

The AlpBioEco project is an international three-year research and innovation project, aiming to strengthen the bioeconomy in five European Alpine countries. With innovative methods, AlpBioEco fosters sustainable development in these regions and raises awareness regarding the economic potential of bioeconomy. The project started in April 2018 and ended in April 2021. During this time, the 13 AlpBioEco project partner organisations from Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia explored the bioeconomy potentials along value chains of vegetable extracts and foods and develop possibilities to valorise these potentials.

ABOUT BIOECONOMY IN THE ALPINE SPACE

Bioeconomy or bio-based economy means an economy that is based on using renewable resources from land and sea “to produce food, materials and energy” (European Commission, 2021) and services. With the approach to replace non-renewable and fossil raw materials, which have a negative impact on the environment and climate, developing the bioeconomy accelerates the transition to a low-carbon economy. Ideally, these renewable resources are used comprehensively and efficiently in a circular way. With the creation and connection of new value chains, the bioeconomy has a huge potential for green economic growth and innovation whilst protecting biodiversity and the environment.

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

The overall objective is to foster the sustainability of the local economy in the Alpine Space through the valorisation of innovative bioeconomic potentials along bio-based food and botanical extract value chains. In addition, AlpBioEco aims to increase the capacities of local actors from different sectors, such as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to develop and implement bio-based innovative products and services. By bringing together these actors, AlpBioEco connects value chains and contributes to better cohesion and integrated territorial development and supports supra-regional cooperation. On a macro-regional level, AlpBioEco contributes to lower disparity in the Alpine region.

ALPBIOECO PROJECT TEAM

The AlpBioEco team is an interdisciplinary team, consisting of 13 partner organisations from five Alpine countries: Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia. All partner organisations contribute with their specific competences and expertise to the project:



Sources: https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/research-area/environment/bioeconomy_en

COURSE OF THE PROJECT

The AlpBioEco project is structured in four work packages, which build upon each other.



WORK PACKAGE T1: VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS

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WORK PACKAGE T2: CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

To valorise these identified potentials, the AlpBioEco team then developed eco-innovative product and service ideas and business model concepts together with local stakeholders. Therefore, the AlpBioEco team conducted 22 interactive open innovation workshops, involving SMEs, clusters, academic and other societal actors, in nine different locations in five AlpBioEco countries. As an output, over 440 eco-innovative product and services ideas were created. Of those, the most promising ideas were selected and developed into 26 detailed business model concepts.

WORK PACKAGE T3: CONCEPT VALIDATION | PILOT STUDIES

Of the 26 business model concepts, again the most promising ones were selected for the further development and testing: two for each value chain and one transversal business model. These seven selected business model concepts were validated and tested in business practice. To do so, 17 cross-sectoral focus group workshops were conducted in 9 different regions. In addition, pilot activities were conducted, such as product prototyping and business visits to discuss the implementation possibilities and opportunities in. In total, 16 online and offline business visits took place in 6 different regions. The results of the validation are comprised in a best practice brochure.

WORK PACKAGE T4: POLICY TRANSFER PREPARATION | GUIDELINES

As a last step, the AlpBioEco team transferred the results from the previous work into policy learning and implementation recommendations. To do this, 10 regional advisory boards were set up who developed regional policy implementation guidelines to promote the implementation for specific business models in these regions. Together with the regional advisory boards, the AlpBioEco team also developed recommendations on how to improve the framework conditions for bioeconomy and innovation in these regions. Finally, all regional recommendations were brought together in a so-called transregional and transnational transfer guideline that summarises the results, compares the different regions and gives general recommendations on how innovation and bioeconomy can be promoted also in other regions, countries or projects.

→ For more information on our project activities and results visit project website:
<https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/alpbioeco/en/home>

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