



Ministero della cultura

DIPARTIMENTO PER LA TUTELA DEL PATRIMONIO CULTURALE – DIT
Direzione generale Archeologia belle arti e paesaggio

Italian application for the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe – 9th edition

The Ministry of Culture (hereinafter Ministry), following the invitation to participate in the 9th edition of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe, has identified the Italian project candidate to represent the experiences and good practices implemented for the conservation and management of the landscape in the Italian scenario, in line with the principles of the European Landscape Convention.

As in the past, this year the Ministry adopted a public call procedure for the selection of the Italian candidature for the COE Award, which allowed the identification of high quality projects and at the same time represented an opportunity to raise awareness among the wider public about the cultural and social values of the landscape. In addition, since 2016 the Ministry has reinforced the importance of the selection of the Italian candidature for the COE Prize, attributing to the selected project the National Landscape Prize, which will be awarded on the occasion of the celebration of National Landscape Day (14 March).

Also thanks to the strong commitment of the Ministry, which in a framework of maximum openness and transparency, disseminated the announcement of the competition through a widespread information campaign, participation in the Italian selection had a positive response and 78 applications were admitted to the evaluation.

The Jury appointed by the General Director ABAP of the Ministry is composed of well-known personalities and experts involved in landscape issues in different ways: geographers, architects, university professors, professionals engaged in interventions that have been nominated in previous editions.

After an in-depth examination of all the proposals, the Jury selected, from a list of 30 particularly significant projects, the one presented **by the Magnificent Community of the Fiemme Valley, in Trentino** entitled **"1,000 Years of Forests at the Service of the Community: Heritage, Sustainability, and Shared Value"** as a candidate to represent Italy at the 9th edition of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe.

The Jury recognised the extraordinary importance of the activities of the Magnificent Community of Fiemme which, through its centuries-old tradition of sustainable management of the natural and forest resources of a difficult landscape such as that of the small municipalities of the Alps, has been able to create a surprising model of care and development of the forest and pasture heritage of a vast historical system of settlements and, consequently, of the environment, the territory and the landscape. The collective behaviour of the inhabitants of the Community has shared for centuries a system of rules and good practices that has allowed them to face, in the same spirit, the challenges of the present, climate change and mountain degradation.

The Community's action is oriented towards an integrated vision of protection, enhancement and use of the territory, with particular attention to the conservation of cultural, landscape and natural assets. The main objectives include:

- the redevelopment and enhancement of the archaeological, architectural and historical-artistic, material and immaterial heritage, through forest management that recognizes cultural and natural heritage as an essential part of the community and its sustainable economies;



DIPARTIMENTO PER LA TUTELA DEL PATRIMONIO CULTURALE – DIT
Direzione generale Archeologia belle arti e paesaggio

Via di San Michele, 22 00153 Roma

PEC: dg-abap@pec.cultura.gov.it - PEO: dg-abap@cultura.gov.it

- the enhancement of traditional rural landscapes through reforestation and recovery of degraded forest areas, with the aim of preserving the ecological and historical characteristics of the territory, and redevelopment of urban and peri-urban areas and degraded suburbs;
- prevent hydrogeological and seismic risk and the effects of climate change, through management practices that reduce the risk of landslides, limit soil erosion and preserve the quality of drinking water;
- environmental sustainability has also been pursued through the use of eco-sustainable technologies, responsible management of forest resources and monitoring of impacts on the forest-wood supply chain.
- a sustainable, ethical and inclusive tourism offer, enhancing safe and accessible tourist and nature trails.

Among the most relevant results obtained from the Community's commitment we can summarize: the attention to entrepreneurial innovation in respect of the environment; the awareness of the historical memory and the progressive evolution of the identity of the mountain landscape; the ability to reinvent itself and open to the outside, even facing activities that can have negative repercussions such as the vertiginous increase in mass tourism; the resilience in responding concretely to natural disasters such as the Vaia storm; and the willingness to accompany other communities and operators in virtuous and sustainable driving practices in the long term.

In fact, the Magnificent Community of Fiemme (MCF) is, in the Alps, one of the oldest, largest and most important **"neighborhoods"**, as these types of jointly owned management bodies are called. The Neighbours have been residents for at least 25 years in these valleys, today almost 17,500 individuals, distributed in 10 municipalities, and belonging to three different linguistic groups (Italian, German and Ladin). In the almost 1000 years of history of the Community, the Neighbours have concretely witnessed the holistic capacity for collective management of a large and valuable forest heritage, for the maintenance of the territory and for virtuous entrepreneurial activities related to the conscious use of resources.

In order to continue a centuries-old tradition that recognizes in-depth knowledge of the landscape as the main device through which the community identifies and structures its life practices, the forest is assumed as a primary resource and territorial matrix. Around it, and thanks to it, the different areas that make up the mountain landscape are systematically integrated, including the economic, social, settlement and housing dimensions, as well as the additional material and immaterial components that support its organization and reproduction over time.

The tourist offer, in line with the World Code of Tourism Ethics, and attentive to the issues of accessibility and inclusion, based not only on the richness of the woods and forests, mountain landscapes and views of the Alpine highlands, but also on the rich local cultural heritage, which has an important focus in the great Renaissance Palace of Cavalese where the MCF is based, is characterized by minimum environmental and territorial impact, and participates in the transmission of the strong link between the sense of identity of the community and its territory, starting from the security of the dense network of paths, paths and stages of huts and pastures, perfectly maintained and made accessible for many stretches by the uninterrupted work of the Neighbours.

With this application, we not only want to enhance the centuries-old and exemplary history of land management implemented by the Community, which has maintained, cared for, refined and made a precious landscape known to the world, but also the ability to react to adverse events, from the catastrophic VAIA Storm, which devastated the north-eastern Alps in 2018, to the subsequent outbreak of the bark beetle, the parasitic beetle of the spruce, which destroyed over 3,000 of the 13,000 hectares of productive forests of the Magnificent Community.

The certification of forests, the experimentation of innovative techniques for the fight against bark beetle, the commitment to research and good practices to accompany the reproduction of the forest through special nurseries, a good management of the ecosystem services of the mountain, are all strategic tools started from the



DIPARTIMENTO PER LA TUTELA DEL PATRIMONIO CULTURALE – DIT

Direzione generale Archeologia belle arti e paesaggio

Via di San Michele, 22 00153 Roma

PEC: dg-abap@pec.cultura.gov.it - PEO: dg-abap@cultura.gov.it

first season after the disaster of 2018. Today the Magnificent Community of Fiemme is one of the protagonists of the future of the Italian mountain and the economy of the forest, strong in the ability of its Neighbours to work together, to interact with research centres, with young people eager for a profession in nature, and with other communities that today begin to rediscover the importance and value of the forest in the mountain landscape.

A further element of particular consideration for the Jury refers to the evaluation of the effectiveness of this model of collective management of natural resources, which manages to have simultaneous repercussions in many sectors of local social, cultural and economic life.

In addition to the main action, on the forestry and rural heritage of the Community, the MCF has historically promoted the construction of roads and railways to connect its territory to the Adige river, has participated in the financing of the local Hospital, has promoted strategic actions to offer attractiveness to the most sustainable and respectful tourism, both by enhancing the historical cultural heritage, starting from the Palazzo di Cavalese, and by making the network of trails of the entire territory accessible to all types of hikers.

In the last 20 years, moreover, the greatest efforts have been devoted to aspects of more strictly strategic importance, in relation to the general conditions of the context. To this end, the MCF has committed to:

- insert a specific project dedicated to ecosystem services for the local community that also involves the wider territorial scope, in order to identify the necessary alternatives to simple timber production, weakened by the known catastrophic events;
- qualifying the entire wood supply chain, from seed to finished product, in a territory, like the Italian one, devoid of tradition in the sector, certifying cultivation, production and production methods with FSC(R) and PEFC and the other most advanced services in the sector.

In the face of all this and in particular of the capacity for multiple and integrated action put in place by the MSC, the Jury has recognized in the living structural component of the socio-cultural and economic organization of the MCF, particularly valuable because traditionally self-managed and culturally and financially autonomous, the profound meaning of the Landscape, in the most complex and articulated sense attributed to it by the European Convention.

The project was selected for the importance of identifying good practices and policies focused on the sustainable development of forest assets and for the effectiveness of the actions carried out and strategies adopted by the MCF, which have allowed the achievement of the objectives set, in full consistency with the criteria specified in the MIC call and established by the COE Landscape Award, including:

- for **sustainable development** aspects, the very history of the MCF shows how the fundamental principles of sustainability have been recognised for centuries as essential components of the MCF Statute itself. MCF's intervention programs have always been aimed at the constant enhancement of the territory's resources without losing their value and consistency. It is an orientation confirmed by good traditional practices but also at the forefront in the face of the challenges that have arisen over time: from making wood a valuable resource, also economically (and therefore taking care of the systematic renewal of the forest), a very important strategy in the last century, to the care of ecosystem services: to the reforestation of over 200 hectares, to the reduction of soil erosion and hydrogeological protection even beyond the forest, the restoration of over 158 km of trails; up to forest reconstruction as a strategy in response to climate change and the catastrophic events of Vaia and the bark beetle;
- due to their **exemplary value**, the MCF's action programs, thanks to their integrated approach that combines environmental protection, cultural enhancement and social and economic development, are already taken for example in the Italian mountain territories, where the value of the Forest resource has



DIPARTIMENTO PER LA TUTELA DEL PATRIMONIO CULTURALE – DIT

Direzione generale Archeologia belle arti e paesaggio

Via di San Michele, 22 00153 Roma

PEC: dg-abap@pec.cultura.gov.it - PEO: dg-abap@cultura.gov.it

been neglected for many decades. The methodology adopted by the MCF demonstrates how a coordinated management of natural and cultural resources can generate lasting and measurable benefits, being applicable to local mountain communities, which in many cases are able to manage large portions of public and private forests, redeeming them from abandonment and neglect. Many local authorities, committed to supporting the survival of mountain settlements, redeeming them from the processes of abandonment, find in the MCF model an appropriate approach to intervene also in their situations, in which to enhance traditions and cultural heritage spread as a driver of sustainable territorial development through initiatives of correct use of resources, even when weakened by the systemic exodus of inhabitants of inland areas;

- **public participation**, like sustainable development, is also part of the very DNA of the MCF, an entity that administers the common goods and their use through consolidated rights and managed by an Assembly of inhabitants (the Neighbours) and local bodies corresponding to the various municipalities (the Rules). Starting from this criterion, observed since the Middle Ages, today MCF plays a mediating role between citizens, institutions and the territory, ensuring that each decision takes into account both social and economic needs and environmental priorities and identifying all forms of employment that can improve the sustainable use of resources already in progress.

In this way, MCF is not only a participating entity but also proposes itself as a local company, which employs numerous young people, actively participating in the Entity's programs.

To strengthen awareness and participation, the MCF has adopted direct and effective communication tools, including informative periodicals distributed to all families, which illustrate ongoing interventions, good practices, protection initiatives and opportunities for sustainable use of forests, consolidating the sense of belonging and shared responsibility towards the territory;

- **for awareness-raising** aspects, it is interesting to note how the widespread information service designed to ensure conscious participation in the technical and operational aspects of the strategies adopted by the Entity is also evolving into a generalised awareness-raising tool, which concretely involves inhabitants and tourists in territorial qualification events. A concrete case is offered by the strategy of interventions to deal with Vaia and the bark beetle: for example, participatory reforestation or nursery training interventions have involved citizens, schools and companies. The Community came into direct contact with the territory, understanding the value of ecosystems and the shared responsibility in protecting them. There are periodic outings on the territory, informative meetings and conferences, which offer information on sustainable forestry practices, biodiversity and the enhancement of natural and historical heritage. In this way, the project promotes not only a shared identity rooted in European values of heritage protection, sustainability and participation but also the right to live in a healthy, cared for and culturally rich environment, integrating social, cultural, ecological and educational aspects into everyday life that favour a more aware, inclusive and resilient community.

For the reasons explained above and for the quality of the implemented actions – further detailed in the application form and in the attached documentation – the candidate project has been identified as the most deserving to represent Italy for the 9th edition of the COE Landscape Award.



DIPARTIMENTO PER LA TUTELA DEL PATRIMONIO CULTURALE – DIT

Direzione generale Archeologia belle arti e paesaggio

Via di San Michele, 22 00153 Roma

PEC: dg-abap@pec.cultura.gov.it - PEO: dg-abap@cultura.gov.it