

Glaciers of Italy: quantitative assessment and monitoring of a natural resource threatened by climate change

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Ongoing climate change is deeply impacting high-mountain areas and glacier shrinkage is one of the most evident consequences. The general and progressive retreat of glaciers in the Alps is expected to continue in the future. Glaciers represent an important resource for the Society not only in the areas close to these natural elements but also more far away: they represent both opportunities (tourism, exploitation as water reservoir and/or for hydropower production, biodiversity and geodiversity enhancement, scientific purposes, etc.) and risks (ice falls, outburst flood). For these reasons it is essential to know their geographic distribution, the area covered by them as well as their evolution through time. In order to better know this resource both regional and in-situ studies are carried out. These activities will allow to prioritize and guide specific actions like more detailed studies and monitoring, valorization, fruition, and towards their sustainable management from the socio-environmental point of view.

The speaker

Cristina Viani is a physical geographer, she obtained her PhD in Earth Sciences in 2018 with a thesis in glaciology and has collaborated on international projects (NextData and GLIMS) on the same topic. After her PhD, she worked at different projects concerning the impacts of climate change in high-elevation areas of the Alps both with research centers and universities. Now she is working as a post-doc on the PNRR Nodes project at the Department of Earth Sciences of the University of Turin. She is a member of the Italian Glaciological Committee and carries out observation of some glaciers in the Western Alps as a glaciological operator.