carbon neutral and climate resilient territory.



Source: <https://www.intechopen.com/profiles/424528>

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SHORT FOREST-TIMBER VALUE CHAINS IN TIMES OF CLIMATE AND GEO-POLITICAL CRISES - Forest management is, by definition, a balancing act that aims to optimize one forest ecosystem service while preserving others:

Timber production, protection against natural hazards, carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, recreational uses, scenic value... The resilience of this multi-functionality of forest areas is only possible if the forest stands are functional and functioning. The solution lies in the old axiom: divide and conquer, which translates into a mosaic forest. Since the middle of the 19th century, the forest area in the Alpine Space has been expanding because of a combination of afforestation policies to prevent natural hazards and the natural recolonization of abandoned agricultural land. In France, for example, the growth rate of the forest area was 70% between 1908 (9.9 M ha) and 2019 (16.9 M ha).

The new challenge facing foresters is how to deal with Climate Change-related compound events and impacts on the resilience of forest ecosystem services. This issue translates into 4 main related questions: what will be 1) the frequency and magnitude of natural disturbances, 2) the forest dynamics under CC (tree species distribution...), 3) how to develop efficient adaptive forest management plans, and 4) who will pay for what (evolution of the timber market, wood use, payment of non-merchant forest services...)? In this decisionmaking area, the manager is confronted with several sources of uncertainty, including : the availability and accessibility of data, projection models and analysis scales, the demands and understanding of stakeholders, the lack of a real forestry culture and risks on the part of some stakeholders ("the forest grows by itself there is no need for foresters"...), the actions of decision-makers, the major political orientations and the adaptability of European, national and regional policies, and finally who will pay for what?

To best meet this challenge and develop a truly mosaic and resilient forest, 8 criteria can be identified and summarized:

1. Which forest ecosystem services and where? To gather requested data, develop, and apply efficient methodologies and tools to qualify, quantify and map the different forest ecosystem services.
2. If there is no soil, then there is no forest! Soil preservation/protection is needed for having a well-functioning soil in good condition.
3. Harvesting is one of the main actions of foresters but not in any way.
4. Don't forget the hidden 3 S of forest (carbon Sequestration in situ, carbon Storage in furniture and buildings, carbon Substitution) and therefore develop a reasoned use of forests, timbers and wood.
5. Biodiversity is one of the main engines of forest resilience, so: Promote silvicultural and land-use strategies that achieve a high biodiversity in managed forests.
6. Need for public awareness for developing an efficient territorial intelligence: adapted training, education, communication, actions.
7. Anticipate the likely consequences of CC impacts by developing adaptation plans that are themselves adaptive to both climatic and economic changes.
8. Be innovative in implementing an efficient strategy for financing non-market forest services: mobilization of insurance, forest tourism tax

In the end, the forester must get out of the forest to communicate and mobilize on the problems faced by the forest as a heritage asset. Currently, a widely used term regarding the impacts of CC is "nature-based solution". It should not be forgotten that historically the first NBS that has been the subject of dedicated policies is the forest to mitigate natural risks. Thus, Forest-Based Solutions are the grandmother of Nature-Based Solutions and it is not too late to rediscover this.