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## **Alternative management models for addressing emerging demand on forest-based cultural services: a case-study in northern Italy**

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### **Abstract**

Scientists and practitioners are paying growing attention to forest-based cultural ecosystem services (ES), including Forest Care Initiatives (FCIs). FCIs are organized initiatives supporting active and passive interaction with forests, aiming at increasing human health, wellbeing and quality of life. The use of forests for cultural, recreational and therapeutic uses may represent an opportunity for valuing forest resources and supporting development in marginalized areas. However, this requires new management solutions as well as tailored planning and forest management models (FMMs).

The paper analyses the case of the Lowland Forest Association (AFP), a network of forests located in Northern Italy, close to densely populated and touristic sites along the Adriatic Sea. Within the European Union Horizon 2020 project ALTERFOR, current FMMs and stakeholder's ES needs/priorities have been identified via field surveys, meetings and interviews. Data have been then analysed, discussed with experts and modeled to set alternative FMMs and to assess the basket of ES associated to them.

It has emerged that cultural ES, including FCIs, are paramount for local stakeholders, however FMMs for promoting them are not limited to technical aspects, rather they shall include mechanisms to enhance governance of forest resources. Alternative FMMs -including group forest management solutions, new investment mechanisms to attract investors, *ad hoc* initiatives, etc.- shall combine silvicultural choices and arrangements to favor cooperation among different actors.

Results from the AFP case study may provide useful insights to inform future policies and inspire research activities on management choices for the provision of forest-based ES.