

CARBON

SMART COMMUNITIES
POLITICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Interreg
Alpine Space
CaSCo

EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND



EUROPEAN UNION

CARBON

SMART COMMUNITIES POLITICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
A MORE FAVOURABLE DEVELOPMENT
OF LOW CARBON TIMBER ACROSS EUROPE**

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More information about CaSCO project is available on
www.alpine-space.eu/projects/casco/en/home

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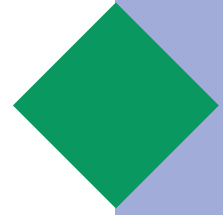
SHORT DESCRIPTION

This document is a result of CaSCO project and defines
recommendations for policy makers at EU, National, Regional and
Local (inter-municipal) levels, on developing and implementing
transnational low carbon policy instruments for the
procurement of timber products with low carbon
footprint and fostering the use of low carbon timber
products in policies, public bodies and key actors.

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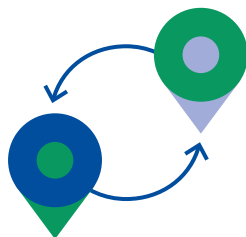
INTRODUCTION

The number of ways to mitigate the environmental impact of everyday human activities is vast and grows proportionally to the complexity of our society. In order to reach the **EU climate neutrality target** for the block¹ set in December 2019, it is necessary to employ every means available and do it as effectively as possible.



Timber products are imported from all corners of the world, thus rendering wood's carbon stocking properties useless. The emissions related to transportation can account for **up to 5 times** of a given timber product's share of carbon emitted.

An increasing amount of long distance material flows, even in endemic timber species indicate interrupted processing chains in the timber global market. Here lies a well of opportunities to reduce CO₂ emissions at regional, national and European timber processing chains, especially since **short circuit chains** have proven sustainable at the scale of the Alpine Space.



Creating a short circuit for timber products within the Alpine Space not only contributes to carbon emissions reduction, but also **protection of biodiversity and responsible resource use**. In the framework of CaSCo project, a traceability tool was developed with the aim is to help every stakeholder of the supply chain to know the distance the timber products they are buying have traveled and thus, its carbon footprint.

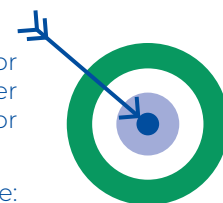
The project also developed policy guidelines in order to allow decision makers in participating territories to promote the use of climate friendly timber products through the use of steering instruments. Last but not least, CaSCo established regional short circuit processing chains within the timber industry to **provide low carbon timber products** in order to meet the rising demand and to strengthen regional economy.

This report aims to make a link between low carbon policies and timber policies at European, national and regional level. As evoked, CaSCo's aim is to get timber product stakeholders, from the producer to the consumer, on board and on track to reduce the carbon footprint of timber products through the reduction of transportation distances. Thanks to the experience amassed during the three years of the CaSCo project, a set of recommendations at various levels of governance guide policymakers in the aspired direction.

The capacity of the tools developed during the project to spread and expand will be counting on the will and ability of policymakers to adopt the measures herein. The time for action is here!

The presentation of the following policy recommendations uses a common layout as indicated below:

- Targeted policy levels, for instance: EU level, Member State level, Regional or Inter-municipal levels.
- Issue at stake, for instance: legislation not implemented or lacking, awareness raising among policy makers, recognition of new organizational and economic models, etc.
- Recommendations: description of the proposed recommendation.
- Successful examples or next steps: examples successfully implemented by policy makers.



¹ Excluding Poland

1.

Including carbon and supply distance traceability tool in public and private funding schemes

Policy Level:
National/
Regional/
Local

Recommendation:

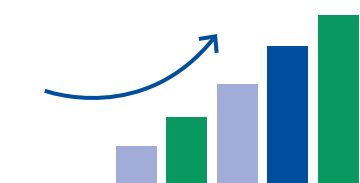
There are an array of funding and subsidy programmes at multiple levels of governance targeting climate change mitigation in several fields such as housing and construction, energy saving and efficiency, carbon neutrality and many others. **Public authorities at every level; local, regional, National and European, should take into consideration the environmental impact of transport related emission in such funding schemes.** In the growing market for wood products, this can be easily implemented through a Low Carbon Timber traceability tool by setting up a carbon-content score to differentiate between environmentally virtuous and harmful materials.

This model is especially relevant for subsidy programmes fostering climate change mitigation in building and construction. It would be also relevant to implement this model in the commercial sector such as environmental pacts or other agreements aimed at environmental performance.

What is at stake?

Public funding and subsidy programmes at Regional, National and European level are **an effective lever to trigger development in society** towards desired directions including climate protection and climate change mitigation purposes.

However, the massive impact of transport related emissions in processing chains is not yet reflected in such programmes.



Examples:



- In the federal State of Vorarlberg, **Austria**, a subsidy program exists to foster sustainable construction in public buildings giving additional financial incentives for timber products with this label.
- In **Germany**, the City of Munich and the City of Freiburg established subsidy schemes to foster wood in construction and integrated the Label HOLZ VON HIER² (HvH) in the programme giving up to several thousand euros if they use wood with this certificate. The County of Neumarkt developed internal procurement guidelines, integrating the Label HvH[®] to reduce transportation emissions.

² <https://www.holz-von-hier.eu/>

2.

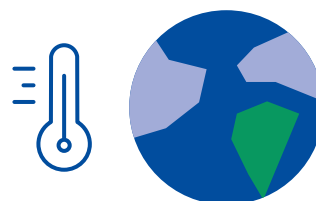
Integration of a transnational traceability tool into EU Environ- mental & Climate related policies

Policy Level:
EU/
Macro-Regional

What is at stake?

Climate change mitigation has become one of the **most important environmental policy issues** and objectives.

In the various fields of action within this framework, the large CO₂ savings potential through the reduction of transport is not yet reflected and important climate potential therefore remains unexploited.



Recommendation:

Within the framework of the European Green Deal 2019 - 2024, a traceability tool should be considered as an instrument for reducing transport-related emissions, especially in the policy areas 'building and renovation', 'sustainable mobility' and 'sustainable industry'.

- **Implementation of a traceability tool such as the Low Carbon Toolkit developed in the CaSCo project provides an edge on energy-efficient construction.**
- Include the LCT monitoring and control instrument for cross-border material flows in the EU in **relevant programmes** (e.g. Green building programme or others) **to significantly contribute to CO₂ reduction in transport, without national protectionism and without economic restrictions.**

Next Steps:

Holz von Hier, together with CaSCo project partners, will discuss transnational solutions and strategies for Low Carbon Circular Economy in the field of construction, housing, work, as well as implementation possibilities for the LCT discussed with concerned EU DGs. HVH will seek and pursue collaboration with the European ecolabel.



3.

Promote the use of transport traceability tool towards international organizations

Policy Level:
EU/
Macro-Regional

What is at stake?

Sustainable management of forests is not enough if the same logic is not applied throughout the **full lifecycle of the resource**.



In order to reduce the carbon footprint of timber, it is necessary to know where the timber was grown and what distance it traveled. In order to know the distance a given amount of timber has traveled and thus know its carbon footprint, a traceability tool is needed.

Today the capacity to trace the provenance and distanced traveled of timber is not widely available.

Recommendation:

In order to increase the consumption of locally grown timber, the amount of imported timber must be reduced. As mentioned in recommendation two, the setup of a traceability tool will allow low carbon timber stakeholders to demand and prove of origin and distance traveled by the timber they are buying or selling.

Since the wood industry operates internationally, it is only sound to **promote the use of a traceability tool such as HvH, internationally**. In the case of the Alpine region, naturally the Alpine Convention and the Action Group 2 from the EUSALP are ideally placed to influence public authorities and promote the use of such tool. Similar structures in other Macro-Regions could do likewise. On a broader scale, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Covenant of Mayors could also promote the use of such traceability tool.

Next steps:

CaSCo project partners will showcase and promote the use of HvH across the Alpine Space. At European level, project partners will disseminate and promote a **European-wide adoption of this tool**. For example, the promotions of CaSCo approach during the 2020 Forest Mountain EUSALP event.



4.

Promote the integration of low carbon timber use in low carbon programme priorities in European Funds and macro-regional strategies

Policy Level:
National/
Regional

What is at stake?

The Alpine regions and the European Union have been implementing the Alpine macro-regional strategy (EUSALP) since 2015.

The importance of the wood resource is such that it is dealt with by **5 actions groups**, from various and complementary perspectives.



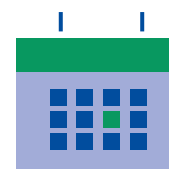
Actions groups feed the reflections on the future European funding programs for the next budgetary period of the European Union 2012-2027.

Recommendation:

In order to integrate low carbon timber use as a programme priority across European funding schemes, actors across all governance levels must be mobilized.

- Transnational (e.g. Alpine Space) and cross-border (e.g. ALCOTRA) cooperation programmes **must finance projects to structure the forest-based sector, and enable this sector to be more competitive and better organized to meet local demand, whether public or private.**
- The ERDF operational programmes managed by the Regions, which grant investment aid, must integrate local timber criteria into the financing of efficient buildings. **One of the eligibility criteria for funding applications must concern the use of local wood, with the project leader having to justify the use of a label of origin (Bois des Alpes) or a low carbon impact label (HVH - LCT certification).**

Next Steps:



During the preparation of the next programming period, (2021 – 2027), CaSCo project partners will support the integration of low carbon timber use in low carbon programme priorities in transnational and ERDF operational programmes.



5.

Green public procurement legislation: integrating minimum share of low carbon timber and short distance transport of timber for increasing sustainability of public constructions.

Policy Level:
EU/National/Regional

What is at stake?

Green Public procurement aims to improve the resource efficiency of the consumption and production of public authorities. Many **clear and verifiable environmental criteria** have been developed and integrated into the GPP. However, sustainability criteria of GPP are limited to mainly sustainable forestry, leaving the full potential impact of GPP legislation to climate protection unexploited. Encouraging the use of local resources would reduce the supply distances and consequently the impact on climate change and polluting emissions linked to the means of transport (PM10, NOX). This approach must emphasize the sustainability of wood products through its entire life cycle, including forest management, the supply and distribution chain, its use in sustainable products and manufactured goods its inclusion in sustainable construction projects and finally the management of wooden products at the end of life cycle (energy use, reuse, recycle, waste dumping).

³ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/toolkit/furniture_gpp.pdf

⁴ DM 11 ottobre 2017, in G.U. Serie Generale n. 259 del 6 novembre 2017).

Recommendation:

In order to promote an integral approach to low carbon timber in the construction sector, the regions and institutions should support certain initiatives, also within legislation, such as:

- **Extend the criterion** on CO₂-equivalent emissions from the transport of aggregates to wood.
- **A certification with Low Carbon Timber** should be accepted as proof of compliance with the criterion B10.3.
- **Add carbon footprint** criterion from EU GPP for Furniture³ in the buildings' criteria too.
- **Add local tree species requirement** to CO₂-equivalent emission from transport criteria.
- Promotion of a **traceability tool** such as the CaSCo Low Carbon Timber toolkit for assessing the sustainability of buildings and European initiatives for coordination between protocols.
- Promoting the **dissemination of standards** for sustainable forest management at European level, such as PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes).

Examples:

- In **Italy**: Public Contracts Act (D.Lgs. 50/2016 art. 34 and 71) requires the use of environmental criteria in public procurement, in particular for buildings there is an award criterion for materials coming from distances of less than 150 km⁴.
- In **Slovenia**: Decree on Green Public procurement in Slovenia (2018) defines share of timber or timber materials in the furniture should be at least 70% of volume of all materials used for producing furniture and share of timber or timber materials should be in buildings at least 30% of the volume of inbuilt materials.



6.

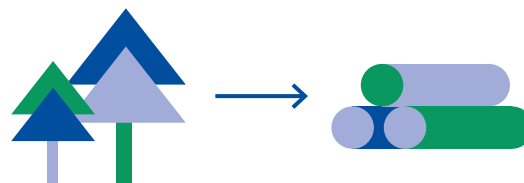
Produce quality data on wood-flows to support decision makers

Policy Level:
Regional/
Macro-Regional

What is at stake?

The main challenge about tracing the provenance of wood and the distance travels is the lack of data.

From the moment timber leaves the forest until it reaches its final destination, a series of stakeholders, transform and transport the timber seeking the most economically viable option. Studies such as the Forest Wood-Flow in the Alpine Region and findings of the CaSCo project indicate that public data often is not enough to have a comprehensive view on the wood flows in the Alpine Region. Understanding these flows would help short-circuit certain wood-flows and thus reduce the carbon footprint of this resource.



Recommendation:

One of the most useful tools to reduce the distance timber is transported is to have a **clear vision of wood-flows across Europe**. In order to improve the current visibility, it is imperative to:

- Make the existing timber-trade data available.
- Collect at every level of governance, from private and public institutions.
- Carry out wood-flow diagrams through which timber flows can be visualized with the aim to better inform decision makers and industry stakeholders, build comprehensive strategies and ultimately reduce the distance timber travels across Europe.

Next Steps:

Promote the **sharing, accessibility and collection of wood-flow** related data to increase the scope at which wood-flows are currently visualized.

Hence, promote the development of studies at transnational, macro-regional and international level to better plan for the reduction in transport distance of timber products.



⁵ Wawrzyniak V., Bonilla R., Courtonne JY, (2018): *Forest wood-flow in the Alpine Region. EUSALP Action Group 8. Forest Wood-Flow in the Alpine Region.*

⁶ Bruckner; G. & P. Strohmeier (2017): *Forest and timber in the Alpine Space: An overview on frame conditions for strengthening the use of regional low carbon timber.*

7.

Support training in strengthening the local value chain on wood products through public procurement

Policy Level:
National/
Regional

What is at stake?

Public procurers play **a key role** in implementing low carbon policies at regional and inter-municipal levels. That is why it is primordial to provide them with the tools to develop targeted skills.



In order to develop these low carbon timber related skills, further capacity building activities and technical support must be provided and reconcile curricula to be prepared by involvement of institutions.

Recommendation:

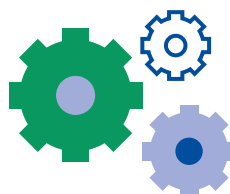
Existing institutions should develop curricula and consider procurement of low carbon products and services in their courses. Online tools should be complemented for example: online open courses, guides, knowledge platforms, etc. Exchange of experiences among procurers could be facilitated through cooperation programmes. Peer learning among institutions and exchange programmes, sharing knowledge and success stories are essential to enroll new projects and approaches.

Encouraging the training of technicians and professionals responsible for the definition of design choices in the field of timber construction. Knowledge of the supply chains and possible uses of local timber is an essential element for the implementation of quality wood projects and the generation of local economic development opportunities for the regions of the Alpine area.

Examples:

EIPA⁷ provides a **mix of deep insights and practical knowledge** about EU policies, to all professionals related to EU public affairs, with the key objective to further improve their skills and capacity to efficiently manage policies.

KOINNO⁸ is a competence centre that promotes **innovative guidance in public procurement**. The sharing of innovations, measured by the total volume of public procurement in Germany, is to be increased. The focus will be placed on purchasing for its decisive role in the market.



⁷ <https://www.eipa.eu/>

⁸ <http://www.koinno-bmw.de/>

8.

Support information campaigns on the importance of low carbon wood products for air quality, climate change mitigation and regional development

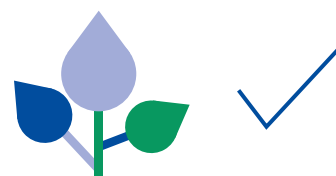
Policy Level:
National/Regional

What is at stake?

The relevance of low carbon wood products is not well known by National, Regional and Local policy makers in relation with air quality, climate change mitigation and regional development.

Consequently limiting the support needed from policy makers in order to set up and promote environmental labels at local level. Low carbon timber products reduce carbon emissions by cutting down on transportation distance along the entire processing chain.

This could be achieved by **recording and quantifying the transport distance** to measure the associated environmental impacts.



Recommendation:

European cooperation initiatives such as the EUSALP or the Covenant of Mayors **should emphasize the positive properties of low carbon wood products**. This promotion could be done via positive examples and results demonstrating air quality benefits, climate change mitigation contribution and regional development capacity. Such promotion could be held at an awareness raising campaign targeted at policy makers in tandem with Covenant of Mayors signatory event or EUSALP Macro-Regional event.

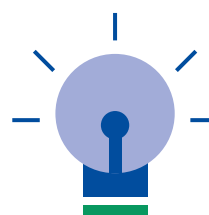
Policy makers at regional, national or macro-regional level should launch or support information campaigns to sensitize and to make low carbon timber products and the CaSCo LCT toolkit better known.

Examples:

EU: Covenant of Mayors Ceremony - Gathers the Covenant of Mayors community to showcase how local governments develop integrated climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Alpine Space Regional Timber Award - Ceremony in the context of the EUSALP Annual Forum.

EUSALP Mountain Forests and Climate Change in the Alps event.



Notes

**Business Support Centre,
Kranj (SI)**
www.bsc-kranj.si



**Auvergne Rhône-Alpes
Energie Environnement (FR)**
www.auvergnerhonealpes-ee.fr



Development Agency Sinergija (SI)
www.ra-sinergija.si



IG Kraftspendedorfer Joglland (AT)
www.kraftspendedoerfer.at



Parco Scientifico per l'Ambiente (IT)
www.envipark.com



E-Institute (SI)
www.ezavod.si



**Regionalentwicklung Vorarlberg
eGen (AT)**
www.regio-v.at



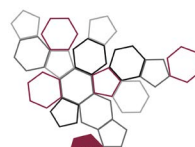
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www.unionemontanavalsesia.it



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**Environment Protection Agency
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www.arpa.piemonte.gov.it



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