

DIVERSE NEWS

FROM THE INTERREG ALPINE SPACE PROJECT

April 2026 ISSUE No. 3

Integration of bioDIVERSity conservation within bioEnergy production

Welcome to the 3rd Newsletter

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Here we are! We exchanged know-how within the EUSALP Action Groups, shared indicators with stakeholders and received updates from the testing side of the Open Dialogue Toolkit in seven Focus Labs. They all have generated evidence and learning for biodiversity-sensitive bioenergy pathways: the Alpine Trajectories.



Alpine Cooperation: Contributions to the EUSALP Action Groups

Cristina Cavicchioli / RSE - Ricerca sul Sistema Energetico, Italy & Clarisse Marechal / COFOR - Communes forestières Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France

DIVERSE has launched a structured dialogue with EUSALP Action Groups to align project results with their work plans and strengthen cooperation on bioenergy, biodiversity and Alpine governance.

Over recent months, DIVERSE held bilateral meetings with EUSALP Action Groups AG2, AG6 and AG9 to present its approach and collect feedback on how to better align with their work plans. AG2 highlighted the relevance of DIVERSE for circular bioeconomy and wood value chains, particularly as a source of best practices and policy inputs. AG6 emphasised the need to frame results within a resource-based perspective, supporting biodiversity, soil and multi-functional land management. AG9 showed strong interest in the project's governance tools, especially for stakeholder engagement and addressing trade-offs in the energy transition. Building on this, further meetings are planned for early summer to align with the updated work plans adopted in January.



Sustainability & Biodiversity Indicators Set for Bioenergy Value Chains Assessment

Anna Zeindl / Landshut University of Applied Sciences, Germany & Prof. Adam Clark / University of Graz, Austria

A shared document including a set of dedicated sustainability and biodiversity indicators has been compiled in order to achieve the project's core objective of strengthening energy diversification within the Alpine Space through the sustainable integration of (residual) biomass energy sources.

The inclusion of sustainability and biodiversity into two relevant bioenergy value chains (forestry and agriculture/agri-food) was addressed by DIVERSE experts by employing various approaches to develop a list of criteria and indicators designed to enable the systematic collection of data and the assessment of bioenergy value chains. The sustainability indicators were developed based on the EU Sustainable Development Goals, the Renewable Energy Directive, existing sustainability indices, and relevant scientific literature. Additionally, the results of a stakeholder survey conducted in the first period of the project were included. The biodiversity metrics were designed to be easy for non-experts to collect, but still capture multiple aspects of biodiversity (e.g. number and relative

abundance of species, conservation and social value, etc.), as well as effects of spatial scale (e.g. local vs. regional diversity). Biodiversity survey guidelines also included cursory information on productivity (e.g. forest structure, crop types, logging or harvest history, etc.) to support subsequent project tasks. Two lists of sustainability and biodiversity indicators were compiled, each corresponding to one of the two relevant value chains in the Alpine Space, forestry and agriculture/agri-food. These can be broken down into nine main categories, which cover residual biomass production, climate change, air quality, energy, land use, soil quality, economic and social indicators, policy and governance, and best available technologies. The considerable diversity among the



various Focus Labs within the project requires that specific indicators must be individually selected based on their relevance to each region. This enables the Focus Labs to work in a targeted manner despite their various differences.

Key outcomes and Takeaways from the DIVERSE Focus Labs

Sandro Angiolini / Agenzia Veneta per l'Innovazione nel Settore Primario, Italy

Open dialogue is a key concept of the DIVERSE project, and the Focus Labs are the best place where this approach could be implemented. Their main objective is to test a set of tools for fostering such dialogue among different stakeholders, and to elaborate proposals for the solution of key issues in the biomass value chains.

The Focus Labs were organised in 8 territories across 5 countries holding slightly different and specific objectives that matched their context. For example: (1.) devising models for biomass management (balancing demand/offer), (2.) drafting

guidelines to support policy-makers and operators and (3.) identifying and sharing best management practices. This activity took place between October 2025 and March 2026, but was always anticipated by previous contacts with key

stakeholders to prepare the Focus Labs and tailor them to local and/or regional needs. The collection of relevant data and analysing the stakeholders' spectrum and their involvement in the Focus Labs process proved to be quite time and

resource demanding, given the wide range of distinct subjects (and related interests) that were present. So far 42 events have been organised, and a few more are expected, involving approximately 350 people.

Testing the DIVERSE approach and tools: what worked best

Each Focus Lab addressed one of these topics: (1.) Integrate biodiversity into spatial and mobility planning, (2.) Improve Agro-ecological & Forestry Practices and (3.) Explore innovative, resource-efficient, & circular economy models.

Yet all of them partially touched also the other two areas, due to the diversity of the engaged stakeholders, of the problems being discussed, and of the tools available in the Open Dialogue Toolkit. In this regard, participatory and capacity building tools (e.g. Design thinking, SWOT analysis) proved widely used and able to progressively involve both private and public stakeholders. Face-to-Face methods, such as roundtables and discussions after presentations by external experts proved more successful than remote events. The use of technical tools to support desired changes was more limited: Benefit Analysis and Life Cycle Assessment were carried out, but both will need more time to be completed. In all the Focus Labs a high level of awareness and dialogue among



distinct people was achieved, and in most cases also a consensus was reached on key proposals for improving the state of the art for the biomass/biodiversity connection.

Key problems and related solutions: where do we stand

The most relevant problems and related solutions that the Focus Labs produced were as follows:

- There is still a lack of knowledge and of communication among distinct stakeholders. This is why Focus Labs were useful to bridge such gaps, and to raise awareness about the need to integrate biodiversity conservation issues.
- The normative and financial frameworks are of vital importance for affecting the biomass value chains: both can be improved in several

ways (e.g. proper classification of resources, amendment of regulations, speeding certification procedures, etc).

- The importance of biomass use at local scale is not fully valued: it must be reinforced with the different solutions being proposed (e.g. renewable energy communities).

- Technical improvements for the management of biogas plants, for digestate use, and for sustainable logging are already available: proper tools (technical assistance and incentives) must be implemented. Jointly with an improved energy grid and markets, to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and other chemicals' use (e.g. fertilizers).

Lessons learnt for the next DIVERSE activities

DIVERSE is now moving to a more proactive phase where recommendations for Alpine Trajectories will be defined and validated. It will be essential to place them at the appropriate scale (e.g. local, regional, EU), and the relevant stakeholders. Furthermore the general public might play a role for their wider, social acceptance. Proper engagement with decision-makers and politicians will be of significant benefit the overall success of the project.





Picture: DIVERSE

Next Steps: Towards Alpine Trajectories, laying the foundations for the joint solutions

Cristina Cavicchioli / RSE -
Ricerca sul Sistema Energetico, Italy

In the next months the DIVERSE team will evaluate the testing phase of the Open Dialogue Toolkit implementation inside eight pilot actions by peer review, and external experts, providing key inputs for the Alpine Trajectories, one of the main output of the project. Indeed, Alpine Trajectories will be joint transnational solutions: guidelines covering policy integration, sustainable residue management practices, and circular business models for energy communities and bioenergy value chains.

General Contact & Further Information

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Find more information about the project on:

www.alpine-space.eu/project/diverse

THE NEXT DIVERSE NEWSLETTER WILL BE AVAILABLE IN OCTOBER 2026!

DIVERSE Project Partners



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