

The BioClima Initiative

The context

Over the past few years, attention and awareness towards the **climate crisis** have increased. However, there is an equally urgent need to address another related crisis connected to human activities: **biodiversity loss**, which is causing the **sixth mass extinction** in the planet's history.

Several international initiatives have emerged to address this new reality by **setting ambitious goals and pointing the way forward through clearly defined roadmaps**. Notable initiatives include the Kunming-Montreal **Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)** and the **Nature Restoration Law**. The framework, with its **"30 by 30 target"**, has been called the **biodiversity equivalent of the Paris Climate Agreement**.

The problem

Despite the emergence of these positive initiatives at the international level, there remains the so-called **Biodiversity Funding Gap**, which is the **difference between the resources needed to achieve the set goals and the resources deployed**, or planned, to achieve them.

To not miss the next decade's ambitious goals to restoring ecosystems, it is necessary and urgent to **"close the gap"**. To do this it is necessary to reduce the damage done to nature and to increase the financial resources devoted to its conservation and restoration.

Therefore, a systemic and cross-society change is required, and this means that not only the **public sector but also the private sector and finance are now called upon to play their part**.

The opportunity

This desirable change is already underway. Interest in **nature positive**, a method that aims to safeguard biodiversity as well as the climate, continues to grow both in the public and private sectors.

The private sector, along with the finance, is willing to engage in dialogue with the public sector as evidenced by the growing interest in the **European Nature & Business Summit (EBNS)**.

This is a great opportunity which, if seized, could **contribute to solving the problem of the Biodiversity Funding Gap**.

In 2020 **Regione Lombardia** allocated **€3.5 million** (through the Lombardia Plan) to finance interventions with a **positive impact on nature**. This gave rise to **BioClima**, an initiative aimed at testing governance pathways geared towards the activation of **innovative financing mechanisms to support ecosystem services** (i.e., the benefits nature provides to humankind).

With the external technical assistance of **Etifor** and the support of **Fondazione Cariplo**, Regione Lombardia conducted a long **stakeholder consultation** process to develop an innovative financing model for interventions in **biodiversity conservation**, **climate change adaptation** and enhancement of **ecosystem services** provided by forests, protected areas and regional ecological networks.

The public-private financing scheme

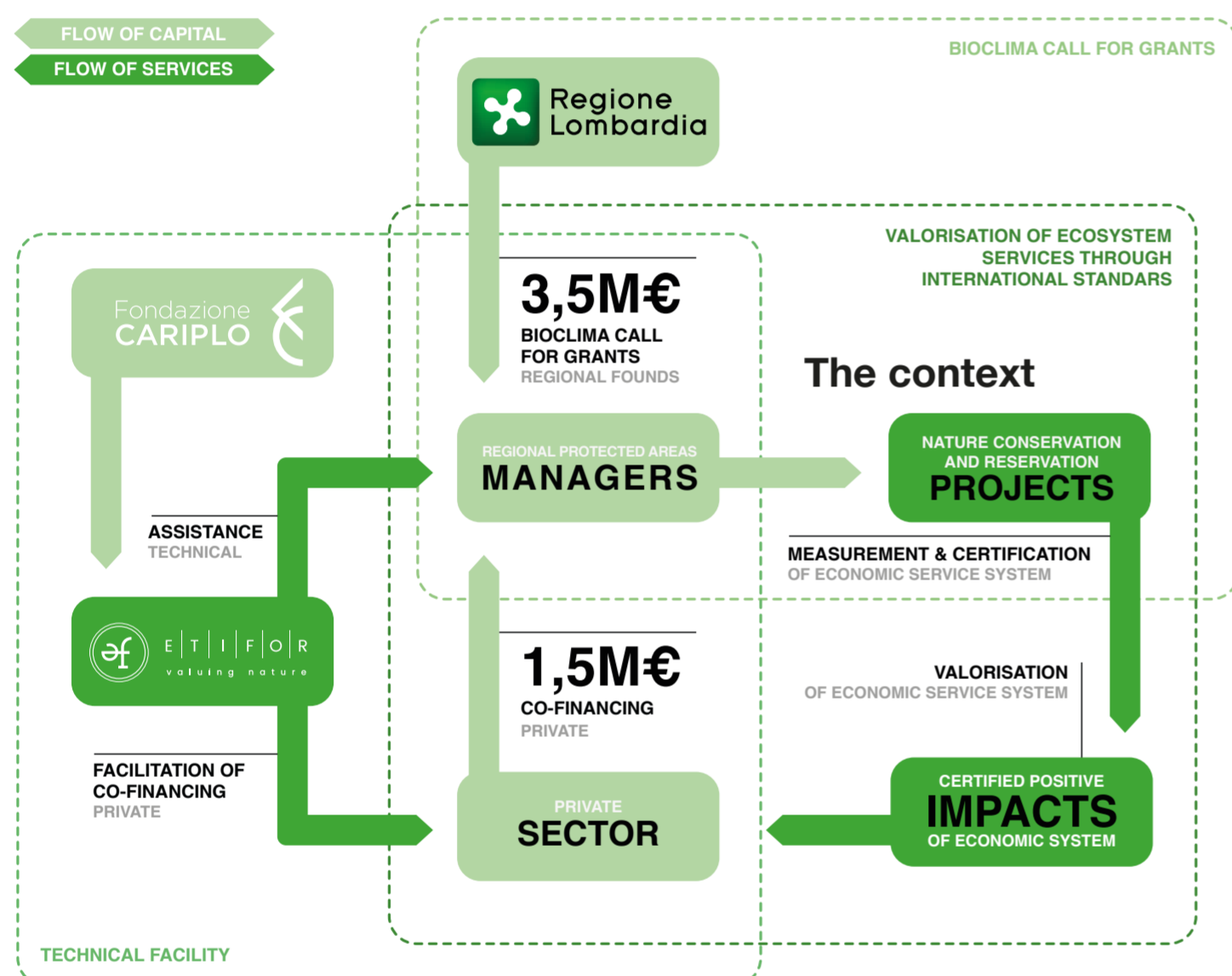
The BioClima initiative is, to all intents and purposes, a public-private partnership: a form of cooperation between public and private entities with the aim of financing services of public interest. In this case, the collaboration aims to finance forestry interventions to combat climate change and conserve habitats and species. BioClima gives concrete implementation to the Biodiversity Prioritized Action Framework (PAF) and Lombardia's Regional Strategies for Biodiversity and Sustainable Development.

The initiative consists of three key components:

- 1. BioClima Call** for proposals granted the forest and parks managing entities part of the funds needed to implement projects in the area.
- 2. The Technical Facility Service**, financed by Fondazione Cariplo and entrusted to Etifor, granted technical assistance to entities in identifying interventions, applying projects to the call for proposals and searching for private sponsors (through the use of the wownature.eu platform), to raise the remaining funds needed for the project implementation.
- 3. The FSC® Ecosystem Services Procedure** is the international standard used to verify ecosystem service as a tool for quality assurance of projects and scientific measurement of impacts.

The initiative relies on an innovative **blended finance** mechanism, which is a system that uses public financing to attract and facilitate private sponsorship, coupling the two sources of funding to achieve results related to sustainable development. In this specific case, the blended finance model works on two levels:

- On a **regional scale**, the public entity provides grant funding, supplementing it with philanthropic funding of private origin granted by Fondazione Cariplo and an economic model for enhancing ecosystem services designed and managed by Etifor (which then also provides technical assistance and know-how)
- On a **local scale**, each beneficiary of the call receives sponsorships from private companies by generating certified positive impacts in the area through technical assistance provided by Etifor; the involvement of local communities allows the dissemination of the "value" created in the area.

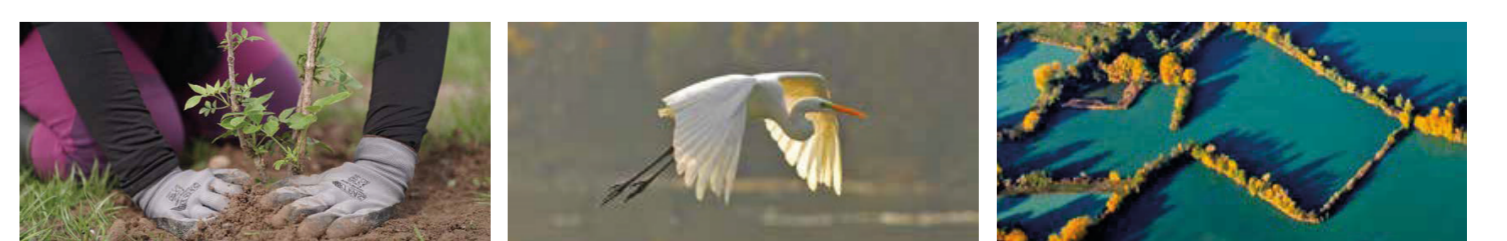
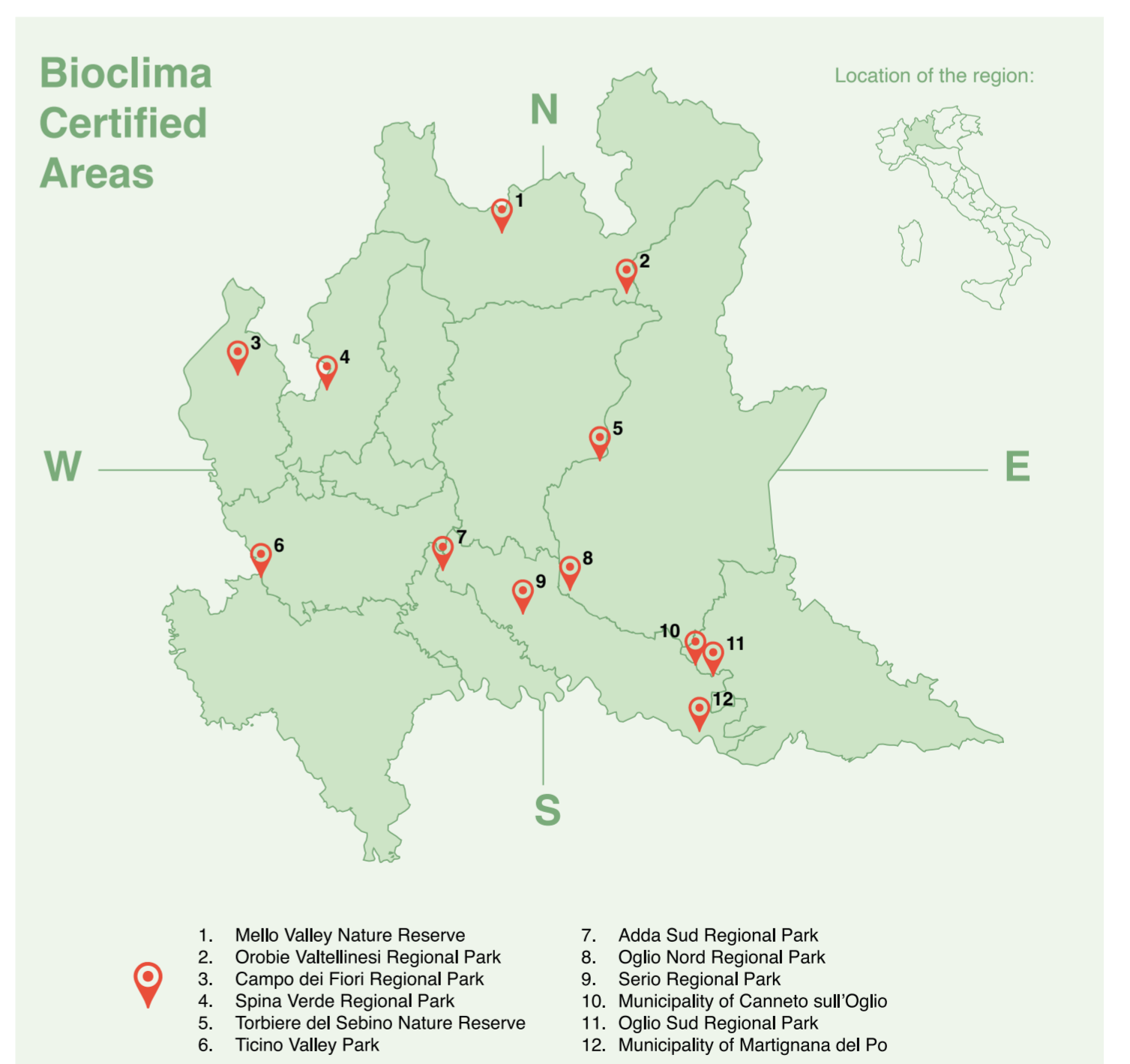


Results and impacts

The initiative attracted the interest of the management entities of 30 regional protected areas and resulted in the application of 18 projects. Of these, **12 were approved, funded and are currently ongoing**.

Overall, the project will generate the following results:

- **FSC® certification for responsible forest management, with verified positive impacts on ecosystem services, for more than 3,000 hectares.**
- **Forest improvements of more than 300 hectares.**
- **More than 27 hectares of specific biodiversity interventions.**
- **Over 66,000 trees planted in reforestation, creation of linear systems, ecological enrichment.**
- **Interventions for the conservation of 16 protected habitats.**
- **Interventions for the conservation of over 20 protected species.**
- **€5.6 million mobilized to finance interventions** for biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and enhancement of ecosystem services.
 - Of these, **€3.5 million covered by regional contribution**, €700,000 of co-financing from the proposing bodies and **€1.5 million of private co-financing**.
 - Of this €1.5 million, **€1 million came from private companies and organizations**, raised through the **WOWNature portal** (www.wownature.eu).
- **Over 150 people trained on responsible forest management standards and procedures** for verifying impacts on ecosystem services.
- **Dissemination and awareness through >20 field events** open to citizens and businesses and over 130 mentions in the local or national press.



Learn more about the project

Contact us: info@wownature.eu