

CONCEPT NOTE



Third International EUSALP Territorial Brands Conference: Towards Circular Territorial Brands in the Alpine Region and beyond

Monday, November 13th, 2023, 13:30–18:00

Tuesday, November 14th, 2023, 08:30–12:30

At Polo Poschiavo, Via da Melga 2, 7742 Poschiavo (Switzerland) and on Zoom

Concept: hybrid event, but speakers all face to face
Simultaneous translation in all Alpine languages

Date: 13-14 November, noon to noon (before the AG6 Meeting planned 14-15 November, noon to noon.)

Organizing committee: Polo Poschiavo, emlyon business school, Alpine Convention, EURAC Research
Under the auspices of the EUSALP Swiss Presidency 2023

Concept

The Alpine Region is home to numerous Territorial Brands (TBs). These local economic development initiatives constitute an effective platform for the mobilization of local actors towards common goals. Previous EUSALP initiatives have indeed shown that TBs can facilitate collaboration among SMEs operating in different value chains, the upgrading of local skills and territorial innovation valorizing local resources.

Yet, explicit reference to the circular economy is still minimal, even though as a matter of fact many TBs already facilitate the transition from a linear to a multi-dimensional, non-linear production system by promoting short supply chains with reduced CO₂ emissions, the development of high-quality products and the prolongation of the lifespan of materials by integrating them as resources into other products.

With this third edition of the Territorial Brand in the Alpin Region Conference, we want to make explicit the so far implicit link between TBs and the circular economy and challenge these organizations, their members, and the stakeholders supporting them to do more and better. Research carried out in the context of the ARPAF-III 'Made in the Alps' project, carried out in collaboration with the EUSALP Youth Council, shows that products from traditional Alpine value chains benefit from the Alps' image of pureness and closeness to nature – but also highlights widespread concerns over the fragility of the Alpine environment due to the climate crisis and the melting of glaciers.

By embracing the circular economy, TBs will contribute to making Alpine regions more resilient by helping local SMEs, citizens and tourists to integrate in their behaviors more sustainable production and consumption practices. TBs in Alpine regions will thus live up to their image of closeness to nature, thus forming a real asset for the adaptation to and mitigation of the climate emergency.

Thanks to discussion with experts, the sharing of good practices from the Alps and beyond, and roundtables involving professionals and policy makers, **the Conference proceedings will contribute to the EUSALP Action Groups' cross-cutting priority #4, "Boosting Circular Economy"**, thus helping the development of the EUSALP roadmap for the circular economy and obtain inspirations for possible future projects involving partners from different States and Regions.

The Conference will also be of interest to other EU Macroregional Strategies that could similarly benefit from the untapped potential of TBs as a policy tool to accelerate transition to circularity in regional economy systems.

If adequately supported through multi-level policies, TBs could in fact use their influence and connections within local communities to:

- educate SMEs about circular design principles;
- re-organize local value chains towards greater circularity;
- promote the sourcing of local materials and resources through as many upcycling processes as possible, before disposing of them;
- the local sourcing of materials and the upcycling of resources otherwise considered waste;
- facilitate the implementation of waste reduction and recycling programs;
- support (and showcase) local business that create products using circular design principles;
- promote regenerative agriculture and organic farming;
- contribute to the adoption of circular packaging solutions.
- Help to mitigate the CO2 impact of Alpine value chains in times of climate crisis.

Target Audience

The conference is dedicated to raising awareness about the potential role of TBs in accelerating the transition to a circular economy. Target participants include:

- Regional governments,
- TB organizations and their stakeholders
- Trade organisations representing SMEs operating in agro-food, wood, textile and other typical Alpine value chains
- Tourism organizations
- **EUSALP action groups**
- Members of other EU macro-regional strategies
- Academic experts and professionals in place branding and the circular economy.

Tentative programme

13 November, Consumer Perceptions and Perception of 'Made in the Alps' value chains

12-13.30 – Light Lunch

13.30-18h Circular Alpine value chains? Insights from the ARPAF-III project “Made in the Alps”

What is 'Made in the Alps' and does it drive consumer behavior?

Establishing circular value chains in timber-wood and wool: Insights from pilot actions in Valposchiavo (CH) and Skofja Loka (SL)

Facilitating cross-regional and cross-border collaboration: A discussion (involving EUSALP Youth Council, AG members, academic researchers)

19h-22h30 – Dinner 100% Valposchiavo

14 November, Towards Circular Territorial Brands?

8h30-9h Welcome

9h-10h30 Experiences from the Alps and beyond (tbd)

10h30-11 Coffee break

11h-11h45 Establishing circular territorial brands: Roundtable with representatives of Territorial Brands

11h45-12h30 EUSALP Action Group roundtable, with participation of representatives of other EU Macroregional Strategies

Invited speakers (work in progress)

- Representatives of Alpine Territorial Brands (e.g., alpinavera, graubündenVIVA, Bois des Alpes, others tbd)
- Selected members of EUSALP action groups (tbd, AGs 1-2-3-5-6-7-8-9 are involved in the cross-cutting priority on circular economy)
- Youth Council (day 1, extensively cooperated with the Made in the Alps project)
- EUROMONTANA (has worked on the territorial brands/circular economy nexus)
- Representatives of other EU MRS
- Mapping of eco-labels in wood/timber (AURA Region)
- Academic researchers (tbd)

Valposchiavo: the home of the 100% Valposchiavo territorial brand

Valposchiavo is an Italian-speaking valley in the Southern part of the Swiss Canton of Graubünden. In 2015, various stakeholders developed a territorial brand piloted by Valposchiavo Turismo (the local destination management organization). Today, more than 150 products are certified 100% locally produced and entirely made from local ingredients (100% Valposchiavo label) or mostly made with local products (Fait sü in Valposchiavo). 100% Valposchiavo is one of the most studied territorial brands in the Alpine region. It has been a case study for researchers from multiple disciplines (including geography, marketing, branding, food studies, tourism studies, regional development), serving also as a source of inspiration for the ARPAF-II project '100% Local' and for numerous delegations of local communities. More recently, a pilot action carried out in the context of the ARPAF-III Made in the Alps project is fostering the structuring of a circular regional wood value chain with roots in the local cultural heritage and aesthetics but modernized thanks to inputs coming from Italian design. Valposchiavo is thus a living laboratory of territorial branding that will provide participants to the 2023 Territorial Branding conference experiential policy and managerial insight.