



BOOSTING RURAL BIOECONOMY NETWORKS FOLLOWING MULTI-ACTOR APPROACHES

NEWSLETTER

THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE BRANCHES PROJECT **n°6 | August | 2023**
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BRANCHES



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 101000375

PARTNERS



BRANCHES identifies and shares **Good Practices**

According to the operational agenda of the BRANCHES project in each of the various partner countries, 8 good practices were selected from the many Practice Abstracts (PAs) collected to date, to be described and commented on in specific workshops addressed to stakeholders in the sector. These initiatives met with great interest and confirmed the importance of knowledge transfer for the development of the bioeconomy. The activities carried out in Spain, Finland and Italy are summarised below.

SPAIN On June 29th INtercamBIOM networks organized, through the BRANCHES project, an European online seminar with companies from Spain and Portugal that are innovating in systems for obtaining and valorising biomass to produce bioenergy, syngas and biocoals.

The seminar is structured in two blocks: a first block of practices devoted to practices related to the obtaining and treatments of biomass, and a second block focusing on its transformation into bioenergy and bioproducts.

Each panellist will share during a brief interventions of 5 minutes, how the innovation was triggered, what was the problem to be solved, the results and applications already underway.

OBTAINING AND TREATING BIOMASS



Forest silviculture for fire prevention in a tourist resort to feed its DH. As ourtesy of Monte Holiday Ecoturismo



Forest debris from fire prevention recycled in a Portuguese Municipality. As courtesy of CBE Centro da Biomasa para Energia



Obtaining separately aboveground and stump biomass from fruit tree plantation removals. As courtesy of Serrat Trituradores



Mobile washing system for detaching soil and stones in woody biomass from prunings, uprooted trees and stumps. As courtesy of Athisa Biogeneración

TRANSFORMATION INTO BIOENERGY, SYNGAS AND BIO-COALS



Horizon + the first self-cleaning rotary watertube boiler designed for complex fuels. As courtesy of Sugimat



Integration of solar drying and gasification in the valorisation of sewage sludge at a full-scale pilot plant. As courtesy of Ceder-Ciemat



First Industrial scale gasification plant of olive pomace in the olive oil industry. As courtesy of Bioliza



Invited practice

FINLAND A BRANCHES webinar presenting selected Practical Abstracts (PAs) from the Finnish operating environment was held online on May 23rd. The webinar presented bioeconomy related topics in eight different presentations from a wide range of topics, including both, agricultural and forestry perspectives. Experts within the BRANCHES project presented their respective topics:

- 1) In the field of agriculture, climate-smart food production, the utilization of fiber sludge and the utilization of drones in agriculture topics were presented by researchers from partner Luke. Manure-powered milk logistics chain was presented by a researcher from the partner VTT.
- 2) Forestry related topics included the biomass atlas concept and biomass terminals, as well as possibilities of non-timber forest products presented by BRANCHES partner Luke. Also the concept of an innovative biomass hybrid dryer was presented by an expert from VTT.

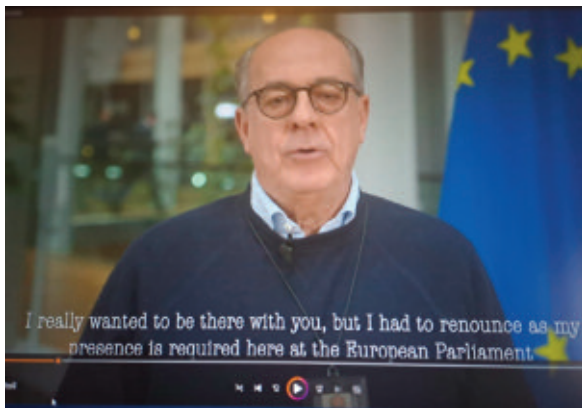
The key focus of the webinar was the sharing of knowledge, both across research disciplines and towards the practitioners. The webinar presented options for the use of innovative solutions and technologies. With the aim to bring new developments to practitioners, the presented solutions presented options to combine existing technologies and to look at new ways of working. Presented changes can benefit from new materials as well as cooperation. A total of 17 participants joined the Finnish webinar and similar events will be organized also in all other partner countries (Italy, Spain, Germany and Poland).

ITALY Parallel to the Italian showcase day held last April at the FIUSIS Biomass Power Plant (see following news), ITABIA and CNR IBE organised a workshop in hybrid mode to analyse the various segments of

the production chain of the FIUSIS plant system, associating each of them with similar issues of 7 other good practices chosen from the PAs of Italy, Finland, Germany and Poland. In this way - starting from the FIUSIS model - it was possible to discuss modern techniques and technologies to

- make the collection, conditioning and storage of wood biomass more efficient;
- sustainably operate a biomass plant;
- produce and distribute quality pellets
- recover and valorise combustion ash as a soil conditioner in agriculture.

All these topics were discussed using real cases provided by experts in the field such as agricultural and forestry entrepreneurs, technology companies, researchers and local administrators. The initiative



- as expressed in the opening greeting of the Honourable Paolo De Castro (European Parliament Agriculture Commission) - was a complete success in terms of its expected objectives. The recording of the workshop (broken down into thematic sessions and translated into English) can be viewed on the BRANCHES Project website at www.branchesproject.eu/materials/videos

Show-case days

The commitment of the BRANCHES partners to focus the attention of 'practitioners' on specific technological aspects of particular interest continues. Thus the project envisages - among other activities - the organization of demonstration days in the field, of which we want to leave a lasting testimony through videos that are uploaded on our project website. Recently, two new initiatives, organised in Finland and Italy, have enriched the wealth of knowledge shared and disseminated by BRANCHES.

1) The team LUKE and MTK organized in Finland a showcase day, where a novel felling head RISUPETO and chipping were presented. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMHQNyisaD4>

2) The Italian team (ITABIA and CNR IBE) organized in Apulia Region (April) a showcase day, where un'intera filiera biomassa-bioenergia è stata mostrata a partire dal campo fino alla messa in rete dell'elettricità. Link <https://www.branchesproject.eu/materials/videos>



The Factsheet “Bioenergy in a time of crisis”

Last October 2022 a new initiative, conceived by the BRANCHES project partners during the BRANCHES Consortium General Assembly held in Valladolid, was launched. Referring to the many PAs collected in the first two years of project activity, it was decided to interview the stakeholders involved in the PAs to understand how the current double crisis - due to COVID19 and the war in Ukraine - has affected their businesses. In a nutshell, the questions were asked with the intent of gauging:

1) the role of bioenergy/renewable energy/local energy in mitigating the effects of the latest energy crisis and/or

2) the opportunities created by such crisis for bioenergy/renewable energy/local energy ventures.

All interviews included at least the following points:

- Negative impact of the energy price increase (cost increase)
- Positive impact of the energy price increase (biomass savings, increased biomass operation viability, increased sustainability of land management etc.)
- Plans for the future

This new activity is coordinated by Italy and so far has been actively joined by Finland and Poland. The final text is a concise but exhaustive report that shows the strengths and weaknesses of the bioeconomy, if the innovative sector is expanding, in a period in which the path towards sustainable development is hampered by hard-to-control dynamics.

A BRANCHES workshop in Lleida and Alcarrás

More than 50 key actors from La Rioja, Navarra, Aragon and Catalonia met to discuss and set a milestone in inter-territorial collaboration to promote local actions to boost the use of agricultural, livestock and forestry waste and resources. The INtercamBIOM network and the BRANCHES project were present (16 May 2023) as part of the driving initiatives.

The starting point is the following vision: Circularity applied to agricultural and livestock organic waste represents an opportunity for the rural territories of the Ebro Valley, disimpacting their management and generating new businesses. In this context, it is often difficult to implement local and rural initiatives. However, there are initiatives that can show the way. And to generate more movement and replication it is necessary to put the key territorial key actors in contact with each other and facilitate the exchange of information.

This shared vision has driven the workshop, a collaboration between several projects and entities (see below), in which more than 50 key actors from the territories of the Ebro Valley have participated.

The day included an initial reception and opening with project presentations, a show case visit to a circularity success story, and a dialogue workshop followed by a networking lunch (see programme).

A BRANCHES NTN meeting and workshop in Germany

On May 23, 2023, the fourth meeting of the national network "Bioeconomy in Practice" took place with 25 participants. After a introduction of the current and planned activities of the network, two innovative practices were presented related to innovative value chains:

- Conversion of organic residues into insect biomass - Madebymade GmbH: The insects (black

soldier fly) used by Madebymade GmbH are part of nature's value-added cycle and convert organic material into insect biomass, which can serve as a high-quality source of protein.

- Lavender cultivation in Lusatia as an adaptation to climate change - Agriculture Cooperative (AG See eG): In order to adapt to drier conditions as a result of climate change, AG See relies on the cultivation of lavender to diversify the crop rotation and as a drought-resistant alternative to conventional arable crops. Using French mass production as a model, the AG focuses on high-quality plant products with organic quality. Marketing is carried out directly via an online store and through commercial customers.

The presentations were followed by a workshop discussion on the factors that enable the development and strengthening of the bioeconomy. The aim of the discussion was to prioritize 5 factors that can particularly contribute to the success of regional bioeconomy development and which will be further describe in the framework of WP4 in BRANCHES.

BRANCHES and BioRural projects

Cooperation between the two projects has been established through an online meeting on 31st of May: both projects work to increase the flow of information, new ideas and technologies among European agriculture and forestry professionals.

BioRural, a Horizon Europe funded project is “connecting the dots to unlock the potential of European rural areas towards a circular Bioeconomy”.

During 3 years of activities and progress, until August 2025, the joint efforts of 19 partners from 14 countries across Europe, aim to bridge the gap between bio-based innovations and European citizens' everyday life!

To this end, BioRural aspires to enhance the cooperation between important players in the Bioeconomy chain; from farmers, fishermen, foresters, rural citizens, innovators, to wider groups such as the private sector, policy makers, local governments, NGOs, schools, universities and training centres. A pan- European Rural Bioeconomy Network will be created, to promote the currently available small-scale bio-based solutions in rural areas and increase the Bioeconomy share, giving more value in such remote areas. To accelerate the integration of bio-based innovations in people's reality, an online toolkit will be generated, that allows stakeholders to register themselves through an interactive map and also provides scientific and practical support to stakeholders in the development, scaling and mainstreaming of Bioeconomy ideas and initiatives. Eight success stories have already been integrated into BioRural, while more noteworthy real-life examples will be included in the future. Stay updated and learn more about the project: <https://biorural.eu/>

Carbon sequestration: new European targets approved

European forests and soils will have to absorb 310 megatonnes of CO₂ by 2030. 15% more than they do today. A contribution that would help reduce greenhouse gases in the EU by 55% to 57% compared to 1990 levels. This is stipulated in the revision of EU Regulation 2018/841 on emissions and removals from land, land use change and forestry. It was approved - with 479 votes in favour, 97 against and 43 abstentions - by the European Parliament, formalising the political agreement reached with the EU Council of Ministers last March. For the agroforestry sector, the scope of the new regulation is clearly of great importance. Improving the capacity of natural carbon sinks is indispensable for making the EU the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. In this respect, the contribution of the LULUCF sector is central: cultivated land, grasslands, wetlands, forest areas, plants, biomass and timber are responsible for both the emission and the absorption of CO₂ from the atmosphere. The objective of the regulation is to set targets that lead to a progressive increase in the capacity to absorb carbon dioxide, offsetting the emissions produced. The revision of the LULUCF regulation is in fact an integral part of the 'Fit for 55' package, the EU plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by the end of the decade compared to 1990 levels, in line with the European Climate Act.



Renewables, agreement on new EU Directive

Following to 15 hours of negotiations, EU institutions reached an agreement, described as an 'ambitious compromise', on the new directive to promote and regulate renewable energy. According to EU Energy Commissioner Kadri Simson, "the new renewables directive is an important step towards the realisation of the Green Deal and RePower Eu". The agreement on the new directive increases the EU's 2030 target for the share of final electricity consumption to be



covered by renewables to 42.5 per cent. This was announced by Markus Pieper (EPP, Germany), rapporteur of the measure for the European Parliament. The mandatory contribution of renewables rises not only from the current 32 per cent, but also from what the Commission proposed in the 2021 climate package (40 per cent). With RePower EU, the EU executive had proposed 45 per cent. According to Pieper, another very important aspect of the agreement concerns measures to accelerate permitting. Furthermore, by 2030 RES would contribute 49 per cent of the energy used by buildings. The agreement, which will have to be ratified by the European Parliament and the EU Council, also includes binding targets for transport. Member states will be able to choose between at least a 29% share of renewables in final energy consumption in the sector, or a 14.5% reduction in greenhouse gas intensity for the use of renewables. Again for transport, renewables will also have to contribute at least 5.5% of advanced biofuels (i.e. from non-food feedstocks) and renewable fuels of non-biological origin (renewable hydrogen and synthetic hydrogen fuels) to consumption. Finally, we note with some perplexity, the fact that the agreement envisages increasingly stringent criteria for the production of energy from biomass, which nevertheless remains counted as renewable.

According to the IPCC Report, time is over

The March 2023 IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report, the result of two years of work, launches an agenda of priorities, indicating three concepts: urgency, speed and hope. The report stresses that we have not done enough so far and that we must act fast, using all the technologies at our disposal to halve climate-changing emissions.



We must not forget that we are already 1.1 degrees Celsius above the global average temperature. The Intergovernmental Panel of Experts, working under the aegis of the UN, confirms that the cause of climate change is emissions of CO₂ (37 billion tonnes per year) and other anthropogenic greenhouse gases, mainly from the use of fossil fuels. According to the report, there is still time to reverse course, but the scientists warn that we must reduce CO₂ emissions by the end of the decade, with 'deep, fast and lasting' cuts.

Energy Communities: EU-funded through the Social Climate Fund

In order to support investments that will help the EU achieve climate neutrality, a fund has been set up for state plans that should also promote energy communities. This is provided for in the EU Regulation 10 May 2023/955, European Parliament and European Council, emphasising the importance of energy communities in achieving climate neutrality in the EU by 2050.



Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and energy poverty. But also the promotion of self-consumption is among the measures that can be financed by the Social Climate Fund established by the Regulation for the period 2026-2032, which is expected to have a maximum amount of 65 billion Euros at its disposal. The main objective of the fund is to support the social climate plans to be submitted by individual states by 30 June 2025, in compliance with EU climate and environmental standards and priorities. The Member State in the total estimated costs of the plan, to which it will have to contribute 25%, must include investments with lasting impacts, to be targeted mainly at vulnerable households and micro-enterprises.

The Regulation recognises that Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) and self-consumption have a key role to play in contributing to decarbonisation through this bottom-up approach, which empowers citizens and contributes to the fight against energy poverty.

States should promote ECRs and consider them eligible for funding from the Fund, which will be fed, on a temporary basis, by the auctioning of 50 million greenhouse gas emission allowances. In our view, it should be avoided that Renewable Energy Communities give priority to certain renewable sources (photovoltaics and wind power) while neglecting the enormous contribution that bioenergy can make, especially in rural areas.

A snap-shot on solid biomass in Europe until 2021



The 'Solid Biomass Barometer' prepared by the European Agency Euroserv'ER, reports that European energy consumption in 2021 has been influenced by three factors: a colder and longer winter than previous ones, the recovery of economic activities in coming out of the covid-19 emergency, and the first gas price speculations triggered

by Russia before invading Ukraine. The simultaneous increase in energy demand and the cost of natural gas prompted large energy operators to replace fossil fuels with biomass. As stocks of industrial solid fuels ran out, continued increases in the cost of gas forced operators to tap the market for 'premium' pellets, triggering price competition with domestic consumers. The result has been an 8.1% increase in solid biomass consumption compared to 2020 and a surge in the price of pellets (the price in August 2021 was almost three times that of the previous year). The combined industrial consumption of biomass - cogeneration, district heating and electricity generation and domestic firewood and pellets - reached 104.2 Mtoe. Solid biomass thus ranks first in the production of renewable energy: more than three times as much as wind and hydroelectric production (33.2 Mtoe and 31.8 Mtoe respectively in 2021), seven times as much as heat pump production (14.9 Mtoe in 2021) and 7.66 times as much as the entire solar photovoltaic fleet (13.6 Mtoe in 2021, according to preliminary Eurostat estimates).

Out of 10.4 million hectares of **Ukrainian forests**, 20% are **at risk** of mining

Mr Viktor Smal, Acting Head of the State Forest Resources Agency of Ukraine (SFRAU), held an online meeting with Ms Jennifer Jadin, Mr Alberto Del Lungo and Mr Vasyl Masyuk, representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Ms Yana Vikhtiuk, responsible for international relationships at SFRAU. The news was announced by Mr Smal on Facebook.

"We are preparing for a conference to attract international donors to restore and demine the forest areas affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine," wrote Viktor Smal. "To understand the scale of the consequences of the war for Ukraine's forests, I will share a few figures. Out of 10.4 million hectares of Ukrainian forests, 20% of the area, approximately 2.2 million hectares, are at risk of being mined and require thorough inspections. Another 800 thousand hectares of forests are classified as temporarily occupied."

This meeting with FAO representatives aims to address the urgent need for resources and assistance to mitigate the impact of the war on Ukraine's forest ecosystems and secure funding for restoration efforts. The aftermath of the war has left vast areas of forests at risk and in need of urgent attention to ensure their preservation and sustainable development.

How to value biomass in Ukraine

At the conclusion of the Italian showcase (FIUSIS), recently organised by BRANCHES, Alberto Del



Lungo - who is on a long term mission in Kiev (Ukraine) on behalf of FAO - gave the floor to Ms. Lyudmyla Pshenytska (Director General, Forestry and woodworking development institute in Ukraine) who has been following the developments of our Project for some time. Ms. Lyudmyla was able to explain how important it is in their country - now more than ever - to establish a solid and sustainable economy around agroforestry resources. This is why the transfer of good practices and technological innovation that BRANCHES proposes on a European and international scale was greatly appreciated.

Innovative best practice awards 2023

IN SPAIN Sustainable forest management as a fire prevention measure and use for renewable heat supply in rural tourism facilities through the +Bosque initiative by Monteholiday Ecoturismo wins the award for best innovative practice with Biomass. This practice combines actions in the natural environment, in this case a holm oak grove, to reduce the risk and impact of fires, thereby increasing safety for users of the campsite resort and local residents of the village. At the same time, the installation integrates a renewable heat network that is supplied through state-of-the-art boilers fed with the biomass collected in the actions, and a management of the interior temperatures in the cabins and facilities of the resort through their monitoring.

IN GERMANY The winner of the best innovative practice in bioeconomy at the German NTN was announced on July 3, following a 50% open vote and 50% jury vote: Agile Innovation Management for the Bioeconomy (PIC- Pi Innovation Culture GmbH).

PIC is building an innovation ecosystem along the value chains of the agricultural, food and chemical industries as part of the "BioZ" project. Within the research landscape, these sectors are only weakly interconnected. As a result, the value-added potential in the use of regionally produced biogenic residues (e.g. sugar beet pulp, stillage) for innovative material refinement is not sufficiently exploited. Innovation management guarantees the orderly process and efficient functioning of the innovation system. It covers all operational and organizational tasks in the alliance. The aim is to significantly reduce the time and costs involved in initiating and implementing innovations. The core of the system is the structured development of ideas across company boundaries and sectors. Four

technical innovation areas have been developed and differentiated in the "dialogue groups" proteins, fine and specialty chemicals, biopolymers and lipids. They represent fields of work with defined topics and are closely networked with each other. PIC GmbH offers all services to meet the needs of the alliance partners, e.g. for networking, initiation, implementation and visualization of the R&D projects. The approach of the moderated dialogue groups brings together actors and their different competencies in a systematic and targeted way to develop new ideas and solutions.

EUBCE

Last June, the 31st EUBCE 'European Biomass Conference and Exhibition' invited the BRANCHES Project to describe its activities and results to date in the 'Bioenergy and Biobased Products' planning session.

Gasification is a key process for the conversion of a range of feedstocks to useful intermediate products that can subsequently be used to build a variety of products. One of the biggest challenges has been to scale up the gasification process to achieve commercial success. Enerkem has developed a bubbling fluidised bed system up to commercial demonstration scale in Edmonton that can use all sorts of agricultural and forestry residues as well as industrial and commercial wastes and mixed waste plastics. The presentation covered all the main sub-processes in the conversion of raw feedstock into useful fuels and bio-based products, including methanol and ethanol at the demonstration facility. In addition, an overview of target products and markets as well as the status of Enerkem's most advanced projects in Canada and Europe will be given.

The EU BRANCHES project has identified drivers and barriers for the integration of various technologies into farm and rural community bioeconomies, these technologies including biogas, hybrid energy solutions, biomass heating and CHP and advanced thermochemical conversion processes. Results from the research provide factors that may or may not have an impact on whether introduction of a bioeconomy solution could be successful. In this plenary presentation, the identified drivers and barriers affecting introduction of biomass conversion processes into rural communities will be given in terms of demographic, economic, political, ecological, socio-economic and technological factors.

Ukrainian Furniture Industry Defies Adversity at KIFF 2023

On 10th of March, Mr Alberto Del Lungo, BRANCHES member and Senior International Forestry Expert at the FAO country office of Kyiv, Ukraine, and Mr Vasyl Masyuk, wood technologist and FAO Forestry Programme National Specialist, visited the The Kyiv International Furniture Forum (KIFF), Ukraine's premier furniture trade fair on 10th of March 2023 that, successfully took place amidst

challenging times. Despite the backdrop of an ongoing war that erupted on February 24, 2022, the furniture industry leaders from around the globe united at KIFF 2023.

Every year, KIFF serves as a dynamic platform, bringing together manufacturers, distributors, designers, architects, decorators, wholesalers, retailers, furniture salon owners, HoReCa sector operators, and enthusiasts of exquisite interiors. Covering diverse segments such as furniture, lighting, decoration, textiles, floor coverings, ceramics, and plumbing, the fair showcases the latest trends and innovations in the industry.

KIFF 2023 was particularly significant as it had been "delayed" for a year due to the outbreak of the war. However, the spirit of resilience prevailed as the event commenced on March 9, 2023. The three-day exhibition proved to be an essential catalyst for the market's growth, facilitating meetings with partners, networking opportunities, and presentations of new models, collections, and projects. Collaborations with designers and architects and the introduction of unique products added to the fair's allure. Welcoming nearly 8,000 visitors to the International Exhibition Centre in Kyiv, KIFF 2023 demonstrated the unwavering determination of the Ukrainian furniture industry to overcome adversities and foster professional connections.



From left to right, Alberto Del Lungo, (BRANCHES), Yuri Korostyliov (ELIO, furniture company), Yana Chernyavska (KIFF exhibition), Vasyl Masyuk (FAO Ukraine), and Valeriy Sukhytskyj (SV design studio)

A key BRANCHES member reported on BRANCHES in a national talk show in Italy

Raffaele Spinelli, Research Director of CNR IBE and globally recognised expert in forest mechanisation, discussed the ecosystem services of forests and the BRANCHES project on a popular Italian talk show. Spinelli's speech was part of a session



dedicated to the Next Generation Eu funds and how Italy is gearing up to ensure the country's recovery and resilience. In this regard Spinelli said: "In Italy the forestry sector is suffering not because of a shortage of forests (which occupy 1/3 of the national territory), but because of an anachronistic difficulty in planning active forms of management of this enormous heritage. The funding available today is an opportunity to be grasped with the utmost seriousness and commitment."



Ville Niinistö

Following the vote by which the European Parliament approved the revision of the LULUCF (Land Use and Forestry) regulation, the measure's rapporteur, Finnish MEP Ville Niinistö commented: "In the last decade, the EU's carbon sinks have decreased. With this law, the soil sector will play its part in tackling the climate crisis: We now have a more ambitious target and other guarantees, including better data and reporting requirements, increased transparency and an obligation to review by 2025. This is the first law to address biodiversity and the

climate crisis simultaneously, and Member States will also have to take into account the 'do-no-significant-harm' principle".

Showcase

ORGANIZED BY POLAND On 6 September, the two Polish partners (UWM and WMODR) will hold a showcase day "Ecological biogas plant in Boleszyn". The day will include a workshop in which all BRANCHES partners are invited to participate in order to discuss "good agricultural practices, technologies and policies" in front of a panel of local stakeholders (NTN). In the afternoon, there will be a technical visit to a biogas plant that will be shown the whole chain of activities "acquisition and logistics of biomass from marginal land, including agricultural land overgrown with self-seeding trees and shrubs.

ORGANIZED BY GERMANY On 27th of September with the selected case study on: High-quality natural fibres made from hemp with the regional association SachsenLeinen e.V (FUSE) will be organized a showcase day that will present the entire value chain process from FUSE, which utilizes hemp fibre waste to produce a UD-tape for the manufacture of sustainable composite products (<https://en.fuse-composite.com/>). Attendees will have the opportunity to visit the cultivation facilities south of Leipzig, Germany, to learn about the process of growing and processing the fibres for use in the textile and other value chains. On the same day, the Fraunhofer Pilot Plant Center for Polymer Synthesis and Processing PAZ in Schkopau, Germany (<https://www.polymer-pilotanlagen.de/en/Fraunhofer-PAZ.html>) will also be visited to learn about the industrial processes for the utilization of natural fibres in higher value-added products. In particular, to learn about the processes used for the creation of FUSE's UD-Tape.

BRANCHES Online German Seminar

On the 12th of October the last BRANCHES Online Seminar is organized by German partners with the support of the German EIP-Agri national contact point. More information on the agenda and registration will follow in August.

BRANCHES final Conference

With just under 6 months to go before the conclusion of the BRANCHES Project, the ITABIA Association – BRANCHES WP leader on Communication, in collaboration with CNR IBE, with LUKE, BRANCHES Project Coordinator and with the FAO Mountain Partnership Secretariat, is organising the final conference. This will be organised in Rome at the FAO headquarters on 13 and 14 November 2023. The main purpose of the event that will take place over the two days, in addition

to reporting to a selected audience of stakeholders, will be to disseminate the main results obtained in three years of activity in order to prepare the conditions for the experience gained through our project to become a guiding tool to be addressed to policy makers. With this in mind, we are aiming at involving top-level personalities at national, European and international level, including FAO senior officers. We would like to conclude our project by laying the foundation for further developments in the years to come. As soon as we have a more detailed programme, we will disseminate it through the wide network of stakeholders created during the three years of the Project.

