



**COUNCIL OF EUROPE LANDSCAPE CONVENTION**  
**LANDSCAPE AWARD OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

*8th Session – 2022-2023*

**APPLICATION FORM**

## **Presentation**

*The Council of Europe Landscape Convention is the first international treaty to be exclusively concerned with all aspects of landscape: natural, rural, urban and peri-urban. It represents an important contribution to the implementation of the Council of Europe's objectives. By taking into account the value of landscapes, with their natural and human components, the Council of Europe acknowledges that the landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas.*

*Article 11 of the Convention establishes the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe. The Resolution [CM/Res\(2008\)3](#) on the rules governing the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008 at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, draws attention to the fact that Article 11 of the Convention institutes the Award and that it is in keeping with the work carried out by the Council of Europe concerning human rights, democracy and sustainable development.*

*Opened to the Parties to the Convention, the Award is intended to raise civil society's awareness of the value of landscapes, of their role and of changes to them. Its objective is to reward exemplary practical initiatives aimed at successful landscape quality objectives on the territories of the Parties to the Convention. The Award is conferred every two years and the files presenting applications must reach the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe.*

*At its meeting held in Strasbourg on 28-29 April 2008, the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP) decided that applications should be submitted to the Council of Europe Secretariat through the Permanent Representations of the Parties to the Convention.*

***Each State Party to the Convention is thus invited to send by post to the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe (Council of Europe Landscape Convention), before 31 January 2023, via its Permanent Representation to the Council of Europe, a completed application form in paper format, together with a digital copy on a USB key of the form and additional material.***

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*Please note that:*

- participation to the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe is only open to local and regional authorities and their groupings and non-governmental organisations, as stated in the Resolution CM/Res (2008)3, Appendix, Article 2;*
- the application form must be completed in all its parts, in one of the two official languages of the Council of Europe (English or French);*
- the materials submitted must be copyright-free, for use by the Council of Europe in communications aimed at promoting the Award or any other publications or activities relating to the Convention. The Council of Europe undertakes to cite the authors' names;*
- files that are incomplete or fail to comply with the rules will not be taken into consideration.*

*For further information please visit the Landscape Award section of the Council of Europe website:*

[Convention du Conseil de l'Europe sur le paysage / Site web officiel \(coe.int\)](#)  
[Council of Europe Landscape Convention / Official website \(coe.int\)](#)

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## I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

<b>1. State</b>	Finland
<b>Represented by</b>	Mr Tapio Heikkilä
<i>Address:</i>	Ministry of the Environment Department of the Nature Environment P.O. Box 35 FI-00023 Government FINLAND
<i>Telephone:</i>	+358 295 250 166
<i>E-mail:</i>	tapio.heikkila@gov.fi
<b>2. Applicant</b>	Rural Women's Advisory Organisation of ProAgria Southern Finland
<i>Name of the local, regional authority(ies) or NGO(s)</i>	
<b>Represented by</b>	Ms Laura Puolamäki
<i>Address:</i>	ProAgria Etelä-Suomi ry / MKN maisemapalvelut Vanajantie 10 B 13110 Hämeenlinna FINLAND
<i>Telephone:</i>	+358 40 544 4899
<i>E-mail:</i>	laura.puolamaki@proagria.fi

## II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJET

### 3. Name of the Project

Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands

### 4. Location of the Project

Pirkanmaa region

### 5. Summary of the Project (10-12 lines)

The Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project brought a new dimension to landscape management, as the special needs of species were taken into account in an exceptionally diverse manner as a central part of landscape management. The project examined multi-level natural values of traditional rural biotopes on the selected farms, while developing management methods for them through cooperation between officials, advisers, researchers, and landowners. Through the project, more than 4,000 species were identified. The information was used to implement favourable management at each site. The project's service design work package developed the environmental communications of the farms and services offered to consumers. The project increased farmers' competence and motivation for management of traditional rural biotopes as well as researchers' understanding of issues affecting the management and development of cultural landscapes. The project increased public awareness of landscapes through various communications and museum cooperation.

### 6. Photo representing the Project (high definition – JPEG 350 dpi) and name of the author of the photo please



Photo: Laura Puolamäki

### 7. Website of the Project (if exists)

<https://www.maajakotitalousnaiset.fi/hankkeet/lumolaidunverkosto>

### III. CONTENT OF THE PROJECT

8. **Start of the Project** month  year   
*The project must have been completed at least three years previously*

9. **Partners**
- The 8 network farms of the project, Entomological Society of Tampere, Natural Resources Institute Finland, the nature surveying company Tmi Luonto-Lasse, and electricity grid company Elenia Oy. Sarka Finnish Museum of Agriculture participated as a communications partner.

10. **Financing bodies**
- Center for Economic development, Transport and the Environment, Pirkanmaa

#### 11. **Central aims of the Project**

From the nature perspective, traditional rural biotopes are the most important part of the cultural landscape. They are unique landscapes whose emergence was facilitated by traditional agriculture, and preserving them requires effective management. In Finland's 2018 national assessment of threatened habitat types, all traditional rural biotopes were assessed as endangered, and most of them as critically endangered. The surface area of most traditional rural biotopes has decreased by more than 90% over the past 50 years. The end of management means for traditional rural biotopes a significant change in the habitat type and landscape, a loss of species, and often also a gradual loss of the habitat type through overgrowth. Managing such biotopes involves the landscape itself, the vulnerable habitat types, and the area's species.

Due to centuries of management, traditional rural biotopes have developed a unique and rich range of species that require the habitat provided by the biotopes. Conserving traditional rural biotopes and their species is essential in efforts to prevent biodiversity loss, but landscape management does not always succeed in taking into account the small needs of different species. The aim of the project was to get a better understanding of local biodiversity interconnections in traditional rural biotopes in relation to both natural species and pasture animals.

The main objectives of the Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project were:

- 1) Set up a network of farms that want to develop their semi-natural grasslands and preserve biodiversity. The aim was to establish a network of farms that serve as a peer group, as producers of grazing services that support biodiversity, and as a developer of biodiversity-supporting grazing and public services related to this.

- 2) Find out about the multilevel nature values of traditional rural biotopes on the selected farms and thus accumulate research-based information for landowners and other people working with traditional rural biotopes.
- 3) Develop site-specific management methods for traditional rural biotopes and plan site management through broad-based cooperation between various actors, including authorities, advisory services, researchers and landowners.
- 4) Plan the landscape management of sites to be favourable to the species found there and to maintain the landscape and biotic communities.
- 5) Support the continuity of the management of these unique landscapes by motivating and engaging the farmers involved in the project to continue and expand natural grazing.
- 6) Develop farm-specific services and environmental communications related to semi-natural grasslands so that the conservation work and care of local natural species can be presented to the public. This objective was aimed at supporting the economic viability of the farms and continuation of natural grazing.
- 7) Encourage other livestock owners to utilise and manage semi-natural grasslands by making farmers and other professionals aware of the benefits of natural grazing in terms of agriculture, landscape and biodiversity. Disseminate among farms that manage pastures the information and lessons learned in the project in order to promote good grazing practices.
- 8) Increase researchers' expertise and understanding of the agricultural environment and of the factors affecting the management of traditional rural biotopes and development of cultural landscapes.
- 9) Provide citizens with information on the value, significance and management of cultural landscapes in order to encourage consumption choices that support biodiversity, landscape management and sustainability.
- 10) Utilise diverse communications and the project's farm network in order to raise public awareness of the importance of the agricultural environment for maintaining biodiversity.
- 11) Implement museum cooperation by organising an exhibition in the premises of Sarka, the Finnish Museum of Agriculture.
- 12) Enrich the landscape through the use of grazing animals.

## 12. Outcome

The central aims of the project have been achieved brilliantly. The project brought a new dimension to landscape management, as the special needs of local species were taken into account in an exceptionally diverse manner as a central part of landscape management. The project examined multi-level natural values of traditional rural biotopes on the selected farms, while developing management methods for them through cooperation between officials, advisers, researchers, and landowners. The project increased the understanding and expertise of the network's farms, the general public and researchers on the topics of biodiversity and its diverse interconnections.

The sites of the Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project are traditional rural biotopes mainly on private farms. The farms registered to participate out of interest in the topic. The project involved eight farms, four of which are sheep farms, while the rest raise beef cattle. Also participating was one nature reserve located outside of the farms.

The sites include different types of semi-natural grassland, meadows, pastures and woodland pastures. Some of the pastures have been under management for a very long time, while others have been recently restored, with management only restarting a few years ago. All sites included in the project were inventoried in 2017–2019 in the traditional rural biotope inventories by the Center for Economic development, Transport and the Environment, Pirkanmaa. Some of the sites involved in the project are areas of national and regional value.

Key results (corresponding to the numbered items in the Central aims of the Project section):

- 1) The project brought together a network of eight farms through which the project was then implemented. With the help of this farm network, the results of the project and the significance of traditional rural biotopes as part of the cultural landscape can also be presented in concrete terms to both consumers and to other farmers.
- 2) The multilevel nature values of traditional rural biotopes in the participating farms were examined through a range of surveys. Insects, birds, fungi, and plant species were examined in the traditional rural biotope areas of the participating farms. As part of the surveys, assessment was also made of soil biodiversity. A more detailed study of soil biodiversity was performed at some of the locations. The surveyed area totalled more than 100 hectares, and the observed and identified species included over 1500 insect species, 131 bird species, 872 fungus species and 1124 vascular plant species. These species included several dozen endangered species and other species from the Red List of Finnish Species. The results were used both to develop the management of the sites and to obtain research data on the impact of semi-natural grasslands on biodiversity. The farms participating in the project received valuable information on their own biodiversity.
- 3) The project was implemented through cooperation between authorities, landowners, farmers and researchers. It increased dialogue and understanding between the different actors. The cooperation between these parties enabled the development of site-specific management methods for traditional rural biotopes. In the development of the management methods for traditional rural biotopes, efforts were made to take into account various factors that influence and limit the management process, such as species, animal needs, the impact of agricultural subsidies, and the profitability of the farm. Traditional rural biotopes are part of a comprehensive cultural environment, but their management is guided by the terms of the agricultural support system. This

sometimes causes conflicts in decisions on landscape management. These challenges were raised constructively in discussions between the project actors. In addition, as a result of the networking that took place within the project, new forms of cooperation have continued in many respects even after the project's completion.

- 4) Using the results of the surveys carried out, landscape management was designed to be favourable to the species present at each site. Management of traditional rural biotopes in a manner that favours the species found there does not always require the farm to make either investments or large changes to grazing practices. When learning about the habitat needed by different species, it was often enough to be able to ensure the presence of an important tree or to set the grazing pressure at the right level. The results can also be applied to planning ways to manage other similar habitats. The research methods and results of the project have been presented in various places, including blogs and websites which are available to everyone. The experiences and lessons learned from the project have also been shared during theme days aimed at professionals.
- 5) The results of the project and the discussions that were held motivated farmers to continue and to increase grazing on semi-natural grassland. The project increased farmers' skills and knowledge in matters of biodiversity as well as their motivation to conserve traditional rural biotopes and landscapes. Farmers' expertise increased through meetings with those conducting the surveys and participation in study trips. Thanks to the surveys and coffee table discussions, the farms have better capabilities for perceiving the landscape processes on their own farm and the diverse interconnections. Increasing this type of expertise produces results, as farmers have the opportunity to implement landscape-level solutions. They are not only landscape actors, but also landowners in large, continuous areas.
- 6) The project's service design work package helped farms to develop their environmental communications and to productise service types that can be used for engaging with the general public. The excursions, flyers, and information boards designed in the project help the farms promote their conservation work and care of local natural species to the public. The flyers can be included in the farms' online shop orders, so consumers who do not visit the farm can also receive information. In this way, biodiversity work carried out on private land also becomes visible to consumers and decision-makers.
- 7) The project's farms have helped to raise other farmers' awareness of the benefits of natural grazing from both the agricultural and biodiversity perspective. With the help of these participating farms, new farmers have been able to familiarise themselves with and become interested in the management of traditional rural biotopes and landscapes through the positive experiences of others.
- 8) Plenty of direct interaction between farmers and researchers took place through the project's survey work. This interaction also increased researchers' expertise and understanding of agricultural nature and the guiding mechanisms that have a large impact on the management of traditional rural biotopes and development of the cultural landscape.
- 9) The general communications for the project and the information boards, flyers and public excursions developed within the project's service design work package have provided citizens with information on the value, significance and management of cultural landscapes. The objective for the information offered to the public has been to incentivise consumer choices that benefit biodiversity, cultural landscapes, and



sustainable development. By buying products from farms that use semi-natural grassland for grazing, consumers can support the preservation of landscapes and biodiversity.

- 10) The project published several newspaper articles and blog posts. In addition, a website was set up for the project's network farms. Through these channels, the value and significance of agriculture and semi-natural grasslands for maintaining both landscapes and biodiversity were highlighted both at the general and the farm-specific level.
- 11) The project and its network farms produced, in cooperation with Sarka Finnish Museum of Agriculture, an exhibition entitled "Lumoavat laitumet (enchanted pastures)", which was on display in the museum's premises in Loimaa from 18 February 2022 to 9 January 2023. The exhibition presented the significance of biodiversity in agricultural environments and introduced visitors to landscape workers and the history of grazing. Presenting the results at the museum exhibition provided an opportunity to explore the cultural landscape also to those who could not visit the farms. The professionally produced museum exhibition also spoke to its viewers in a way that the farmers and experts involved in the project would not have had the expertise to bring about.
- 12) Grazing animals revitalise the landscape and are an enriching element in the landscape. Learning about grazing animals also increases positive attitudes towards agriculture and the countryside.

## IV. RESPECT OF THE CRITERIA OF THE ATTRIBUTION OF THE AWARD

### 13. Sustainable territorial development

*Is the project part of a sustainable development policy?*

*Does it contribute to the enhancement of environmental, social, economic, cultural or aesthetic values of the landscape? How?*

*Has it successfully countered or posed a remedy to any pre-existing environmental damage or urban blight? How?*

The measures of the Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project are in line with sustainable development policy and implemented in harmony with the regional organisation.

The project's monitoring group included representatives from the Center for Economic development, Transport and the Environment Pirkanmaa and Metsähallitus. Participating in the work of the monitoring group and in study trips aimed at professionals furthered the expertise of these actors, who have important roles in cultural landscape matters.

Traditional rural biotopes are part of a comprehensive cultural environment, but their management is guided by the terms of the agricultural support system. This sometimes causes conflicts in decisions on landscape management. These challenges were raised constructively in discussions between the project actors.

The project has contributed to the enhancement of environmental, social, economic, cultural and aesthetic values of the landscape in the following ways:

#### **Environmental sustainability:**

The nature types in Finland that are typical to the cultural landscape, also known as traditional rural biotopes, have all been assessed as endangered. If a habitat type is lost, a large amount of Finnish species will also disappear, leading to a severe loss of biodiversity. The project brought a new dimension to landscape management, as the special needs of local species were taken into account in an exceptionally diverse manner as a central part of landscape management. The project also supported the continuation of traditional rural biotope management.

Traditional rural biotopes are typically open and low in nutrients, and the grazing of these areas enables their unique species to thrive. In terms of their habitat, the species have varying needs. This means that they benefit from a diverse and mosaic-like landscape. Correctly implemented grazing promotes the biodiversity of all species in traditional rural biotopes. Host plants, edible plants, manure piles, soil churned up by hooves and patches that have been grazed bare all have their place.

The project examined multi-level natural values of traditional rural biotopes on the selected farms, while developing management methods for them through cooperation between officials, advisers, researchers, and landowners. Extensive species surveys were a central part of the project. Insects, birds, fungi, and plant species were examined in the traditional rural biotope areas of the participating farms. Surveys of soil biodiversity was also carried out. The surveyed area totalled more than 100 hectares, and the observed and identified species

included over 1500 insect species, 131 bird species, 872 fungus species and 1124 vascular plant species. These species included several dozen endangered species and other species from the Red List of Finnish Species. Based on the soil biodiversity assessments, it can also be said that the biodiversity of pastures extends all the way down into the soil.

The results of the project were used to implement site management that was favourable to the species present. The results can also be applied to planning ways to manage other similar habitats.

Managing traditional rural biotopes in a manner that favours the species found there does not always require the farm to make either investments or large changes to grazing practices. When learning about the habitat needed by different species, it is often enough to be able, for example, to ensure the presence of an important tree or to set the grazing pressure at the right level.

Project's surveys discovered *Chlaenius nigricornis* beetles, which are classified as a vulnerable species, on the lakeside pastures of three farms, where they used standing water found in hoof prints as a habitat for one of their stages of development. This result can help farmers to implement management of lakeside pastures that allows this species to survive.

The surveys also found the beetle *Agrilus mendax* in a sheep pasture, where the grazing animals had rubbed themselves against the trunks of rowan trees, breaking their surface in a way that is beneficial for this beetle species. This discovery meant that the farms knew they should preserve the rowan trees in their grazing areas.

Results of the project indicate that lakeside grazing is of value both for cultural landscapes and biodiversity. Lakeside grazing is also a cost-effective way to clean water systems, and the management of traditional rural biotopes thus also supports the protection of the lakes and the Baltic Sea. The vegetation along the shoreline collects large amounts of nutrients from the water and sediment. When the livestock eats the plants along the shoreline and within the water, the nutrients are transported back to dry land.

Natural grazing adds economically beneficial ecosystem services to a farm. The soil biodiversity assessments carried out in the project indicate that semi-natural grasslands generally have biodiverse soil, and that the ecosystem services that they provide also extend to adjacent arable land.

Using the public excursions, flyers and information boards designed in the project's service design work package, the nature management work and natural species of the farms can be presented to the public, thus increasing public awareness of the topic.

### **Cultural sustainability:**

Traditional rural biotopes, which include grass fields, meadows, pastures and forest pastures, are habitats shaped by traditional livestock farming which are usually rich in species. They have been used both for grazing livestock and for producing winter fodder. Traditional management of traditional rural biotopes has mainly involved mowing, grazing and post-harvest grazing. As agriculture has become more efficient, many old methods have been abandoned, and the surface area of most traditional rural biotopes has decreased by more than 90% over the past 50 years. As traditional rural biotopes decline, we risk the loss of a significant part of Finnish cultural history and identity as well as many beautiful rural

landscapes.

All sites included in the project were inventoried in 2017–2019 in the traditional rural biotope inventories by the Center for Economic development, Transport and the Environment, Pirkanmaa. Included are areas of both national and regional value. The results of the project and the discussions that were held motivated the farmers in the project sites to persevere and to increase grazing on semi-natural grassland.

Thanks to the management of traditional landscapes, the current generations will be able to familiarise themselves with how traditional agriculture has influenced the Finnish landscape and what the landscape has looked like. Understanding local cultural history helps towards better understanding the roots that affect the present. The management of the project sites is part of the maintenance of a diverse historical and cultural heritage.

In addition to the management of traditional landscapes and the maintenance of diverse species, grazing revitalises the rural landscape and increases positive attitudes towards agriculture and rural areas.

**Economic sustainability:**

In order for us to have the grazing animals essential for landscape management, there must be a sufficient number of cattle farms. The management of traditional rural biotopes is funded especially by agricultural subsidies, but farms do not get by solely on the subsidies received for the management of traditional rural biotopes – they need also profitable cattle farming.

The profitability of the farm and of natural grazing depends on whether consumers buy the farm's products, such as wool, meat and milk. The Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project included a service design work package to help farms to develop their environmental communications and develop services for public. The excursions, flyers, and information boards designed in the project help the farms to present to the public their conservation work and the natural species on their farms. The flyers can be included in the farms' online shop orders, so consumers who do not visit the farm can also receive information. Following the completion of the project, the farms are also free to utilise in their operations the two public excursion concepts developed in the project and the other materials produced. The service design work package supported the profitability of the farms as a whole and their continuation of natural grazing.

The development of environmental communications that was part of the service design work also aimed to raise consumer awareness and thus support consumers in making choices that promote biodiversity, cultural landscapes and sustainable development. By buying products from farms that use semi-natural grassland for grazing, consumers can support the preservation of landscapes and biodiversity.

Managing traditional rural biotopes in a manner that favours the species found there does not always require the farm to make investments or large changes to grazing practices. Knowledge of the habitat required by the species is often sufficient, and even small measures can help to take into account the habitat needs of different species. The information, for its part, can make it possible to save a tree that is especially valuable for a species, and to set the grazing pressure at the right level.

Agri-environmental payments for nature and landscape management are of particular economic importance to agricultural entrepreneurs that manage traditional rural biotopes, and they also have positive knock-on effects on the rest of the regional economy.

**Social sustainability:**

A key objective of the project has been to implement landscape management and landscape planning through broad-based cooperation between various actors, including authorities, landowners, farmers and researchers.

In addition to the species surveys, a key part of the project has been support the economic conditions and wellbeing of farmers that keep grazing animals, as this is a condition for the continuation of grazing and the farming of these animals.

The project highlighted the crucial importance of grazing for preserving the biodiversity of Finnish nature, which was important and empowering for the farmers. The project also provoked public discussion of the importance of agriculture for biodiversity. The results of the project and the discussions that were held motivated farmers to continue and to increase grazing on semi-natural grassland.

The project also included two study trips, one in Finland and one abroad. Through the study trips, farmers received practical examples from outside of their own farms of landscape management and natural grazing both in protected areas and on agricultural land in Finland and Estonia. These study trips also provided opportunities for networking more extensively and even internationally.

In the farmer-focused theme days, the farmers involved in the project told other farmers about their experiences and lessons learned in the management of traditional rural biotopes.

**Aesthetic sustainability:**

The Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project has motivated farmers to continue natural grazing and thus supported aesthetic sustainability by promoting the continued management of the unique landscapes of traditional rural biotopes.

The project and its network farms produced, in cooperation with Sarka Finnish Museum of Agriculture, an exhibition entitled “Lumoavat laitumet (enchanted pastures)”, which was on display in the museum’s premises in Loimaa from 18 February 2022 to 9 January 2023. The exhibition presented the significance of biodiversity in agricultural environments and introduced visitors to landscape workers and the history of grazing. Presenting the results at the museum exhibition provided an opportunity to explore the cultural landscape also to those who could not visit the farms.

The project has also repaired and prevented damage to the landscape and the environment and enriched the landscape. Structural changes in agriculture have caused a dramatic decrease in natural grazing, and many traditional rural biotopes became overgrown because of a lack of management. The project has supported the continuation of natural grazing and the addition of new natural grazing sites. Grazing animals are an enriching element in the landscape.

#### 14. Exemplary value

*Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?  
Which are the good practices that it implemented?*

The practical Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project can be considered of exemplary value. The project brought a new dimension to landscape management, as the special needs of local species were taken into account in an exceptionally diverse and broad manner as a central part of landscape management planning work. In many cases, the surveys and management planning of traditional rural biotopes focuses only on tubular plants, but the Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project also surveyed insects, birds and fungi and gave consideration to their needs. In addition, soil biodiversity was also assessed.

Extensive surveys of species were carried out at each site, and the results were used to design management measures that were beneficial for these species. The species surveys carried out on the project farms and the management recommendations based on them are applicable to other similar habitats. The lessons learned from the project bring benefits both to the project farms as well as to broader planning work for the management of semi-natural grasslands and traditional rural biotopes.

A central message of the project has been that managing traditional rural biotopes and landscapes in a manner that favours the species found there does not always require investments or large changes to grazing practices. It is often enough to get information on the habitat required by a species. Minor changes may nevertheless have a major impact on species welfare and thus on the prevention of biodiversity loss.

The direct contacts established in the project between researchers and farmers, as well as the sharing of varied expertise, bring a general increase in understanding and competence. Thanks to the project's surveys and coffee table discussions, the farms have better capabilities for perceiving the landscape processes on their own farm and the diverse interconnections. Increasing this kind of expertise brings results: farmers have the opportunity to implement landscape solutions because they are not only landscape operators but also landowners in large, continuous areas.

It was noted in the project that the management of traditional rural biotopes and landscapes is most sustainably secured if it is part of the profitable and/or everyday activities of farms. The place where the preservation of traditional rural biotopes is most likely is on the land of well-functioning cattle farms. Grazing that takes place as part of a farm's operations does not require special arrangements for the transport of animals and their daily welfare. Animals can also be easily moved to a new pasture after the previous one has been exhausted, as they can get there on their own feet. Continuity of grazing is important, as many species disappear quickly if grazing ends.

Maintaining biodiversity in the agricultural environment requires a continuous reconciliation of different needs. In addition to the needs of natural species, consideration must also be given to the needs of grazing cattle and economic profitability. The Network of Semi-Natural Grasslands Project aimed to take a broad approach to the factors influencing traditional rural biotopes and their interconnections, and efforts were made to find sustainable solutions.

The project sought to improve the profitability of landscape management by creating for farms new forms of services which are related to nature management and species, and by developing the farms' environmental communications. The project's service design work package involved development of public excursion concepts, information boards for contract

grazing sites and flyers that could be included in deliveries of online orders.

The project's service design work package and the project's communications as a whole increased public awareness of the landscape impacts of nature management and grazing. Increasing awareness also enables the public to make consumer choices that help to preserve biodiversity and cultural landscapes. By buying products from farms that use semi-natural grassland for grazing, consumers can support the preservation of landscapes and biodiversity.

Together with the Sarka Finnish Museum of Agriculture, the project and its network farms produced an exhibition called 'Lumoavat laitumet (Enchanting pastures)'. The exhibition was on display at the agricultural museum's premises in Loimaa from 18 February 2022 to 9 January 2023. The professionally produced museum exhibition also spoke to its viewers in a way that the farmers and experts involved in the project would not have had the expertise to bring about. Through the collaboration, the farmers were also able to participate in museum work. The exhibition presented the significance of biodiversity in agricultural environments and introduced visitors to landscape workers and the history of grazing. Presenting the results at the museum exhibition provided an opportunity to explore the cultural landscape also to those who could not visit the farms. The exhibition broadly increased public awareness of the landscape impacts of nature management and grazing.

Through the theme days held on the network farms, the species and landscape management expertise accumulated in the project were shared more broadly with other farmers and professionals.

The study trips organised by the project provided farmers with an opportunity to network more extensively and even internationally.

The project's monitoring group included representatives from the Center for Economic development, Transport and the Environment Pirkanmaa and Metsähallitus. Participating in the work of the monitoring group and in study trips furthered the expertise of these actors, who have important roles in cultural landscape matters. Although traditional rural biotopes are part of a comprehensive cultural environment, their management is guided by the terms of the agricultural support system. This means that the vegetation density, landscape structure and grazing pressure – as defined in the conditions of this support system – determine the development of the cultural landscape. The sensitivity required for good management of the landscape structure, biodiversity and local species cannot always be taken into account because of the threat of losing subsidies. These challenges were raised constructively in discussions between the project actors.

## 15. Public participation

*Does the project actively encourage the public's participation in the decision-making process? How?*

*Is the project in line with the wider policies implemented by national, regional or local authorities?*

Farmers have the opportunity to implement landscape solutions because they are not only landscape actors but also landowners in large, continuous areas. The solutions implemented by farmers have a central impact on what happens to the landscape. The participation of farmers in landscape management as part of day-to-day farm activities was central to the project. Through their participation in the project, the farms now have better capabilities for perceiving the landscape processes on their own farm and the diverse interconnections. The project also motivated farmers to continue and to expand their natural grazing. In addition, their experiences and lessons learned from the project were shared with other farmers and professionals, thus further encouraging the management of the cultural environment through grazing.

By buying products from farms that use semi-natural grassland for grazing, consumers can support the preservation of landscapes and biodiversity. Awareness of the landscape impacts of nature management and grazing enables the public to make consumer choices that promote biodiversity and cultural landscapes. The project included a service design work package that developed the farms' environmental communications and services for the public. The service design work package developed two public excursion concepts for traditional rural biotopes. One concept was also tested, and the pilot excursion sold out. The service design work package also included development of flyers that could be included in deliveries from the farms' online stores. This way, the nature management work and the species and their importance can be presented also to people that do not themselves pay a visit to the farm. For the same reason, the project developed an information board to be displayed on the fencing of contract grazing sites. These sites are often located in places where many people come to view the grazing animals.

Together with the Sarka Finnish Museum of Agriculture, the project and its network farms produced an exhibition called 'Lumoavat laitumet (Enchanting pastures)'. This enabled the farmers to participate in museum work. The exhibition was on display at the agricultural museum's premises in Loimaa from 18 February 2022 to 9 January 2023. The exhibition presented the significance of biodiversity in agricultural environments and introduced visitors to landscape workers and to the changes that have taken place in the landscape since the end of traditional agriculture. The museum exhibition increased public awareness of the landscape impacts of nature management and grazing, which in turn will hopefully encourage responsible consumption choices.

As part of the soil biodiversity studies carried out in the project, 'tea bag tests' were carried out in order to assess the microbial activity in the soil. The tea bag test is part of an international citizen science project which has now also arrived in Pirkanmaa.

The project has been implemented in line with the landscape policies of national, regional and local authorities, including the Council of Europe Landscape Convention, the Finnish Land Use and Building Act and Finnish environmental legislation. The project is also in line with the Pirkanmaa's Regional Biodiversity Programme. This programme has been drawn up for the period 2022–2030, and its objectives include managing and restoring endangered habitats types and the habitats of endangered species, actively finding and experimenting



with new ways of maintaining biodiversity, and supporting the initiative and volunteering of all interested parties.

**16. Awareness-raising**

*Is the project effectively increasing public awareness of the importance of landscape in terms of human development, consolidation of identity, or individual and collective well-being? How?*

The project increased both landowners' and other citizens' awareness of the value and role of traditional rural biotopes as part of the cultural landscape. The project also increased awareness of the changes that have taken place in the cultural landscape since the end of traditional agriculture as well as the possible changes to the landscape if the grazing of traditional rural biotopes comes to an end.

The value and significance of semi-natural grasslands for maintaining biodiversity were highlighted in the project's communications both at the general and the farm-specific level. The project published several newspaper articles and blog posts. For climate-related reasons, cattle farming is often seen only as a threat from the environmental point of view. The project's communications strongly highlighted the fact that cattle farming brings opportunities for the landscape and biodiversity, and that it is the only option for preserving traditional rural biotopes.

Together with the Sarka Finnish Museum of Agriculture, the project and its network farms produced an exhibition called 'Lumoavat laitumet (Enchanting pastures)', which was on display in the museum's premises in Loimaa from 18 February 2022 to 9 January 2023. The exhibition presented the significance of biodiversity in agricultural environments and introduced visitors to the history of grazing and to the changes that have taken place in the landscape since the end of traditional agriculture. The 'Enchanting pastures' exhibition also looked towards the future: The exhibition introduced visitors to the future outlooks of, among others, former Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Emma Kari, the poet Heli Laaksonen, and young people from Loimaa on topics such as agriculture, the cultural landscape, natural grazing and biodiversity.

Presenting the results at the museum exhibition provided an opportunity to explore the cultural landscape also to those who could not visit the network farms. The professionally produced museum exhibition also spoke to its viewers in a way that the farmers and experts involved in the project would not have had the expertise to bring about. Awareness of the landscape impacts of nature management and grazing enables the public to make consumer choices that promote biodiversity and cultural landscapes.

The project and the network farms participated in the Future Heritage workshop together with the Sarka Museum. This workshop was part of the Dynamo project of the University of Turku Research Centre for the Future, and was funded by Sitra.

In the project's service design work package, information boards, flyers and public excursions were developed to enable the public to learn about the natural species of the farms and about nature and landscape conservation work. These flyers can be included in the farms' online shop orders, so even consumers who do not visit the farms can learn about traditional rural biotopes.

The project's service design work package developed two public excursion concepts for traditional rural biotopes. One concept was also tested, and the pilot excursion sold out. During the excursion, a landscape expert guided participants through their experience of the landscape.

Handicraft enthusiasts were served in particular by communication cooperation with the international Laine Magazine, a knitting lifestyle publication. Magazine staff visited one network farm and wrote an article on the positive landscape impacts of Finnish wool. The article was published in both Finnish and English in autumn 2022.

The knowledge of the farmers involved in the project increased through meetings with those conducting the surveys and through participation in study trips. Plenty of direct interaction between farmers and researchers took place in connection with the project's survey work. This interaction also increased researchers' expertise and understanding of agricultural nature and the guiding mechanisms that have a large impact on the management of traditional rural biotopes and development of the cultural landscape.

In the farmer-focused theme days, the farmers involved in the project shared with other farmers their experiences and lessons learned in the management of traditional rural biotopes. The theme days also presented the inventory methods used in the project and the new information obtained. In this way, the results of the project and the accumulated expertise in landscape management was communicated more broadly to farmers and other professional groups. Other farmers and experts have been able to familiarise themselves with the management of traditional rural biotopes also in a concrete way through visits to the farms involved in the project.

The project also produced for professional use three 'quick advice cards' on good grazing practices for semi-natural grasslands:

- the 'Biodiversity benefits of grazing' card presents the benefits for soil, insects and fungi as well as vegetation.
- the 'Many grazing practices' card presents the key practices and principles for grazing.
- the 'Animal welfare' card advises on how to take animal welfare into account on semi-natural grasslands.

For the general public, separate 'Results from the semi-natural grasslands project' cards were produced. The content of the cards intended for the public is based on the survey reports and has been provided by a nonfiction writer.

A website was set up for the network farms. Through this, anyone can familiarise themselves with the farms and the survey results.

## V. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

**Together with the printed version of the Application form, additional material in digital format should be included in one USB key, and returned by post to:**

*Secretariat General of the Council of Europe*

*Council of Europe Landscape Convention*

*8th Session of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe*

*F-67075 STRASBOURG, Cedex*

- Text (20 pages max.): *PDF format*
- Photos (10 max.): *JPEG 350 dpi high definition*
- Posters (2 max.): *PDF format high definition or JPEG 350 dpi high definition*
- Video (15 min max.): *mpeg 2 format - It is recommended to present a video (even of amateur quality).*

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