

17th EDGG Field Workshop

Inner Alpine dry valleys of the south-eastern Alps (Italy, Switzerland, 1-11 June 2023): Call for participation

Background

Since 2009, when J. Dengler first proposed a new sampling methodology, that has been revised and improved from year to year (detailed in Dengler et al. 2016), field workshops have been an important activity for the EDGG.

The multiple scale approach that characterizes the workshop, aims to collect standardized high-quality biodiversity data together with structural data. The approach has already been applied to a series of studies and can be utilized for further research. All data are entered into the [GrassPlot database](#) (Dengler et al. 2018). The data collected during this Field Workshop will result in a joint scientific publication from all the participants.

Topic and aims of the Field Workshop

As Braun-Blanquet stated in his monograph on the xerothermic vegetation (1961), it is possible to distinguish 13 inner-Alpine xerothermic “islands” from the Durance valley (France) in the Southwest, to Carinthia and Styria (Austria) in the East. With regard to the eastern Alps, the 11th EDGG Field Workshop has already investigated the three most important areas of Austria (small areas of Carinthia and

Styria, Puster and upper Drau valley and the Inn valley in Tyrol); while Switzerland, including the Engadine, the valleys of Central Grisons (Rhine and tributaries) and the Valais (Rhône valley), were the target of the 12th EDGG Field Workshop.

The 17th EDGG Field Workshop aims at filling the gaps for the Eastern Alps. This workshop will collect data from the moderately dry valleys of the Eisack/Isarco and Adige/Etsch valley, to the Valtellina, Val di Sole and Valcamonica, and the most extreme dry valley system of the Eastern Alps: the Vinschgau/Venosta valley and Val Müstair in Switzerland.

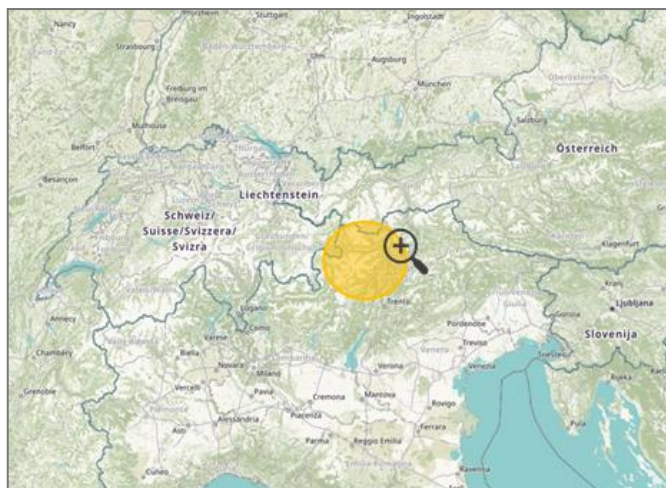
Fauna, flora and vegetation

The average annual precipitation in these climatically extreme valleys is usually between 450 and 700 mm, combined with high solar insolation.

The east-west orientation of the Vinschgau valley and its geographic position, result in an annual precipitation of below 500 mm in some localities. Since the end of the last Ice Age this exceptional environment has resulted in the development of a very species rich thermophilic flora, adapted to conditions that are otherwise absent or rarely found in the



Landscape in the Matsch/Mazia Valley, South Tyrol, Italy. Photo: A. Hilpold.



Field Workshop area: overview map

Alps. Among these species, there are many typical taxa of the steppe-like grasslands of Central and Eastern Europe, isolated from the main distribution range, and thus at the westernmost limit of their range. Some taxa have even formed endemic genetic lineages or subspecies (Kirschner et al. 2020). This diverse steppe-like element is enriched with widespread Central European dry grassland species and some (sub-) Mediterranean species adapted to summer drought.

Nowadays, the biotic communities of dry grasslands are considered to be particularly worthy of protection throughout Europe and are partially protected in the European network Natura 2000. Nevertheless, many valuable areas are still excluded from protected areas and are therefore not subject to adequate protection and management.

Itinerary for the Field Workshop

The EDGG 17th Field Workshop 2023 will take place in the Italian south-eastern Alps, namely in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen (Region Trentino-Alto Adige), Valtellina (Region Lombardy) and in the Val Müstair/Münstertal (Switzerland). We will focus on various types of grazed dry meadows and will also visit some semi-dry hay meadows. The Workshop is organized by three local bodies, namely the Institute for Alpine Environment - Eurac Research, the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano and the Museum of Nature South Tyrol.

Travelling days to and from Bolzano/Bozen: Thursday 1st and Sunday 11th of June 2023.

Field days: From Friday 2nd of June until Saturday 10th of June 2023.

Travel schedule: We will spend the first three days of the Workshop in the wider Bolzano/Bozen area: The Eisack/Isarco Valley between Bolzano/Bozen and Bressanone/Brixen, the Adige/Etsch Valley between Merano/Meran and Bolzano/Bozen, and the lowlands between Bolzano/Bozen and Trento, which are moderately continental with a strong

Mediterranean influence. Dry grasslands here are mostly restricted to small-scale specific sites.

Then we will drive to the Vinschgau/Venosta Valley, the driest valley in the Eastern Alps, where we will spend four days. We will make a detour to Val Müstair (CH) – geographically a side valley of the Vinschgau. If there are issues for individuals entering Switzerland, the groups can be divided, and one group will stay in Vinschgau.

The remaining days of the excursion will be spent in the moderately dry valleys of Valtellina, Valcamonica (both Lombardy) and Val di Sole (Trentino).

Thu 1st	Travelling day to Bolzano/Bozen. Icebreaker event at the Museum of Nature at 6 p.m. (Bindergasse 1, 39100 Bolzano/Bozen)
Fri 2nd	Fieldwork Adige/Etsch Valley (Castelfeder hill), introduction to the vegetation of the area
Sat 3rd	Fieldwork Adige/Etsch Valley and Eisack/Isarco Valley
Sun 4th	Fieldwork Adige/Etsch Valley around Merano; change accommodation to the upper Vinschgau/Venosta valley
Mon 5th	Fieldwork Vinschgau/Val Venosta and Val Müstair
Tue 6th	Fieldwork Vinschgau/Val Venosta and Val Müstair
Wed 7th	Fieldwork Vinschgau/Val Venosta and Val Müstair
Thu 8th	Fieldwork Vinschgau/Val Venosta and Val Müstair, journey to Valtellina
Fri 9th	Fieldwork Valtellina
Sat 10th	Fieldwork Val Camonica and Val di Sole, journey back to Bolzano/Bozen
Sun 11th	Travelling day from Bolzano/Bozen

Accommodation

We will stay at three different places, one close to Bolzano/Bozen, one around Mals/Malles and one in Valtellina.

We have booked the following three accommodations:

- Bolzano area: [Pension Lichtenburg](#), Nals/Nalles (breakfast, lunch package and dinner);
- Mals area: [Hotel Iris](#), Mals/Malles (breakfast, lunch package and dinner);
- Valtellina: [Garni Le Corti](#), Grosotto (breakfast, lunch package and dinner).

We plan to travel to the sites in two 9-seat minibuses. In addition, scientists and students from South Tyrol will join to help with logistics and the fieldwork using their own cars.

Fees

The fees comprise travelling during the field workshops, accommodation, breakfast, dinners and pocket lunch for all days.

The fees for full participation are:

- 800 € for senior scientists (more than 33 years) who are not members of IAVS
- 750 € for senior scientists (more than 33 years) who are members of IAVS
- 750 € for young scientists (up to 32 years) as well as unemployed persons who are not member of IAVS
- 700 € for young scientists (up to 32 years) as well as unemployed persons who are member of IAVS
- 0 € (i.e. no participation fee) for any Ukrainian participant (whether living in Ukraine or a refugee abroad) who is IAVS member at the time of application (it is possible also to apply additionally for travel grants to/from Bolzano).

We search for people with good knowledge of vascular plants, bryophytes and/or lichens. Beyond botanists and lichenologists, EDGG Field Workshops are also open to experts of other taxonomic groups (e.g. insects, spiders, snails, fungi, bacteria) who intend to conduct standardised sampling on the same plots. If interested, please get into contact with the local organisers and the Field Workshop Coordinators to discuss options.

Applications

In general only EDGG members can participate in EDGG Field Workshops, but if non-members apply this will be considered as an application for free membership of the EDGG. To apply for participation in the Field Workshop, please

send a brief motivation letter (for details see below) to Iwona Dembicz (i.dembicz@gmail.com) and Idoia Biurrun (idoia.biurrun@ehu.es), including experience of vegetation surveys, in an email entitled "EDGG Field Workshop" **by 10 April 2023**.

Confirmation of participation and feedback on travel grant applications will be given as soon as possible after this deadline, likely around the 5th April.

All applicants, except those who have already participated in four or more Field Workshops, have to submit a **motivation letter** (250 words maximum), explaining why they are interested in participation and how they would contribute to both a successful Field Workshop and successful outcomes afterwards.

The motivation letter is the most important criterion, if there are more applicants than places, or more applicants for travel grants than available money.

When applying for participation, in addition to your motivation letter please include in your e-mail the following information:

- Name
- Age
- Professional status (e.g. PhD Student, Postdoc, Professor, Unemployed)
- Affiliation
- Address
- Mobile phone (we need to be able to contact you, e.g. when you get lost in the field)
- Dietary requirements (no/vegetarian/other: please specify)
- If you are not an EDGG member yet, you need to agree explicitly to join EDGG (for free)
- Travel grant application (Yes/No)



Dry grasslands in Vinschgau, South Tyrol, Italy. Photo: A. Hilpold.

Travel grants

Any participant (Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians) can apply for a travel grant from IAVS if three conditions are met: (a) the person is an IAVS member at the time of application; (b) there is a compelling motivation letter and (c) the person agrees to take responsibility for part of the data handling after the FW (e.g. plant determination, soil analysis or digitization of plot data). The distribution of funding is decided by an *ad hoc* committee consisting of members from the local organizers and of the EDGG EC. Grants are paid to the grantees after the event by IAVS on provision of the relevant receipts.

Recipients of IAVS travel grants are expected to actively contribute not only during the Workshop, but during data preparation and processing (determination of collected herbarium specimens, data entering and cleaning, or analyses of soil samples etc.).

If you wish to apply for a travel grant, please provide the following additional information together with your standard application:

- IAVS member in 2023 (Yes/No)
- Ukrainian citizenship (Yes/No)
- Details of whether you have already applied, or plan to apply, for another IAVS travel grant (e.g. IAVS Symposium, EVS conference or Eurasian Grassland Conference)
- Indication whether you are willing to organize a future Field Workshop (give target region and potential years)
- Motivation letter (see above)
- Approximate travel costs from your home to the starting point of the Field Workshop and back
- Details of other funding that you receive (e.g. from your institution)?
- Could you participate if you do not get a travel grant?

References

- Braun-Blanquet, J. 1961. *Die inneralpine Trockenvegetation*. Fischer, Stuttgart, DE.
- Dengler, J., Boch, S., Filibeck, G., Chiarucci, A., Dembicz, I., Guarino, R., Henneberg, B., Janišová, M., Marcenò, C., (...) & Biurrun, I. 2016. Assessing plant diversity and composition in grasslands across spatial scales: the standardised EDGG sampling methodology. *Bulletin of the Eurasian Grassland Group* 32: 13–30.
- Dengler, J., Wagner, V., Dembicz, I., García-Mijangos, I., Naqinezhad, A., Boch, S., Chiarucci, A., Conradi, T., Filibeck, G., (...) & Biurrun, I. 2018. GrassPlot – a database of multi-scale plant diversity in Palaeoarctic grasslands. *Phytocoenologia* 48: 331–347.
- Kirschner, P., Záveská, E., Gamisch, A., Hilpold, A., Trucchi, E., Paun, O., Sanmartín, I., Schlick-Steiner, B.C., Frajman, B., (...) & Schönschetter, P. 2020. Long-term isolation of European steppe outposts boosts the biome's conservation value. *Nature Communications* 11: e 1968.

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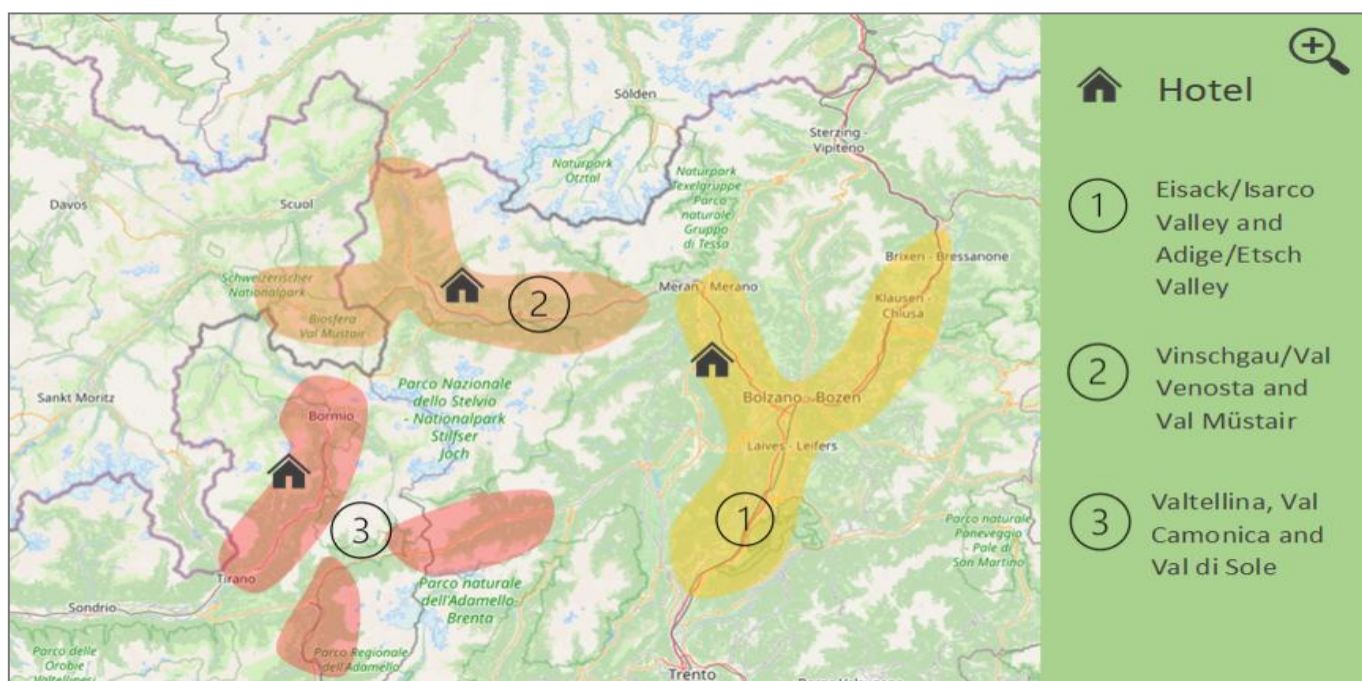
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Field workshop area: detailed trip map.