Review

Biogas upgrading technology solutions: conventional processes and emerging solutions for CO2 valorisation

Matteo Galloni 1 and Gioele Di Marcoberardino 1,\*

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1 Università degli Studi di Brescia;

**\*** Correspondence: gioele.dimarcoberardino@unibs.it; Tel.: (optional; include country code; if there are multiple corresponding authors, add author initials)

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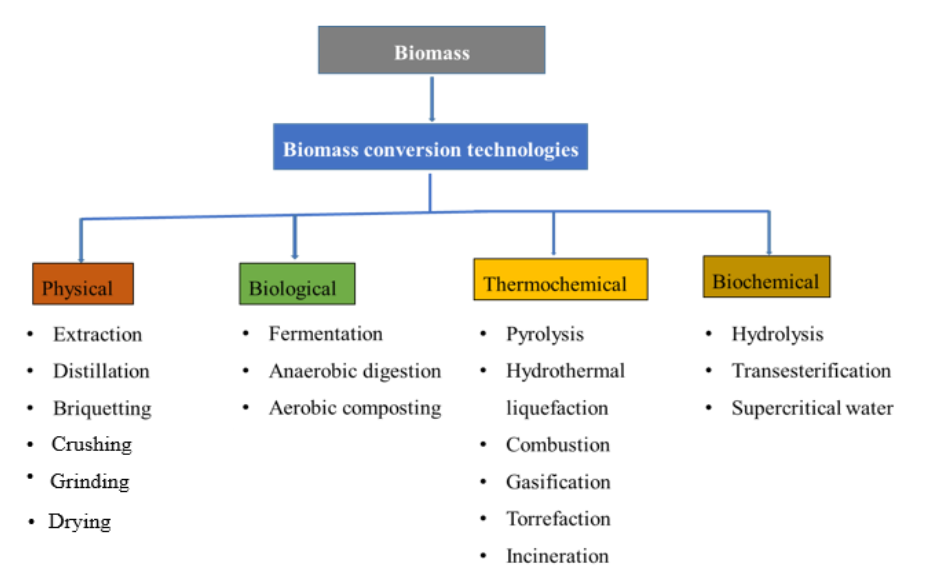
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1. Introduction

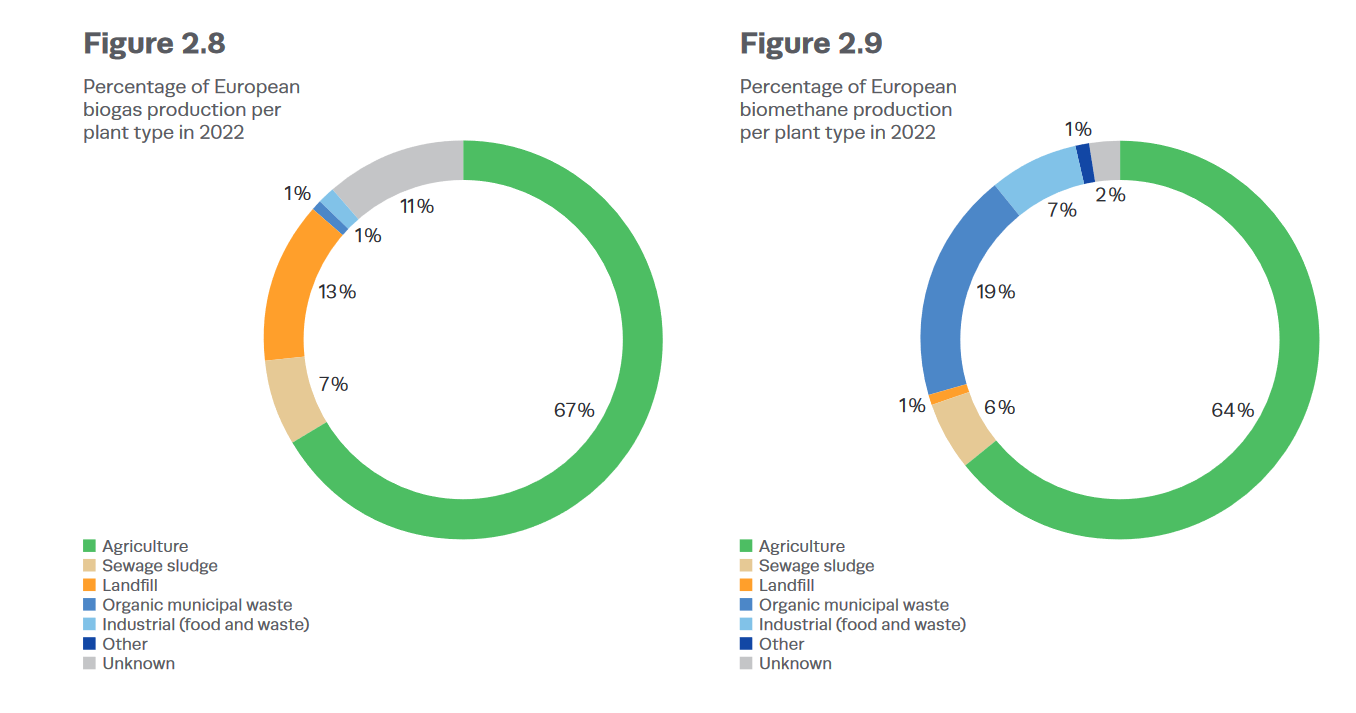
It is crucial to shift the energy sector towards sources with a lower carbon footprint to lessen the harmful impacts on the global the environment caused by human activities. Renewable energy must account for about 40% of total energy generation in all sectors by 2030 [1] to align with the EU's carbon-neutral objective [2]. Biomass, obtained from organic materials including plant leftovers, animal waste, and the organic part of municipal solid waste (OFMSW), offers a promising opportunity for producing greener energy. Moreover, using biomass in this manner allows for the conversion of waste into a valuable resource, aligning with the circular economy principles. The key advantages of biomass compared to other renewable sources are its independence from weather conditions and its ability to more easily meet electricity demand through physical accumulation [3].

Several ways exist for converting biomass into biofuel. The Figure xx displays the primary categories based on the type of process involved in the conversion.



This work [4] presents technology focusing on the product's characteristics, together with a quick overview of the primary advantages and drawbacks. Physical biomass conversion involves modifying biomass by preprocessing activities, size reduction, drying, and densification. The method converts biomass into forms with enhanced characteristics, including increased mass density, energy density, and hydrophobicity compared to raw biomass. Biological processes often utilize microbial systems to improve the conversion of specific chemical products by triggering a series of reactions in a metabolic pathway. Biological conversion techniques are deemed eco-friendly. Moreover, it is generally advised to take an additional separation step in this scenario. Thermochemical processes often work under demanding conditions involving high temperatures and pressures. Thermochemical methods demand a significant initial investment and setup due to the required infrastructure. Additionally, these processes typically provide a variety of chemicals, necessitating a refining step. Biochemical conversion technologies combine biological and chemical mechanisms. This process utilizes microbes and biological catalysts to transform biomass into gas, specifically CO2 and CH4. It offers excellent selectivity in converting biomass into the desired end products. The selection of process technology is dependent upon the desired end product and the feedstocks supplied.

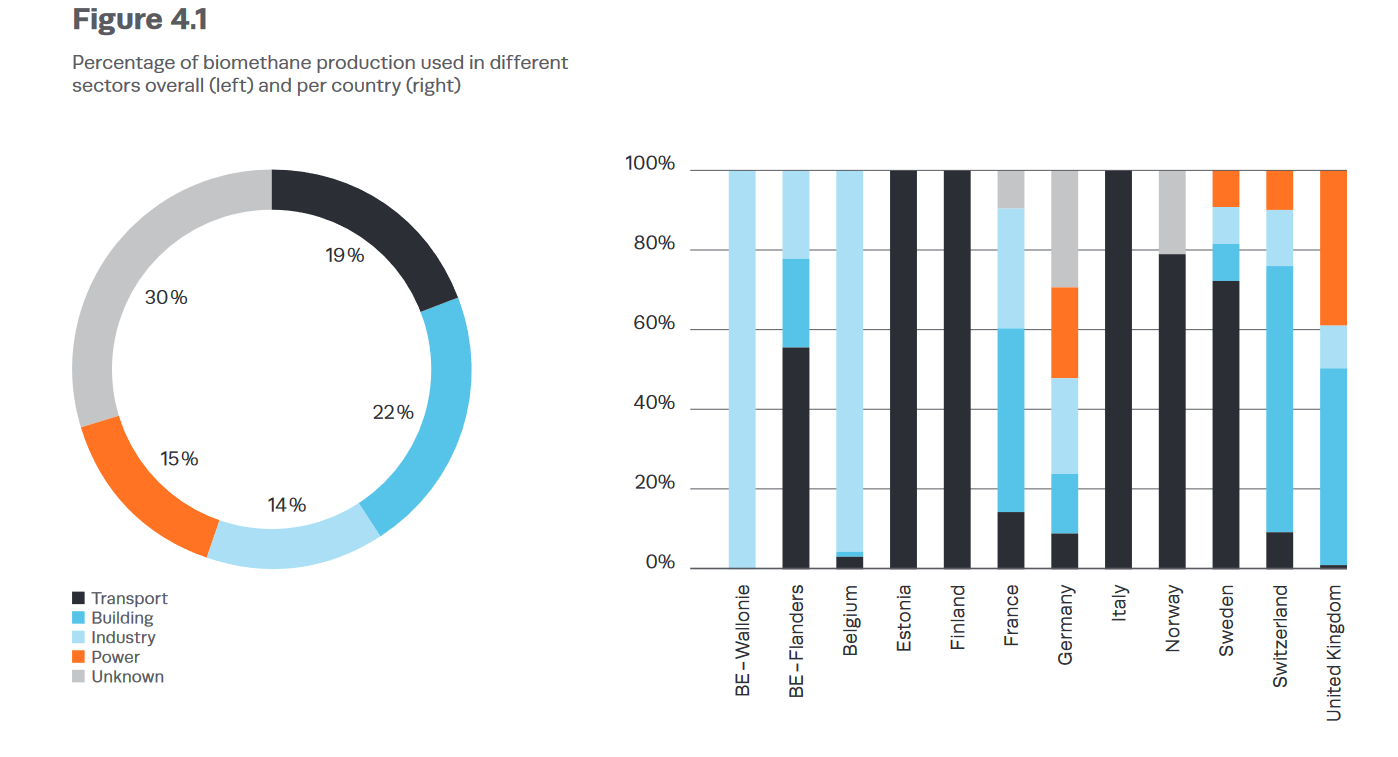
CERCA UNA FRASE DI COLLEGAMENTO (E DEI DATI) per giustificare il fatto che d’ora in poi ci si concentra solo su AD

Anaerobic digestion occurs in specialized reactors, where microbial consortia support a sequence of metabolic activities on the biomass. The reactions progress through various phases: hydrolysis, acidogenesis, acetogenesis, and methanogenesis. Every phase is defined by the decomposition of intricate organic molecules into more basic ones. The process produces biogas primarily composed of methane (CH4) and carbon dioxide (CO2), with small amounts of N2, H2S, H2O, and VOCs. Factors influencing the output and energy content of biogas produced by anaerobic digestion (AD) are the nutritional composition of biomass, operating temperature, operating pH, biomass loading rate, hydraulic retention time, and solid retention time [5]. . Anaerobic digestion is highly adaptable and may treat a variety of biomass sources including agricultural wastes, animal by-products, sewage sludge, landfill materials, and organic waste from municipal solid waste. 

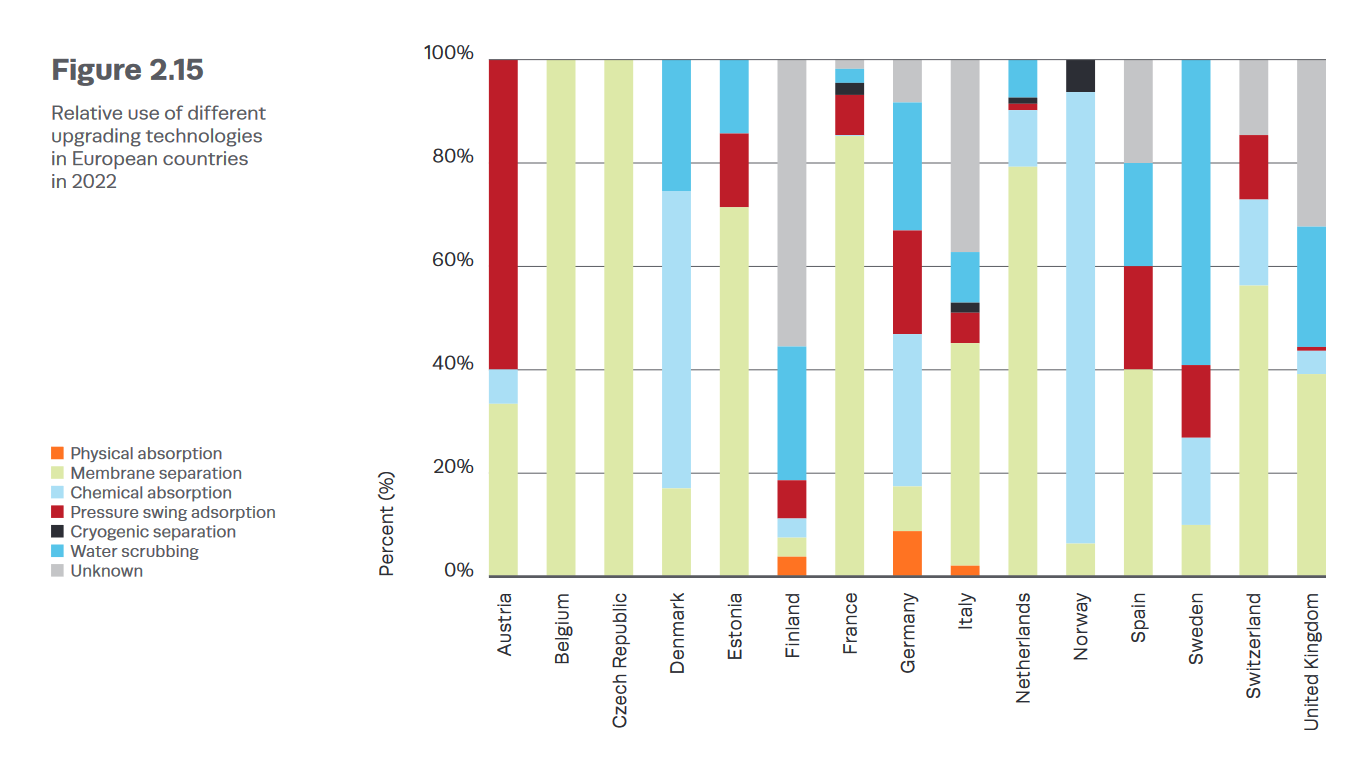
The biogas composition depends on the type of biomass used and the conditions and methods used during the conversion process, as can be seen in Tab yy. By strategically choosing biomass feedstock and optimising process parameters, biogas production efficiencies can be improved, making anaerobic digestion a more appealing choice for generating renewable energy.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Component  % mol | Landifileld | AD from Agricoltural and cattle manure | AD from waste food from industry | Natural Gas |  |
| CH4 | 40-70 | 49-69 | 44-67 | 85-92 |  |
| CO2 | 25-40 | 29-44 | 30-44 | 0.2-1.5 |  |
| N2 | 0-17 | 0.6-13 | 0.1-6 | 0.3 |  |
| O2 | 0-3 | 0.2-3 | 0.1-3 |  |  |

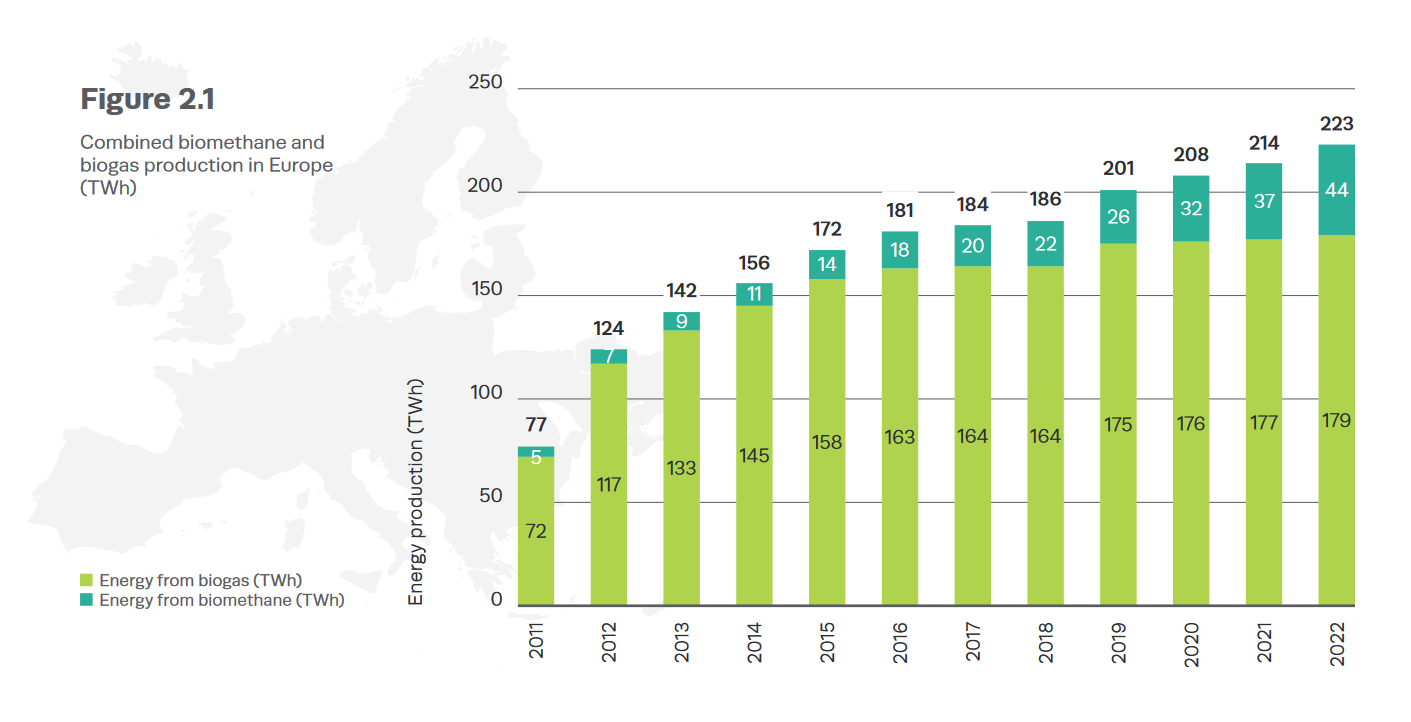
Biogas can be directly fed in combined heat and power system (CHP) or it can be upgraded to biomethane. Direct combustion of biogas in a CHP system has superior environmental performance compared to an upgrading system, as show in this study [6]. However, producing biomethane allows for injection into the natural gas grid for usage in energy production or in hard to abate sectors, as transport and buildings [7]. The increasing size of the CHP system in the power plant improves efficiency and facilitates better integration with energy demand.

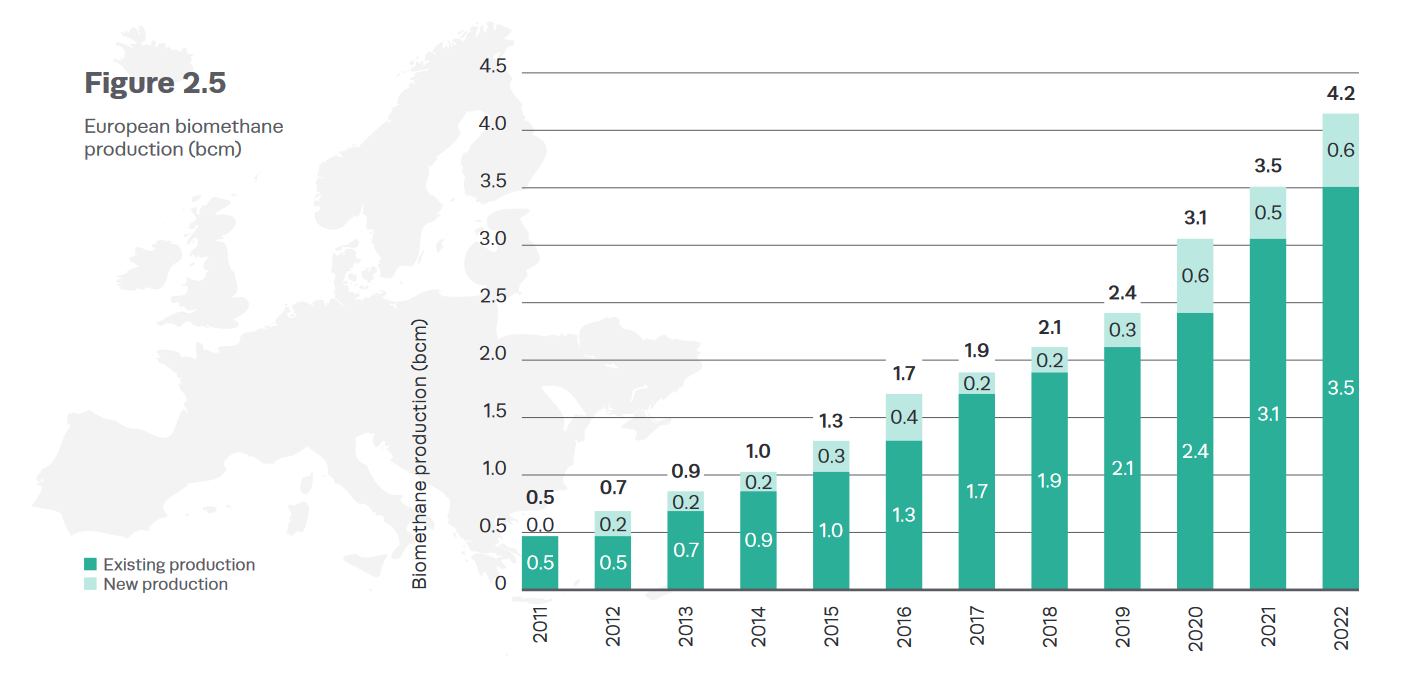


Different methods can be used to produce biomethane from biogas. Well-known technologies include Water Scrubbing (WS), Chemical Absorption (CA), Membrane Separations (MS), and Pressure Swing Adsorption. Cryogenic distillation (CD) is being considered as a potential alternative method for producing LCO2 as a byproduct in the future. Each technology has its advantages and limitations, typically related to the incoming biogas composition, size, and the required methane purity. The figure xx illustrates that membrane separation and water scrubbing are the predominant upgrading technologies in Europe.



The biogas and biomethane business has been experiencing significant expansion in recent years due to substantial investments and favorable policies with incentives (cita RED II e incentive biometano). In 2022, biogas output reached 179 TWh and biomethane production was 44 TWh, showing a 16% growth from 2021.





The conversion of biogas into biomethane involves an initial cleaning process to remove hydrogen sulphide, volatile organic compounds, and sometimes water. This is followed by an upgrading process to separate methane from carbon dioxide.

In the following sections, there is a concise overview of the cleaning procedures. Following a detailed examination of biogas upgrading technology, with a primary focus on existing industrial-scale systems and closing with promising advancements.

2. Materials and Methods

3. Results

This section may be divided by subheadings. It should provide a concise and precise description of the experimental results, their interpretation, as well as the experimental conclusions that can be drawn.

3.1. Subsection

3.1.1. Subsubsection

Bulleted lists look like this:

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* Second bullet;
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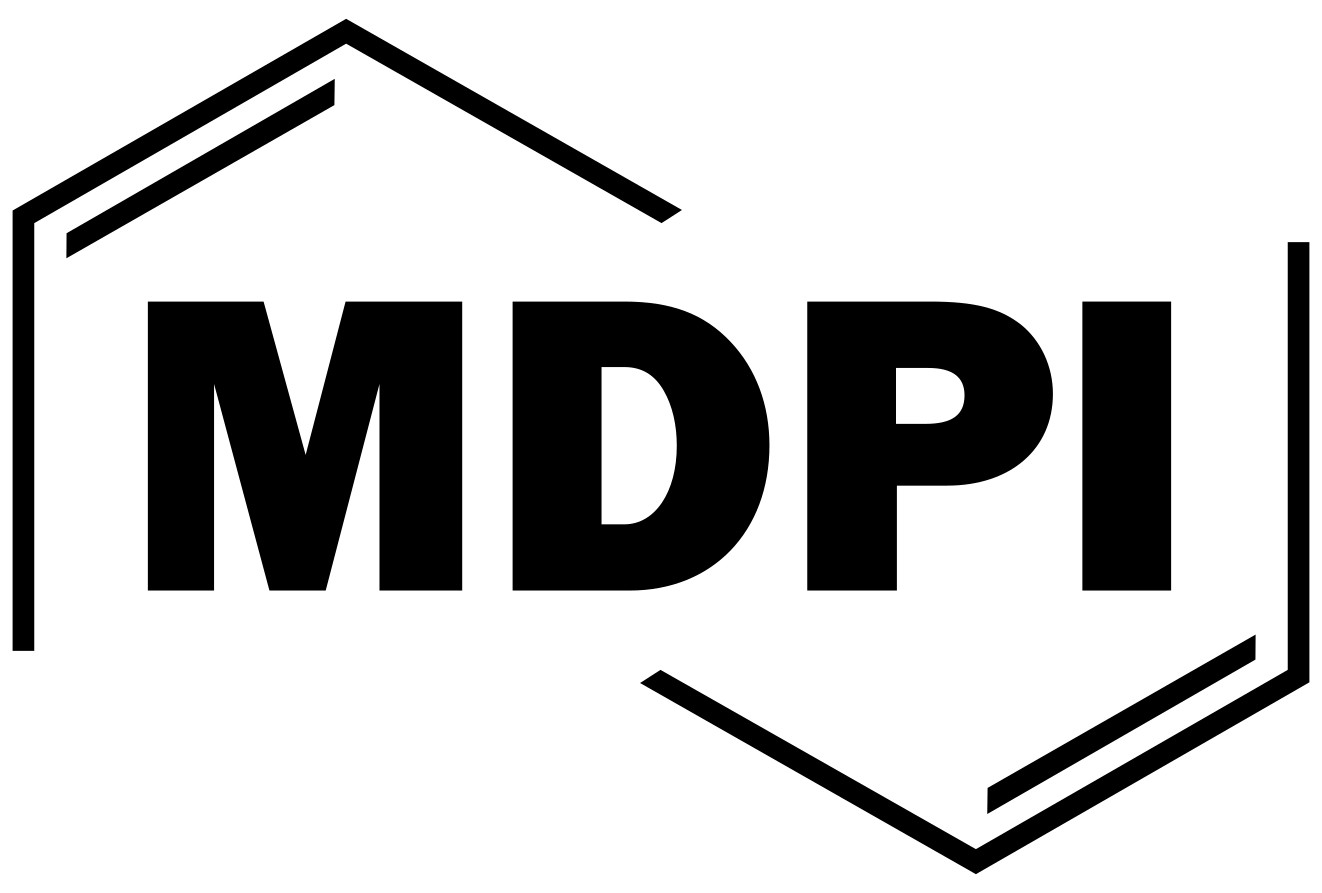
Numbered lists can be added as follows:

1. First item;
2. Second item;
3. Third item.

The text continues here.

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All figures and tables should be cited in the main text as Figure 1, Table 1, etc.

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**Figure 1.** This is a figure. Schemes follow the same formatting.

**Table 1.** This is a table. Tables should be placed in the main text near to the first time they are cited.

|  |  |  |
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| **Title 1** | **Title 2** | **Title 3** |
| entry 1 | data | data |
| entry 2 | data | data 1 |

1 Tables may have a footer.

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| (**a**) | (**b**) |

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\* Tables may have a footer.

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This is example 1 of an equation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a = 1, | (1) |

the text following an equation need not be a new paragraph. Please punctuate equations as regular text.

This is example 2 of an equation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a = b + c + d + e + f + g + h + i + j + k + l + m + n + o + p + q + r + s + t + u + v + w + x + y + z | (2) |

the text following an equation need not be a new paragraph. Please punctuate equations as regular text.

Theorem-type environments (including propositions, lemmas, corollaries etc.) can be formatted as follows:

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The text continues here. Proofs must be formatted as follows:

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Authors should discuss the results and how they can be interpreted from the perspective of previous studies and of the working hypotheses. The findings and their implications should be discussed in the broadest context possible. Future research directions may also be highlighted.

5. Conclusions

This section is not mandatory but can be added to the manuscript if the discussion is unusually long or complex.

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**Appendix A**

The appendix is an optional section that can contain details and data supplemental to the main text—for example, explanations of experimental details that would disrupt the flow of the main text but nonetheless remain crucial to understanding and reproducing the research shown; figures of replicates for experiments of which representative data is shown in the main text can be added here if brief, or as Supplementary data. Mathematical proofs of results not central to the paper can be added as an appendix.

**Appendix B**

All appendix sections must be cited in the main text. In the appendices, Figures, Tables, etc. should be labeled starting with “A”—e.g., Figure A1, Figure A2, etc.

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