

26th COUNCIL OF EUROPE MEETING  
OF THE WORKSHOPS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
**THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION**

26<sup>E</sup> RÉUNION DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE  
DES ATELIERS POUR LA MISE EN ŒUVRE DE  
**LA CONVENTION EUROPÉENNE DU PAYSAGE**



*Council of Europe Landscape Award  
Forum of National Selections  
7th Session 2020-2021*

*Forum des sélections nationales  
du Prix du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe  
7<sup>e</sup> Session 2020-2021*

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**Publication**

26th Council of Europe Meeting  
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of the European Landscape Convention

26<sup>e</sup> Réunion du Conseil de l'Europe  
des Ateliers pour la mise en œuvre  
de la Convention européenne du paysage

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# Présentation

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La Convention du Conseil de l'Europe sur le paysage prévoit l'attribution d'un Prix du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe. Le Prix s'inscrit dans la lignée du travail accompli par le Conseil de l'Europe en faveur des droits de l'homme, de la démocratie et du développement durable, et met en valeur la dimension territoriale des droits de l'homme et de la démocratie, en reconnaissant l'importance des mesures prises pour améliorer les caractéristiques paysagères du cadre de vie des populations.

Le Prix a été lancé en 2008 et six sessions du Prix ont précédemment été organisées.

Conformément à la Résolution CM/Res(2008)3 sur le règlement relatif au Prix du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe, et dans le cadre de l'organisation de la 7<sup>e</sup> Session du Prix du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe (2020-2021), les Parties à la Convention ont été invitées à présenter par la voie de leurs Représentants permanents des candidatures au Secrétariat Général du Conseil de l'Europe. Le Secrétariat a reçu douze candidatures en provenance des Parties suivantes : Bulgarie, Finlande, Italie, Lettonie, Norvège, Pologne, Portugal, Roumanie, République slovaque, Slovénie, Suisse, Turquie<sup>1</sup>.

Le Jury international, constitué en tant qu'organe subordonné du Comité directeur de la culture, du patrimoine et du paysage (CDCPP), conformément à l'article 10 de la Convention européenne du paysage, s'est ainsi réuni au Palais de l'Europe, Conseil de l'Europe, les 11-12 mars 2021 (Réunion en ligne) afin d'examiner les candidatures et de proposer le lauréat, des mentions spéciales et reconnaissances.

Le Jury était composé des membres suivants :

- ▶ Représentante du Comité directeur de la culture, du patrimoine et du paysage (CDCPP) :  
M<sup>me</sup> Isabelle Leroy, Haut fonctionnaire, Direction du patrimoine culturel, Urban, Service public régional de Bruxelles, Belgique ;
- ▶ Représentante du Congrès des pouvoirs locaux et régionaux du Conseil de l'Europe :  
M<sup>me</sup> Barbara Toce, Vice-Présidente du Congrès des pouvoirs locaux et régionaux du Conseil de l'Europe, Conseillère municipale de Pedaso, Italie ;
- ▶ Représentant de la Conférence des OING du Conseil de l'Europe :  
M. Thierry Mathieu, Président de la Commission démocratie, cohésion sociale et enjeux mondiaux de la Conférence des OING du Conseil de l'Europe, Président de l'Association internationale pour la recherche en hygiène hospitalière (AIRHH), Monaco ;
- ▶ Trois éminents spécialistes en matière de paysage :  
M<sup>me</sup> Teresa Andresen, Architecte paysagiste et ingénieur agronome, Docteur en sciences environnementales appliquées de l'Université d'Aveiro, ancienne Présidente de la Fondation européenne pour l'architecture paysagère (EFLA), Portugal ;  
M. Jean Cabanel, ancien Responsable de l'équipe de la Mission et du Bureau du paysage des ministères chargés de l'Environnement et de l'Équipement de la France ;  
M. Peter Howard, Vice-président du Groupe de recherche sur le paysage (LRG), Professeur invité de paysages culturels à l'Université de Bournemouth, Royaume-Uni.

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1. <http://www.coe.int/fr/web/landscape/sessions-of-the-landscape-award>.

Le Comité directeur de la culture, du patrimoine culturel et du paysage (CDCPP) a décidé de soumettre les propositions du Jury au Comité des Ministres<sup>2</sup>.

Le 23 novembre 2021, le Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe a, conformément à la Résolution du Comité des Ministres CM/Res(2008)3 sur le règlement relatif au Prix du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe, et sur proposition du Jury et du Comité directeur du Conseil de l'Europe responsable de la mise en œuvre de la Convention européenne du paysage:

i. salué la grande qualité des douze réalisations présentées par les États parties à la Convention européenne du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe (STE n° 176) pour la 7<sup>e</sup> Session du Prix (2020-2021), considérant qu'elles font partie de l'Alliance du Prix du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe conformément à la Résolution CM/Res(2017)18;

ii. attribué le Prix du paysage de la Convention européenne du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe, pour la 7<sup>e</sup> Session du Prix du paysage (2020-2021), à la réalisation suivante:

**La biodiversité dans la ville : Bergame et la vallée d'Astino,**

*Fondation della Misericordia Maggiore de Bergame, Italie*

S'inscrivant dans une longue tradition de solidarité portée par la Fondation della Misericordia Maggiore de Bergamo, le projet a réussi à mettre en valeur un paysage historique pour créer un paysage tourné vers l'avenir. Alliant tradition et nouveauté, celui-ci a promu un développement territorial durable considéré tout à la fois dans ses dimensions environnementale, culturelle, sociale et économique. Le paysage de la vallée d'Astino et son complexe monastique ont été conservés aux portes de la ville. Poursuivant le travail initié par les moines, les auteurs du projet ont développé des méthodes de gestion agricoles et forestières contemporaines qui favorisent la biodiversité. Le patrimoine culturel a été restauré, des liens sociaux tissés, et des emplois créés avec une forte implication de la population locale. Des modes de circulation douce ont été mis en place. Les activités de sensibilisation et l'éducation favorisent une réelle conscience paysagère. L'étroite coopération entre les différents acteurs fondée sur une charte éthique, confèrent à ce projet une valeur éminemment exemplaire.

Reconnu pour sa grande valeur, le Projet fait partie de l'Alliance du Prix du paysage établi par le Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe, en tant que source d'inspiration.

iii. décerné une mention spéciale identique du Prix du paysage de la Convention européenne du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe, pour la 7<sup>e</sup> Session du Prix (2020-2021), aux réalisations suivantes:

2. 10<sup>e</sup> Réunion (Strasbourg, 18 juin 2021), document CDCPP (2021)11 rév.

**Le Sel de la vie,**

*Fondation bulgare pour la biodiversité, Bulgarie*

L'opération a permis de préserver le paysage de la lagune côtière du lac Atanasovsko, témoin de la symbiose entre l'homme et la nature. Elle a renforcé l'attachement du public aux valeurs écologiques, sociales et culturelles de ce paysage exceptionnel qui a un attrait esthétique indéniable. Le système hydraulique a été soigneusement restauré. Ce site attractif est devenu le lieu privilégié de manifestations culturelles et artistiques, comme la fête du sel. Née de l'implication du monde scientifique, des organisations associatives locales, des habitants de la région et des décideurs politiques, la réalisation a révélé un paysage qui améliore la qualité de vie pour les populations d'hommes et d'oiseaux, tout en soutenant l'économie locale.

Reconnu pour sa grande valeur, le Projet fait partie de l'Alliance du Prix du paysage établi par le Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe, en tant que source d'inspiration.

**La gestion des prairies côtières de la baie de Botnie,**

*Centre pour le développement économique, les transports et l'environnement, Ostrobotnie du Nord, Finlande*

La forte coopération entre les autorités chargées de la conservation de la nature, les propriétaires fonciers, les agriculteurs et les organisations locales a permis de restaurer un paysage de 4 000 hectares de prairies côtières dont les pratiques d'entretien remontent au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Les agriculteurs ont pu bénéficier de mesures agro-environnementales visant à revitaliser le paysage rural de la baie de Botnie. Des initiatives de sensibilisation ont permis de familiariser les nouvelles générations avec l'agriculture traditionnelle. Le projet représente un exemple remarquable de solidarité entre les acteurs locaux, afin de préserver l'histoire d'un paysage unique.

Reconnu pour sa grande valeur, le Projet fait partie de l'Alliance du Prix du paysage établi par le Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe, en tant que source d'inspiration.

**Le Pays des abeilles,**

*Association civique kRAJ, République slovaque*

Le projet contribue à la préservation durable d'un paysage en s'attaquant au grave problème environnemental du déclin des pollinisateurs. Il vise à assurer la pollinisation par les abeilles et d'autres pollinisateurs naturels. Le projet encourage la réalisation d'un paysage conçu pour les abeilles, le développement d'une méthode d'apiculture durable et fournit une formation professionnelle. Les activités de sensibilisation, d'éducation et de formation renforcent le lien avec le paysage et sont une véritable source d'inspiration, pour la population locale. Le projet contribue à la création d'un espace socio-économique pour la création d'emplois basés sur le miel et les produits apicoles locaux. Il favorise ainsi



la cohésion sociale dans une région auparavant négligée.

Reconnu pour sa grande valeur, le Projet fait partie de l'Alliance du Prix du paysage établi par le Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe, en tant que source d'inspiration.

#### **Le développement de la destination touristique de Brda,**

*Commune de Brda, Institut pour le tourisme, la culture, la jeunesse et le sport Brda, Slovénie*

La restauration et l'entretien du paysage agricole en terrasses de Brda, combinés à la conservation des variétés locales et à la promotion des produits traditionnels, démontrent l'importance de préserver l'identité d'un paysage empreint d'histoire. La restauration du patrimoine culturel et le développement de l'agrotourisme ont contribué positivement à soutenir l'activité économique de la commune dans une perspective de développement durable. L'approche participative dans le processus de décision a contribué à la réussite du projet. La population, ainsi que les visiteurs, peuvent désormais apprécier le paysage et ses produits de qualité.

Reconnu pour sa grande valeur, le Projet fait partie de l'Alliance du Prix du paysage établi par le Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe, en tant que source d'inspiration.

#### **Le Parc Dokuma, un parc de la culture, de la nature et de l'art pour la société,**

*Municipalité d'Antalya Kepez, Turquie*

En décidant de créer un parc destiné à lier nature et culture sur le site d'un complexe de filature désaffecté, la municipalité de Kepez a mis à la disposition des habitants un vaste espace culturel et de loisirs qui peut être apprécié de tous. Les différentes composantes du parc – un jardin botanique, des musées, une bibliothèque, des espaces sociaux – ont été restaurés et aménagés, préservant ainsi la mémoire du lieu. Le projet a été réalisé dans le respect des valeurs civiques et éthiques, et une approche participative a été suivie dès le début du processus. Une plateforme de gouvernance interactive permet aux citoyens de s'impliquer activement dans l'avenir de ce paysage vivant. La décision du maire de préférer un parc à un centre commercial a été pleinement justifiée.

Reconnu pour sa grande valeur, le Projet fait partie de l'Alliance du Prix du paysage établi par le Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe, en tant que source d'inspiration.

iv. reconnu la grande valeur de chacune des réalisations présentées à la 7<sup>e</sup> Session (2020-2021) du Prix du paysage de la Convention européenne du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe, ci-après mentionnées, et l'importance de les faire connaître comme sources d'inspiration :

#### **Fonds letton pour la nature, Lettonie**

Ce projet reflète un engagement fort des acteurs impliqués pour sensibiliser, à grande échelle, à

l'importance du paysage letton pour les populations et les visiteurs. Il a permis de sensibiliser les acteurs à l'importance du paysage et aux impacts que les actions d'aujourd'hui peuvent avoir sur le paysage de demain. Une large campagne de communication a proposé des moyens de préserver la biodiversité et de gérer le paysage. Le grand public, les professionnels et les pouvoirs publics ont été invités à réfléchir aux transformations du paysage, afin d'en prendre soin. Une vaste exposition virtuelle a suscité un grand intérêt.

Reconnu pour sa grande valeur, le Projet fait partie de l'Alliance du Prix du paysage établi par le Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe, en tant que source d'inspiration.

#### **Un paysage vivant : la Région de la côte des fjords- et Géoparc,**

*Municipalités de Solund, Fjaler, Askvoll et d'Hyllestad, Norvège*

Ce projet s'inscrit dans un processus plus large de préservation d'un paysage façonné par l'homme depuis plus de 5 000 ans. En rétablissant l'élevage traditionnel du Vieux mouton norvégien, la Hardbakke Old Norwegian Sheep Society, une coopérative gérée par les habitants de la région de la Côte des Fjords, a permis de redécouvrir la richesse de cette race ancienne. Des emplois basés sur des modes de production traditionnels et respectueux de l'environnement ont été créés et le travail effectué a permis de valoriser des pratiques ancestrales que les générations actuelles redécouvrent. Basé sur une approche ascendante, le projet est le résultat d'un engagement fort de la population locale. En préservant la richesse d'un paysage unique, il a créé une dynamique qui est basée sur une alliance durable entre l'homme et la nature.

Reconnu pour sa grande valeur, le Projet fait partie de l'Alliance du Prix du paysage établi par le Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe, en tant que source d'inspiration.

#### **La protection des précieux habitats non forestiers et des caractéristiques paysagères de la région du Parc paysager de l'Orle Gniazda,**

*Complexe de Parcs paysagers de la voïvodie de Silésie, Pologne*

Grâce à la mise en place d'opérations exemplaires d'aménagement et de gestion du paysage, le projet a contribué à protéger un paysage unique du Haut-Jura, constitué d'une mosaïque de collines et de rochers pittoresques. Il a permis de préserver des habitats précieux et des espèces endémiques qui étaient menacés par l'intensification de l'agriculture, par diverses formes de pollution et des espèces invasives. Les actions menées pour sensibiliser les acteurs locaux à l'histoire du territoire, aux valeurs de ses ressources naturelles et culturelles, ainsi qu'aux pratiques traditionnelles d'agriculture et d'élevage, ont pleinement placé la question du développement durable du territoire au centre de leurs préoccupations.

Reconnu pour sa grande valeur, le Projet fait partie de l'Alliance du Prix du paysage établi par le Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe, en tant que source d'inspiration.

**Herdade da Contenda, un conte de résilience pour la nature,**

*Municipalité de Moura, Alentejo, Portugal*

La politique paysagère mise en œuvre dans le domaine de Contenda a inversé la tendance qui conduisait à son déclin. L'état de conservation de ce paysage de *montado* a été amélioré grâce à une gestion et à un aménagement appropriés, avec une démarche participative remarquable. La diffusion de connaissances scientifiques sur ses valeurs intrinsèques a permis aux acteurs locaux d'en devenir les meilleurs protecteurs. En restaurant les paysages dégradés, le projet garantit une utilisation durable des forêts, contribuant à la réduction du changement climatique, et préserve les espèces endémiques. Il favorise également les pratiques éducatives et pédagogiques dans le domaine de l'écologie. Sa dimension économique en termes d'agriculture durable, d'élevage, d'apiculture et de chasse est certaine. Le domaine de Contenda est également un lieu de détente et de loisirs particulièrement apprécié.

Reconnu pour sa grande valeur, le Projet fait partie de l'Alliance du Prix du paysage établi par le Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe, en tant que source d'inspiration.

**Le Parc des jardins,**

*Ville de Timișoara, Comté de Timiș, Roumanie*

Ce projet créatif a amélioré la qualité de vie des populations. L'aménagement paysager a facilité la circulation dans les allées du parc et a favorisé le bien-être individuel et collectif en offrant un parc de détente et de loisirs. Le projet a pris pleinement en compte les valeurs environnementales, sociales, culturelles et économiques du paysage urbain dans une perspective de développement durable. Il s'agit de l'un des plus grands espaces verts récemment aménagés dans la ville, favorisant l'intérêt pour la variété des jardins, la diversité des espèces, et en particulier celle des variétés de roses.

Reconnu pour sa grande valeur, le Projet fait partie de l'Alliance du Prix du paysage établi par le Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe, en tant que source d'inspiration.

**Val Bregaglia, une culture du paysage pour répondre aux enjeux du futur,**

*Commune de Bregaglia, Suisse*

La culture du paysage est bien ancrée dans les préoccupations de cette commune des Alpes suisses. Afin de répondre aux besoins socio-économiques de la population et de réparer les dégâts causés par les catastrophes naturelles, la commune a intégré la dimension paysagère dans ses politiques d'aménagement du territoire et d'urbanisme. L'objectif est de préserver l'environnement et la culture du bâti de la vallée. Basée sur une démarche participative des acteurs, l'action entreprise montre que

l'approche paysagère permet de faire face aux défis contemporains, au premier rang desquels figure le changement climatique.

Reconnu pour sa grande valeur, le Projet fait partie de l'Alliance du Prix du paysage établi par le Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe, en tant que source d'inspiration.]

L'ensemble des réalisations seront présentées dans le cadre de trois Ateliers à l'occasion de la 26<sup>e</sup> Réunion du Conseil de l'Europe pour la mise en œuvre de la Convention européenne du paysage sur le Prix du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe « Forum des sélections nationales du Prix du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe – Session 2020-2021 », devant avoir lieu à Bergame en 2022 :

- ▶ Atelier 1 – Des paysages protégés – Des actions de conservation et de maintien des aspects significatifs ou caractéristiques d'un paysage ;
- ▶ Atelier 2 – Des paysages gérés – Des actions visant, dans une perspective de développement durable, à entretenir le paysage afin de guider et d'harmoniser les transformations ;
- ▶ Atelier 3 – Des paysages aménagés – Des actions présentant un caractère prospectif visant la mise en valeur, la restauration ou la création de paysages.

Telles des étoiles, ces douze nouvelles réalisations viennent compléter les 88 précédentes réalisations, dans le cadre de l'Alliance du Prix du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe, pour porter leur nombre à cent<sup>3</sup>.

*M<sup>me</sup> Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons*

*Secrétaire exécutif*

*de la Convention européenne du paysage,*

*Chef de la Division du paysage,*

*de l'environnement et des risques majeurs,*

*Conseil de l'Europe*

3. – <https://www.coe.int/fr/web/landscape/landscape-award-alliance>  
– [Exposition sur l'Alliance du Prix du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe 2008-2019](#)  
– [Posters de l'Alliance du Prix du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe 2008-2021](#)  
– [Publication « L'Alliance du Prix du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe », volume 1, 2008-2017](#)  
– [Publication « L'Alliance du Prix du paysage du Conseil de l'Europe », volume 2, 2018-2019](#)

# Presentation

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**T**he European Landscape Convention provides for a Council of Europe Landscape Award. The Award is in keeping with the work done by the Council of Europe in favour of human rights, democracy and sustainable development and that it promotes the territorial dimension of human rights and democracy by acknowledging the importance of measures taken to improve the landscape features of people's living conditions.

The Award was launched in 2008 and six sessions of the Award have previously been organised.

According to the Resolution CM/Res(2008)3 on the rules governing the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe, and in the framework of the organisation of the 7th Session of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe (2020-2021), the Parties to the Convention were invited to present through their Permanent Representatives of the Parties to the Convention the applications to the General Secretariat of the Council of Europe. The Secretary received twelve application files from the following Parties: Bulgaria, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey.<sup>4</sup>

The International Jury, set up as a subordinate body of the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP), in accordance with Article 10 of the European Landscape Convention, thus met at the Palais de l'Europe on 11-12 March 2021 (Online Meeting), in order to examine the applications and propose the Award, possible special mentions and acknowledgements.

The jury was composed of the following members

- ▶ Representative of the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP)  
Mrs Isabelle Leroy, Senior Officer, Directorate of Cultural Heritage, Urban, Brussels Regional Public Service, Brussels, Belgium;
- ▶ Representative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe  
Mrs Barbara Toce, Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Town Councillor of Pedaso, Italy;
- ▶ Representative of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe  
Mr Thierry Mathieu, President of the Committee on Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, Secretary General of the International Association for Hospital Hygiene Research (IAHR), Monaco;
- ▶ Three eminent specialists in the field of landscape  
Mrs Teresa Andresen, Landscape Architect and Agricultural Engineer, Doctor of Applied Environmental Sciences from the University of Aveiro, former President of the European Foundation for Landscape Architecture (EFLA), Portugal;  
Mr Jean Cabanel, Former Head of the Mission and of the Landscape Office of the French Ministries of the Environment and Public Works, France;  
Mr Peter Howard, Vice-Chair of the Landscape Research Group (LRG), Visiting Professor of Cultural Landscapes at Bournemouth University, United Kingdom.

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4. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape/sessions-of-the-landscape-award>.

The Steering Committee for Culture, Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) decided to submit the proposals of the Jury to the Committee of Ministers.<sup>5</sup>

On 23 November 2021, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, in accordance with the Resolution of the Committee of Ministers CM/Res(2008)3 on the rules governing the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe, and on the proposals of the Jury and of the Committee of experts responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention:

i. acknowledged the great quality of the twelve achievements presented by the States Parties to the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 176) for the 7th Session of the Landscape Award (2020-2021), considering that they are part of the Landscape Award Alliance of the Council of Europe, in accordance with Resolution CM/Res(2017)18;

ii. conferred the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention, for the 7th Session of the Landscape Award (2020-2021), on the following achievement:

**Biodiversity in the city: Bergamo and the Astino Valley,**

*Foundation della Misericordia Maggiore of Bergamo, Italy*

In keeping with a long tradition of solidarity carried on by the Foundation della Misericordia Maggiore of Bergamo, the project has succeeded in enhancing a historic landscape to create a landscape turned towards the future. Combining tradition and novelty, it has promoted a sustainable territorial development considered in its environmental, cultural, social and economic dimensions. The landscape of the Astino Valley and its monastic complex have been preserved at the city's doorstep. Continuing the work initiated by the monks, the authors of the project have developed contemporary agricultural and forestry management methods that promote biodiversity. The cultural heritage has been restored, social ties have been forged, and jobs have been created with the strong involvement of the local population. Soft traffic modes have been implemented. Awareness-raising activities and education promote a real landscape awareness. The close co-operation between the different actors based on an ethical charter, confer to this project an eminently exemplary value.

Recognised for its great value, the Project is part of the Landscape Award Alliance of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as a source of inspiration.

iii. conferred identical Special Mentions of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention, for the

5. 10th meeting (Strasbourg, 18 June 2021), document CDCPP (2021)11 rev.

7th Session of the Landscape Award (2020-2021), on the following achievements:

**The Salt of Life,**

*Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation, Bulgaria*

The operation achieved the preservation of the landscape of the coastal lagoon of Atanasovsko Lake, a witness of the symbiosis between man and nature. It has strengthened the public's attachment to the ecological, social and cultural values of this exceptional landscape that has undeniable aesthetic appeal. The hydraulic system has been carefully restored. This attractive site has become the preferred venue for cultural and artistic events, such as the salt festival. Born from the involvement of the scientific world, local associative organisations, inhabitants of the region and political decision-makers, the achievement has revealed a landscape that improves the quality of life for the populations of both people and birds, while supporting the local economy.

Recognised for its great value, the Project is part of the Landscape Award Alliance of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as a source of inspiration.

**Bothnian Bay Coastal Meadows Management,**

*Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, North Ostrobothnia, Finland*

The strong co-operation between nature conservation authorities, landowners, farmers and local organisations has resulted in the restoration of a landscape of 4.000 hectares of coastal meadows with maintenance practices dating back to the 15th century. Farmers have been able to benefit from agri-environmental measures to revitalise the rural landscape of the Bay of Bothnia. Awareness-raising initiatives have helped to familiarise new generations with traditional agriculture. The project represents a noteworthy example of solidarity between local actors, in order to preserve the history of a unique landscape.

Recognised for its great value, the Project is part of the Landscape Award Alliance of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as a source of inspiration.

**The Land of Bees,**

*KRAJ Civic Association, Slovak Republic*

The project contributes to the sustainable preservation of a landscape by addressing the serious environmental problem of pollinator decline. It aims to ensure pollination by bees and other natural pollinators. The project promotes the making of a landscape designed for bees, developing a sustainable beekeeping method and provides professional training. Awareness-raising, education and training activities strengthen the link with the landscape and are a real source of inspiration, for local population. The project contributes to the creation of a socio-economic space for job creation based on local honey and bee products. It thus promotes social cohesion in a previously neglected area.

Recognised for its great value, the Project is part of the Landscape Award Alliance of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as a source of inspiration.

**Brda tourist destination development,**  
*Municipality of Brda, Institute for Tourism, Culture,  
Youth and Sport Brda, Slovenia*

The restoration and maintenance of Brda's terraced agricultural landscape combined with the conservation of local varieties and the promotion of traditional products, demonstrates the importance of preserving the identity of a landscape full of history. The restoration of the cultural heritage and the development of agri-tourism have positively contributed to supporting the economic activity of the commune in a sustainable development perspective. The participatory approach in the decision-making process has contributed to the success of the project. The population, as well as visitors, can now appreciate the landscape and its quality products.

Recognised for its great value, the Project is part of the Landscape Award Alliance of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as a source of inspiration.

**Dokuma Park, a culture, nature and art park for society,**  
*Antalya Kepez Municipality, Turkey*

By deciding to create a park dedicated to linking nature and culture on the site of a disused spinning mill complex, the municipality of Kepez has put at the disposal of the inhabitants a vast cultural and leisure space that can be appreciated by all. The different components of the park – a botanical garden, museums, a library, social spaces – have been restored and converted, thus preserving the memory of the place. The project was carried out with respect for civic and ethical values, and a participatory approach was followed from the beginning of the process. An interactive governance platform allows citizens to become actively involved in the future of this living landscape. The mayoral decision to prefer a park to a shopping centre has been fully vindicated.

Recognised for its great value, the Project is part of the Landscape Award Alliance of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as a source of inspiration.

iv. acknowledged the great value of each project presented for the 7th Session of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention (2020-2021) mentioned below, and the importance to make them well-known as sources of inspiration:

**Landscapes are speaking,**  
*Latvian Fund for Nature, Latvia*

This project reflects a strong commitment of the involved actors to raise awareness, on a large scale, of the importance of the Latvian landscape for people and visitors. It made it possible to raise

stakeholders' awareness of the importance of the landscape and the impacts that today's actions can have on tomorrow's landscape. A broad communication campaign proposed ways to preserve biodiversity and manage the landscape. The general public, professionals and public authorities were invited to consider the transformations of the landscape, in order to take care of it. A large virtual exhibition has aroused great interest.

Recognised for its great value, the Project is part of the Landscape Award Alliance of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as a source of inspiration.

**Living Landscape: the Fjord Coast Regional and Geopark,**  
*Municipalities of Solund, Fjaler, Askvoll and Hyllestad,  
Norway*

The project is part of a wider process of preserving a landscape that has been shaped by man for over 5,000 years. By re-establishing the traditional breeding of the Old Norwegian Sheep, the Hardbakke Old Norwegian Sheep Society, a cooperative run by the inhabitants of the Fjord Coast region, has made it possible to rediscover the richness of this ancient breed. Jobs based on traditional, environmentally friendly forms of production have been created and the work carried out has enhanced ancestral practices that current generations are rediscovering. Based on a bottom-up approach, the project is the result of a strong commitment from the local population. By preserving the richness of a unique landscape, it has created a dynamic that is based on a lasting alliance between man and nature.

Recognised for its great value, the Project is part of the Landscape Award Alliance of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as a source of inspiration.

**Protection of the valuable non-forest habitats and landscapes characteristic for the area of Orle Gniazda Landscape Park,**  
*Complex of Landscape Parks of the Silesian Voivodeship, Poland*

Through the introduction of exemplary landscape planning and management operations, the project has helped to protect a unique landscape of the Upper Jura which consists of a mosaic of picturesque hills and rocks. It has preserved valuable habitats and endemic species that were threatened by agricultural intensification, by various forms of pollution and invasive species. The actions carried out to raise the local actors' awareness on the territory's history, the values of its natural and cultural resources, as well as on traditional farming and livestock practices, have fully placed the issue of sustainable territorial development at the centre of their concerns.

Recognised for its great value, the Project is part of the Landscape Award Alliance of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as a source of inspiration.

**Herdade da Contenda, a tale of resilience for nature,**

*Municipality of Moura, Alentejo, Portugal*

The landscape policy implemented in the Contenda Estate has reversed the trend that was leading to its decline. The conservation status of this *montado* landscape has been improved through appropriate management and planning, with a remarkable participatory approach. The dissemination of scientific knowledge on its intrinsic values has enabled local actors to become its best protectors. By restoring degraded landscapes, the project ensures sustainable use of the forests, contributing to climate change reduction, and preserves endemic species. It also promotes educational and pedagogical practices in the field of ecology. Its economic dimension in terms of sustainable agriculture, animal breeding, beekeeping and hunting is certain. The domain of Contenda is also particularly popular for relaxation and recreation.

Recognised for its great value, the Project is part of the Landscape Award Alliance of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as a source of inspiration.

**The Gardens Park,**

*Timișoara City, Timiș County, Romania*

This creative project has improved the quality of people's lives. The landscaping facilitated circulation in the park's paths and promoted individual and collective well-being by providing a park for relaxation and leisure. The project has taken full account of the environmental, social, cultural and economic values of the urban landscape in a sustainable development perspective. It is one of the largest green spaces recently developed in the city, promoting interest in the variety of gardens, the diversity of species, and in particular that of the varieties of roses.

Recognised for its great value, the Project is part of the Landscape Award Alliance of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as a source of inspiration.

**Val Bregaglia, a landscape culture to meet the challenges of the future,**

*Municipality of Bregaglia, Switzerland*

The landscape culture is well anchored in the concerns of this municipality of the Swiss Alps. In order to meet the socio-economic needs of the population and to repair the damage caused by natural disasters, the municipality has integrated the landscape dimension into its land use and town planning policies. The aim is to preserve the environment and the building culture of the valley. Based on a participatory approach of the stakeholders, the action undertaken shows that a landscape approach makes it possible to face contemporary challenges, in the forefront of which is climate change.

Recognised for its great value, the Project is part of the Landscape Award Alliance of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as a source of inspiration.]

The achievements will be presented in three Workshops on the occasion of the 26th Council of Europe Meeting for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention on the Council of Europe Landscape Award "Forum of National Selections for the Council of Europe Landscape Award - Session 2020-2021"; planned to be held in Bergamo in 2022:

- ▶ Workshop 1. Protected landscapes – Actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape;
- ▶ Workshop 2. Managed landscapes – Strong actions, from a perspective of sustainable development, to ensure the regular upkeep of a landscape, so as to guide and harmonise changes;
- ▶ Workshop 3. Planned Landscapes – Strong forward-looking actions, to enhance, restore or create landscapes.

Like stars, these twelve new achievements complement the previous 88 achievements in the Council of Europe Landscape Award Alliance, bringing the total to one hundred.<sup>6</sup>

*Mrs Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons  
Executive Secretary  
of the European Landscape Convention,  
Head of the Landscape, Environment  
and Major Hazards Division,  
Council of Europe*

6. – <https://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape/landscape-award-alliance>  
– [Exhibition on the Landscape Award Alliance of the Council of Europe 2008-2019](#)  
– [Posters on the Landscape Award Alliance of the Council of Europe 2008-2021](#)  
– [Publication "Landscape Award Alliance of the Council of Europe", volume 1, 2008-2017](#)  
– [Publication "Landscape Award Alliance of the Council of Europe", volume 2, 2018-2019](#)

## **Workshop 1/Atelier 1**

**Protected Landscapes –  
Actions to conserve and maintain  
the significant or characteristic  
features of a landscape**

**Des paysages protégés –  
Des actions de conservation  
et de maintien des aspects significatifs  
ou caractéristiques d'un paysage**





# Biodiversity in the city: Bergamo and the Astino Valley

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## Foundation della Misericordia Maggiore of Bergamo, Italy

Representatives of the Ministry

**Mrs Federica Galloni**

*Director General for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape,  
Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, Italy*

**Mr Rocco Rosario Tramutola**

*Head of Department, Directorate General for Archaeology,  
Fine Arts and Landscape, Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, Italy*

**Mrs Isabella Fera**

*Senior Official, Directorate General for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape,  
Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, Italy*

**Mr Giovanni Manieri Elia**

*Senior Official, Directorate General for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape,  
Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, Italy*

Representatives of the Project

**Mr Fabio Bombardieri**

*President of the Foundation of the Misericordia Maggiore of Bergamo, Italy*

**Mr avv. Vittorio Rodeschini**

*Advisor of the of the Foundation of the Misericordia Maggiore of Bergamo, Italy*

## Summary of the Project

The project consists of the recovery and planning, via public-private partnerships, of the landscape of the Astino Valley, a valuable area of almost 60 hectares just outside Bergamo. Rich in history and biodiversity, this area had fallen into a state of decay and abandonment in recent decades, in spite of development restrictions that had been introduced to prevent this.

In 2007, in response to the local community's desire to safeguard and enhance this place, the Foundation della Misericordia Maggiore of Bergamo acquired the Astino Monastery with the adjacent land, in order to restore the complex and regenerate its landscape in a sustainable way. An intense dialogue ensued involving collaboration with public authorities, environmental associations, professional groups, agricultural enterprises, and civil society, and culminated in the underwriting in 2017 of a Plan Agreement. The project has called for the restoration of the monastery and surrounding farmhouses, castle and paths, the creation of educational itineraries in the Happiness wood (*Bosco dell'Allegrezza*), the reintroduction of traditional crops based on organic farming methods, an irrigation network, and the establishment of a local branch of the Bergamo Botanical Gardens. At the same time, a series of cultural, educational and training events have been organised, and specific steps have been taken for the integration of disadvantaged people. By re-establishing the strong identity-defining and social significance of these sites, the project has thus fully restored Astino and its valley for the benefit of the inhabitants of Bergamo and the valley.



*Astino Valley Botanical Garden. © Gabriele Rinaldi*

## Central aims of the Project

### Identification and assessment

The project centres on the sustainable regeneration of the landscape of the Astino Valley (*Valle d'Astino*) and its monastery. Located just outside Bergamo, this strategic area of considerable historical and environmental value has been identified as a landscape that has long defined the identity of the city and its community. Founded in the 12th century through the support and contributions of the inhabitants of Bergamo, the Vallombrosian monastery of Astino has shaped the landscape of the area, which until then had consisted entirely of woodland, by turning it into a haven for biodiversity, creating irrigation channels and promoting cultivation. For centuries, the monastery had been the cornerstone of a complex ecosystem at the gates of the city, as it boasted a high degree of biodiversity that had primarily derived from the interaction between man and nature. The valley and abbey thus represent a centuries-old cultural and natural heritage that informs the identity of the city of Bergamo. As the local inhabitants were already well aware of the importance of this landscape in the immediate aftermath of World War II, both State and local authorities took a series of pioneering measures to protect it, issuing building restrictions as early as 1951. These policies were reinforced in 1977, when the regional government established the Park of the Bergamo Hills (*Parco dei Colli di Bergamo*). These restrictions generally prevented unchecked development, yet not the progressive social and environmental deterioration of the area, which witnessed the spread of corn monoculture and risked closure to public access.



*Bird's-eye view of the Astino Valley and monastery.*  
© Leone Bigoni, MIA

### Landscape quality objectives

Since the beginning of the project, landscape quality objectives connected to planning, awareness-raising, training and education, have been identified. More specifically, given its complexity, the planning

objective has been subdivided into individual sub-objectives and planned interventions.

Implementation and planning: the sustainable regeneration of Astino is a linchpin for structuring the landscape by means of public-private partnerships.

In 2007, with the launch of the project, a transition was made from restrictive policies to the planning and enhancement of the Astino landscape. Through the extensive involvement of government, private actors and local inhabitants, the project, which had sprung from the acquisition by the MIA of the complex and the surrounding land in 2007, pursues the safeguarding, regeneration, and sustainable planning of the Astino Valley. The project began in earnest with the refurbishment of the monastery, which was brought to new life as both a site open to the local community and a means to manage the ecosystem. This intervention was thus designed to improve both the environmental and cultural-historical aspect of the area. The whole landscape of this urban area, located only a short distance from Bergamo city centre and surrounded by industrialised urban areas, thus needed to be redefined on the basis of historical vestiges, in order to restore the dense web of settlement traces (monastic buildings, farmhouses, dry-stone wall networks, and even the remains of a castle in the woods, for which archaeological investigations are planned). The project also sought to reintroduce traditional cultivation, and to regenerate natural and forest areas, as at this time they had become the first Site of Community Importance (*S.I.C. dell'Astino e dell'Allegrezza*) and then a Special Area of Conservation.



*Astino Valley: view of the monastery, a cycle and pedestrian path.* © Moris Lorenzi

The chief aim of the project, however, has been to regenerate the whole Astino area, through the involvement of actors appreciating its identity-defining historical, cultural, social and landscape importance. The innovative concept of restoring the key role to the monastery as an agricultural complex, to mark a new phase in its history, is the outcome of institutional collaboration between the

MIA Foundation, the Parco dei Colli, the Botanical Gardens, the Provincial Government and Slow Food. This dialogue has led to the drafting of an Ethical Commitment Statement (*Carta Etica*), viewed as a necessary step for striking a balance between the requirements and interests of the various stakeholders (landowners, farmers, public institutions, local inhabitants, citizens, and the urban community as a whole) through the Regulations laid out in the Agricultural and Environmental Enhancement Plan (*Progetto di Valorizzazione Agro-Ambientale*). Stakeholders were assigned tasks relating to the enhancement and management of the area owned by the *Società Valle d'Astino s.r.l.* This ambitious project has been structured into concrete objectives through the 2017 Plan Agreement. The complex interventions planned are described within the masterplan. More specifically, in the light of environmental sustainability requirements, the project has been articulated into critical aspects to be addressed, general objects and specific actions.



Astino Valley: flax in bloom. © Arianna Lezzi

The interventions include:

- ▶ The regeneration of the historic landscape and protection of the valley's biodiversity, not least through the involvement of agricultural businesses and local co-operatives cultivating traditional crops based on organic methods, and the social employment of disadvantaged actors, as well as the creation of a cultural promotion office "Biodiversity Valley" (*Valle della Biodiversità*), as the Astino branch of the Bergamo Botanical Gardens. This is a civic institution recognised by the Region of Lombardy, promoting concepts such as the relationship between plants and human beings, agricultural biodiversity and sustainability. In the areas of naturalistic interest of the Astino Valley, a plan has been laid out for the management of *Ailanthus*, a particularly invasive exotic tree species.
- ▶ One crucial step for the regeneration of the historic landscape has been the maintenance of the dry stone wall and terracing system, which has been made possible by a form of agricultural management based on the involvement of a small number of organic farmers contractually

- ▶ bound to refrain from cement construction work and to follow traditional building techniques. This has been a crucial step to improving rain-water management.
- ▶ The protection of biodiversity has also involved wildlife protection, specifically in the Astino and Allegrezza woods, which host 40 bird species. Among the wild species listed in Appendix I of Directive 2009/147/EC is the *Pernis apivorus*, the European honey buzzard. There are also twelve animal species of Community Importance listed in Appendices II-IV of Habitat Directive 92/43/CEE.
- ▶ The project has devoted considerable attention to social aspects, seeking to combine the regeneration of the landscape with a marked social impact.
- ▶ In order to restore the historic value of this landscape, restoration of the monastery, farms buildings and archaeological vestiges in the area have been undertaken, restoring dilapidated structures that were abandoned and, in certain cases, had collapsed roofs. Remarkable artistic and architectural traces have come to light, particularly in the Santo Sepolcro Church.
- ▶ The project has sought to redefine mobility in the area, by promoting "soft" mobility and discouraging motor traffic, as part of a broader effort to manage growing anthropic pressure.

### Awareness-raising

One crucial objective has been to raise awareness of the site among members of civil society and to foster the involvement of local inhabitants: for this purpose, the planning and implementation actions have been developed in parallel with the creation of a cultural centre at Astino which offers both cultural and educational activities.

#### *Training and education*

The Astino complex is promoted as an advanced education centre that fosters a cultural appreciation of the landscape and agricultural food production. An advanced cooking and hospitality training school is planned, in addition to educational activities at university level.

### Outcome

From a general perspective, the Astino complex has been restored to the condition of a "living space" centred on the sustainable relationship between human beings and the environment. Although the project is ongoing, with the implementation of the 2017 Plan Agreement, the following objectives have, as a whole, been met:

## The regeneration of the historic landscape and protection of the valley's biodiversity

- ▶ Transition from a monotonous landscape dominated by corn monoculture to a varied, rich, colourful and pleasant landscape facilitated by the implementation of the Agricultural and Environmental Enhancement Plan (*Progetto di Valorizzazione Agro-Ambientale*) for agricultural diversity. Biodiversity has been increased through the introduction of a range of cultivations, some of which were farmed in the valley during the Middle Ages, including organically-grown grapes, herbs, fruit and vegetables, flax, hemp and hops, within a natural setting that includes extensive woodland which is dominated by chestnut trees.



Astino Monastery: the cloister. © Letizia Ferrari

- ▶ Management of forested areas through the protection of native species and the eradication of invasive exotic species, such as *Ailanthus*, as well as the increase of hedges and bramble bushes, to create ecological corridors and refuge areas for wildlife.
- ▶ Routine maintenance and restoration of dry-stone walls damaged by industrial farming; concrete construction work is not allowed. This has ensured better management of excess rain-water, which had become a major problem in the Astino Valley.
- ▶ Creation, during Expo 2015, of a separate branch of the Bergamo Botanical Gardens, the Biodiversity Valley, featuring over 300 different crops with approximately 1,200 fruit and vegetable varieties. This project combines tradition and innovation, culture and education, focusing on the relationship between agriculture and

biodiversity. The agricultural data is monitored through technologically advanced systems such as soil and agrometeorological sensors, based on online data transmission, thus facilitating a better understanding of the potential of the species and soil, even at a distance. In the near future, such data will be made available to anyone interested, especially local farmers.



Astino Valley: hemp harvest. © Enrico Antignati

- ▶ Creation of a set of rules for the planning and protection of the landscape, based on leases to farmers that include restrictions listed in the Agro-Environmental Enhancement Project of the Astino Valley (*Progetto di Valorizzazione Agro-Ambientale della Valle d'Astino*), and especially in the Ethical Commitment Statement (*Carta Etica*) and Regulation for Agro-Environmental Management and Enhancement (*Regolamento per la Gestione e Valorizzazione Agro-Ambientale*). These documents, brought together in the 2017 Plan Agreement, are an integral part of the leases drawn up between agricultural entrepreneurs and the Astino Valley Society (*Società Valle d'Astino s.r.l.*), the owner of the land. The principles, which are laid out in the leases and which farmers must subscribe to, have become contractual obligations: failure to abide by them constitutes sufficient grounds for the termination of a contract. By signing the leases, agricultural entrepreneurs commit themselves to cultivating the land assigned to them according to an exclusively organic method, and to respect the division of crops established, in order to ensure the greatest possible agricultural variety.

They also commit themselves to managing marginal areas of their plots in an environmentally sustainable way, and to making the agricultural areas to which they have been assigned accessible to visitors, even if this may limit their ordinary farming practices. The implementation of the Agro-Environmental Enhancement Project of the Astino Valley (*Progetto di Valorizzazione*

*Agro-Ambientale della Valle d'Astino*) has thus markedly increased the quality of the Astino Valley landscape in the eyes of its visitors.

- ▶ In 2016 the agricultural entrepreneurs of the Astino Valley founded the Association of Organic Agricultural Producers of the Astino Valley (*Associazione Produttori Agricoli Biologici della Valle d'Astino, APAB*), a non-profit association with the Cascina Mulino building in Astino Valley as its headquarters. The Association's aim is to promote the organic produce of the Astino Valley farmers who have signed the *Carta Etica* of the Progetto Astino and the *Regolamento per la Gestione e Valorizzazione Agroambientale della Valle d'Astino*. In 2017 a label was created to identify organic food products from Astino Valley growers who are members of the Association, and have subscribed to the Astino Valley Project, sharing the cultural and environmental ideals and values laid out in the "Ethical Charter of the Astino Project, the Monastery and its context" (*Carta Etica del Progetto Astino, il Monastero e il suo contesto*).
- ▶ The protection and increase of spontaneous vegetation between plots of land and along the main ditches and pathways has de facto created a web of ecological corridors (managed by the Botanical Gardens) which fall within the Regional Ecological Network (*Rete Ecologica Regionale*).

### Social aspects

- ▶ The involvement of organic farmers proved essential for successful social impact.
- ▶ Co-operatives of young people and disadvantaged actors (e.g. Oikos, Ortinsema) have been involved.
- ▶ Through the numerous organised events (guided tours of Astino and children's educational workshops, exhibitions and concerts), families from Bergamo and nearby are becoming regular visitors to the valley.

### Restoration of buildings and archaeological remains

- ▶ The recovery of the monastic complex of Astino is underway; its restoration has begun, with special attention to the conservation of its historical-artistic heritage. The restoration of the Santo Sepolcro Church has already been implemented, as well as the exterior and roofing of the complex, its ground floor (the premises overlooking the cloister) and the cloister itself, now destined for public use.
- ▶ Promoted and financed by the MIA, archaeological excavations of the entire area have taken place under the direction of the Archaeological Superintendency; these have allowed the

recovery of extraordinary archaeological finds for the Lombard area, dating from as early as the prehistoric era. In this way, it has also been possible to retrace the building's historical development, from the prehistoric evidence of human presence in the area up to the network of channels that enabled water management in medieval times (for further details, see the MIA website).

- ▶ The restoration of the Cascina Mulino has been carried out and it is now used for educational laboratories, courses and open days for schools. The restoration of the Cascina Convento is also underway and will be dedicated to an advanced catering and hospitality training school.

### Soft mobility

- ▶ A network of trails and pedestrian and cycling paths have been restored or created, both within the area and connecting with the town.
- ▶ Implementation of reception and catering facilities within the valley.
- ▶ Car access has been limited to residents only, while a parking area has been created at the entrance of the area, to allow people with reduced mobility to access and enjoy the landscape.
- ▶ The increasing anthropic pressure has been regulated since it has become progressively focused on week-ends, following the modern trend to rediscover green areas near one's home. Regulation was implemented so that, even in the presence of a consistent flow of people and accentuated by the proximity of the area to the city centre, sustainability was maintained and the exploitation of the landscape for tourist purposes was averted (along with unauthorised parking, excess motor traffic, etc.).

### Awareness-raising

- ▶ Astino has become a cultural axis. Since 2015, an intense programme of cultural and educational initiatives has been underway, connected mainly to the themes of the landscape, historical-artistic heritage and agriculture.<sup>7</sup>
- ▶ In the building complex, thanks to the activity of the local branch of the Botanical Gardens, activities for pupils of every age-group and level have been organised, along with courses, educational workshops, science cafés, conferences and exhibitions. It is estimated that between 2015 and 2019 the activities and events at Astino drew roughly 40,000 people a year, and that the

7. For details, see: [http://parcocolliberghamo.it/File/AlboPretorio/Allegati/1248/allegato\\_01\\_delibera\\_37.pdf](http://parcocolliberghamo.it/File/AlboPretorio/Allegati/1248/allegato_01_delibera_37.pdf).

annual number of visitors to the area is double that figure.



*Astino Valley: view from the vineyard. © Moris Lorenzi*

### Training and education

- ▶ The establishment of an advanced catering and hospitality training school is underway.
- ▶ The Summer University has been realised, for the promotion of the values of the European Landscape Convention.
- ▶ A master's course in Landscape Studies is being planned with Milan Polytechnic and the Universities of Weihenstepahn, Florence, Bergamo.
- ▶ The global G7 agriculture meeting was held at Astino on 14-15 October 2017.

### Future scenarios

In short, the character of the Astino Valley, located near the city but which, in contrast to other basins in the Bergamo hills, has not undergone significant urban development, makes this site a landscape of outstanding value for both the city and its cultural events. This is an area increasingly integrated with the planning of soft connections between Astino, the cultural framework of the city and the landscape of the Bergamo hills. The forest and the surrounding countryside have thus entered into the city, becoming a harmonic and fully integrated part thereof, in an equilibrium between past and present.

Starting from the results which have been attained to date, the project has already outlined a concrete prospect for future development. Plans have been made to further extend the historic crops, by encouraging small landowners, not yet adhering to the project and the Ethical Commitment Statement, to adopt the Astino model. The project intends to pursue the recovery of the area's rural context, starting from the *Castello dell'Allegrezza*; plans for this are moving apace with the university archaeological activities and professional training for disadvantaged actors to become, for example, stratigraphic experts. The synergy between university research and landscape training will be reinforced. The

agricultural businesses operating in the area are to be made more competitive and better integrated with the city's supply chain. Most importantly, Astino will strengthen its commitments to projects that put landscape quality above all. The very decision to take part in the 7th Session of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe has assisted in this respect, by making it possible for Astino's management to adhere ever more to the values expressed in the European Landscape Convention.

## Sustainable territorial development

### Sustainable development

This project is part of a policy of sustainable development based on a "balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment" (Preamble of the European Landscape Convention).

### Social needs

The project began from the social needs of Bergamo's population, and the relationship between Astino and the city: through the regeneration of Astino, the city gained access to a large orchard and garden within the city limits, accessible by foot or by means of soft mobility. The local inhabitants have gained access to a regenerated landscape and new economic opportunities, thanks to the activities undertaken by various agricultural companies. Particular attention has been paid to the needs of young and disadvantaged people: regular activities have been undertaken which could well endure, permanently modifying civic and social relations, as well as making good use of the landscape.



*Astino Monastery, the cellars, Ristorante Le Orbe: an "Astino nel Gusto" event. © Fabio Toschi*

The social needs of the population have also been fulfilled from the cultural perspective, developed harmoniously with Astino's environmental side. Astino's landscape stems from the centuries-old interaction between man and nature: by recovering the monastery complex as a cultural axis, and thanks to educational and cultural activities connected to the landscape, the project brings the monastery

back to life in the heart of the valley. In addition, the project has been entrusted to the Foundation of the Misericordia Maggiore, founded in 1265 as a philanthropic confraternity for the assistance of Bergamo's sick, prisoners and poor. The Foundation has since become an identity-defining institution for the citizens of Bergamo. Today, the private-law foundation is governed by a Board of Directors whose advisors are nominated by the pro tempore mayor of Bergamo City Council. The contribution of the Foundation has strengthened the bond with the place's spirituality.

## Environment

The project began with a Strategic Environmental Assessment which dedicates part of its analysis and evaluation to "sustainable development" and which identifies the "criteria of environmental sustainability". The aim was to ensure that the choices made through the Plan Agreement are sustainable in all the environmental components that characterise the territory. The evaluation of sustainability has therefore been undertaken since the very beginning of the planning programme. This has entailed the definition of specific objectives in terms of environmental sustainability, and these are periodically monitored for: protection of soil quality; minimisation of land consumption; efficiency improvement in the consumption and production of energy; limitation of waste production; protection and enhancement of naturalistic areas; protection and development of urban and extra-urban ecological corridors; improvement in water quality and reduction of water consumption; protection and enhancement of historical and architectural assets; protection of the landscape; limitation of atmospheric emissions; limitation of acoustic pollution; limitation of exposure to electromagnetic fields; recovery of the equilibrium between buildings and open spaces; protection of the health and well-being of citizens; promotion of communication and public participation.

The landscape of the Astino Valley is part of an ecological network in the Park of the Bergamo Hills (*Parco dei Colli*) to which it is fully integrated. Thus, ecological corridors have been planned for the preservation of biocenosis. Overall, the project increases the area's resilience and its capacity for regeneration by augmenting biodiversity; promoting organic crops and excluding industrial agriculture; and preserving the valley's biocenosis through, among other things, the presence of SIC areas.

In addition, anthropic pressure has been the subject of much reflection. The project does not intend to exclude all human presence but, on the contrary,

seeks to promote it in a non-invasive way. For this reason, cars are allowed in the valley only up to an indicated parking and reception area, located some few hundred metres from the monastery; this has been planned according to environmental mitigation standards and in a location that will not interfere with the visual enjoyment of the landscape. Traffic has been restricted in order to promote soft forms of mobility.

The Environmental Strategic Assessment has therefore assessed environmental sustainability in detail, ensuring that internal factors (anthropic and agricultural pressures) do not affect the regenerative capacity of the ecological network.

The choice to exclusively undertake organic farming, in pursuance to the guidelines of the environmental assessment plan, thus constitutes a fundamental point for reinforcing the environmental value of the landscape.

## Economic activity

These measures stem from reflection on the project's economic sustainability. The public-private model permits optimisation in locating and using the funds necessary for the realisation of the project. The new catering and reception points contribute to guaranteeing the sustainability of the initiative in the long run. The durability of the project is, however, guaranteed above all by the agricultural development of the area, in such a way that the enhancement of the environmental and landscape features of the area is connected to economical productivity. In particular, a decisive impact on the short supply chain has been the development of organic agriculture, undertaken by farmers who (thanks to the Ethical Commitment Statement) adhere to ethical principles in their activities.

The agricultural project of Astino primarily entails the identification of ways to promote the valley's agricultural products and to enhance the short supply chain. Actions that support this ambition are: the use of a collective label to identify the organic food from the Val d'Astino; the identification of spaces in the valley for setting up display and sales points for the farming products themselves; and the synergy between the agricultural producers and the catering services offered in Astino.

In this way, the goal is for a "strong" form of sustainability, one that satisfies the needs both of current and future generations, a sustainability planned to endure in time, which is also capable of increasing and improving environmental resources.

## The project as a remedy to environmental and urban degradation

In spite of the millennial tradition of Astino, the area had been in a state of advanced decline prior to the beginning of the project. In the 1970s, the buildings appeared dilapidated: the roofs of the monastery and the *Allegrezza* tower had collapsed and the structures in the complex were in a state of abandonment and ruin. The local agriculture was not planned with the identity-defining and aesthetic value of the landscape in mind, and corn was still prevalent as a monoculture in the 1990s. The corn monoculture diminished the mosaic of crops and grape terraces that had characterised the historical landscape. The forest areas, too, enjoyed no protection before the constitution of the Park of the Hills, and the network of trails that crosses them was in state of abandonment. The population of Bergamo no longer visited the area; it was used as a simple road axis for quickly reaching the city. The small population that still lived there was no longer able to enjoy the environmental context. In addition, there was the threat of a planned golf course, which would certainly have closed off the area to the public. Moreover, since the 1970s, before the establishment of the Park of the Hills and special urban planning restrictions, urban expansion was a foreseeable outcome that would definitively have compromised the area's landscape. The protest raised by the population against these projects initiated the first phase of recovery. This project has saved the area from degradation, an area with a fundamental relationship with the city, cemented over centuries. Astino, which stands as the true green heart of the city, had been threatened with urbanisation schemes and withdrawal from public use; it has now been restored to communal use and protected, along with the richness and complexity of its landscape.

The high aesthetic value of the landscape has been protected with the conservation and restoration of the complex, returned to its original splendour, and the grid of cultivation that characterised the valley but was previously menaced by degradation, and the advancement of commercial monoculture, has been restored. In particular, the monotony of the corn monoculture has been broken by introducing a variety of colourful and aesthetically valuable crops, including flax, grape vines, olives, horticultural plants and fruits. Aesthetic results have also been achieved through the restoration of the traditional geometries created by the system of dry stone walls and terraces, which had been eroded by industrial agriculture, and to the recovery of the dilapidated monastic complex and farmhouses.



*Astino Monastery: restorers at the Santo Sepolcro Church in 2011. © Leone Bigoni, MIA*

## Exemplary activity

The Astino Project could be considered exemplary for many reasons

### A system of public-private partnership governance and the socio-economic development of the landscape

Astino is a good example on account of the construction of its complex governance, founded on the involvement of multiple public institutions, with collaborators capable of guaranteeing broad public participation, including associations, museums and parks (the Association of Organic Farmers [MIA, *Parco dei Colli*, *Associazione produttori agricoli biologici della Valle d'Astino*] and the Botanical Gardens).

The MIA Foundation has succeeded in creating a broad network of public figures who participate in the project in a lasting rather than episodic manner. Among these is the University, which guarantees continual scientific support for the project. This involvement confirms that the existence of a common aim – the creation of a valley of biodiversity – can bring about the formation of tightly-knit groups, able to overcome the natural tendency towards solitary action. In particular, three legal steps completed this governance: first the Memorandum of 2007, then the Plan Agreement of 2017, and finally contracts with farmers through the Ethical Commitment Statement.

This kind of governance has had a strong impact on various sectors. A decisive step came with the involvement of the APAB. The valley's farmers, a fundamental resource for the vitality of the valley's landscape, have been involved through contracts with special clauses aimed at the general goals of respecting the environmental, social, economic, cultural and aesthetic values of the landscape. The drafting of the Ethical Commitment Statement has been crucial to this success. Essentially, the strategy of the MIA has been to consider the agricultural landscape of Astino as a sort of commons, to be protected through the institution of a coherent system of rules and controls (on the basis of the economic



model for the commons<sup>8</sup> proposed by Elinor Ostrom, Nobel Laureate in Economy, 2009).

### From the periphery to the green heart of the city

By building an environmental stronghold in the heart of the city, the Astino Project offers an important opportunity for reflection on the regeneration of cities' outskirts and green belts. Indeed, through a series of ambitious actions which integrate the landscape into regional and town planning policies and cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, the Astino Project intends to put this green area at the heart of the urban system by explicitly reflecting (in particular in the 2017 Plan Agreement) on the "connection with the historic city centre". Astino is thus transformed into (or becomes once again) the centre of the urban ecosystem, on account not only of its conservation of biodiversity, but also of the presence of citizens and the recovery of the identity-defining dimension of this landscape for the city. To this end, soft mobility is being promoted, based on the realisation of best practices such as the recovery of trail networks and pedestrian and cycling paths leading to the city centre, and the creation of traffic-free zones.

### Biodiversity, between history and innovation, and the agricultural development of the landscape

Integrated action has been taken to preserve and promote biodiversity, through conservation actions in forest areas, the promotion of food-biodiversity, the promotion of organic farming methods and traditional crop varieties. From this point of view, the exemplary nature of the Astino Project resides in its protection of biodiversity not in a static-conservative way, nor in a neo-ruralistic one, but rather by integrating tradition and innovation in close connection to the city. The organic cultivation of species that characterised the historic countryside is being developed with careful attention to technological innovation. Fundamental to this is the afore-mentioned creation of a local branch of the Botanical Gardens as a centre of research and agricultural innovation, where approximately 1,200 traditional food varieties are cultivated. Moreover, the MIA Foundation has encouraged programmes of agricultural research and experimentation directed towards the development of particular traditional crops. This has been achieved based on specific agreements, such as the Memorandum of Understanding stipulated with Linificio and Canapificio Nazionale s.r.l. The project "Flax at Astino: Tradition, Culture, and Innovation" (*Lino ad Astino: tradizione cultura e innovazione*) has, for example, allowed for the reintroduction of the cultivation of linseed and hemp in the valley.

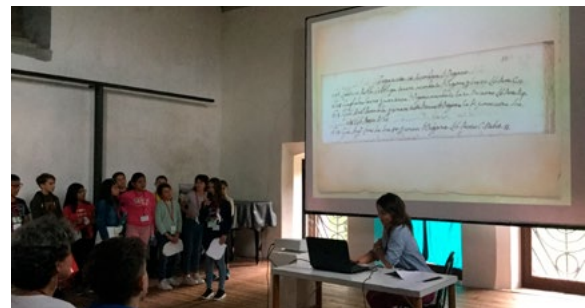
8. [Elinor Ostrom](#).

Much attention has been devoted to commercialisation through the short supply chain, thanks to the creation of a label for local growers: in this case, too, the reconstruction of an organic relationship with the city becomes a positive factor of fundamental importance. In short, cultivation methods rise to meet the challenge of contemporary agriculture, promoting agricultural biodiversity and implementing crops of great biological and cultural value which might enter a short supply chain connected to the catering services provided in the restored building complex, as well as in the city. Astino thus enhances the agricultural aspect of the landscape, which is further reinforced by large-scale initiatives such as the G7 meeting on agriculture: as a result, while the strategy to develop the agricultural dimension of the landscape is fully integrated into the framework of contemporary society, this dimension also represents the recovery of a fundamental characteristic of the historic landscape, including that of Astino, which in past centuries was regarded above all as a food resource.

### The integration of man and nature

The restoration of the monastic complex has been approached in relation to the rural context that the monastery itself has shaped: the abbey has not been viewed as a historical container, fit for any use, but as a significant historical landmark, to be re-inserted into the landscape that Astino itself has produced. Astino in this way becomes once again the linchpin for the protection of the area's biodiversity. The Astino Project has not only guaranteed the conservation of an area of extremely high environmental value just outside the city, but has also guaranteed the recovery of a millennial ecosystemic equilibrium, in which the landscape is the outcome of the historical interaction between man and nature. Astino once again takes up its role as the driving force for biodiversity within the valley, not least thanks to the cultural transmission ensured by the various members of the project.

Ultimately, Astino may serve as an example and model for recovery measures in the suburban landscape or in urbanised areas, where the environmental dimension has for centuries harmoniously coexisted with the human shaping of the landscape.



Astino Monastery: Grandparents' Day, 2 October 2019 (Festa dei nonni). © Fenil, MIA

## Public participation

### Astino and the population of Bergamo

Even during its phase of abandonment in the course of the 1900s, the local community was always aware of the identity-defining value of Astino's landscape. In the aftermath of World War II, the local inhabitants were well aware of the importance of this landscape, and both State and local authorities took a series of pioneering measures to protect it, issuing building restrictions as early as 1951. These policies were reinforced in 1977, when the regional government established the Park of the Hills. These restrictions generally prevented unchecked development, yet not the progressive social and environmental deterioration of the area, which on the one hand risked closure to public access and, on the other, witnessed the spread of corn monoculture. Through a number of associations (WWF, Italia Nostra, the Longuelo Neighbourhood Association) the inhabitants became mobilised to safeguard their landscape at the most critical moments, as for example the 1985 protests against the construction of a golf course in the area.

### The project's public governance

The project emerges from the desire to regain the public use of this landscape, which was in a state of decay and risked being put to private use. This revitalisation has been implemented through the construction of a system of public governance. This began in 2007, with the deployment of a public-private partnership through the agreements between the city and the MIA Foundation, and then with a Plan Agreement. Underwritten in 2017, it involved: the City, participating with its Botanical Gardens; the foundation Val d'Astino Society (*Società Val d'Astino*) (the sole shareholder of which is the MIA Foundation); the Regional Government; the Provincial Government; and the Park of the Hills in a broad system of co-ordination of public and private actors. This agreement stipulated public involvement and participation as its indispensable condition. The APAB association was founded in 2016, bringing together organic farmers who make use of traditional cultivation methods in the area.

The decision-making process has broadly involved both the local and regional authorities responsible for conservation, and also the socio-cultural associations that have urged the recovery and development of the Astino Valley since the 1980s. Since 2007, the project has incorporated certain proposals and statements of the associations.

As the public would be affected by the environmental actions, they were engaged in the formulation of the decision-making process envisaged by the Plan Agreement of 2017. In particular, the following

interested parties were primarily identified: the principal agricultural associations present on the Park territory; those environmental associations recognised at national level (WWF, Legambiente, Italia Nostra, LIPU); the Consortium for the Reclamation of the Bergamo Central Plain (*Consorzio di bonifica per la media pianura bergamasca*); the professional associations of the Province of Bergamo (architects, engineers, surveyors, agronomists); the CCIAA of Bergamo; and Bergamo Diocese. Other communication and advertising actions have been planned to promote active participation on the part of the citizens and to encourage anyone who is interested to collaborate in the project to submit suggestions and proposals.

### From protection to planning

The project found a coherent place within the early decisive policy of protecting the area, in a period in which sensitivity towards the value of the landscape in Lombardy was still largely lacking. Such action was guaranteed by the constitution of the Park of the Hills, in 1977. In 1984 the constitution prescribed the conservation of the area in its Territorial Co-ordination Plan (*Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento*). In the same period, the city enacted the first laws to prevent uncontrolled development within the Astino territory, with particular attention in the detailed plan of 1981 given to the building complex and the valley. Starting in 2002-2003, thanks to the studies carried out by the University of Bergamo, a request for the official recognition of the environmental value of the Astino and *Allegrezza* woods was submitted. These were finally acknowledged as Sites of Community Importance (SCI) in 2006, at the very dawn of the project (they were subsequently recognised as Special Areas of Conservation in 2017). This system of restrictions and plans was however insufficient to prevent the degradation of the area. The project, launched in 2007, finally permitted the realisation of the detailed planning necessary to pass from restrictions to the recovery, enhancement and development of this landscape.

### Respect for and assessment of regional, national and European environmental goals

The project entailed close interaction between local and regional authorities, based on the 2017 Plan Agreement. Moreover, the project falls within the framework of national policies, and not just on account of the presence of an SCI or the conservationist recovery work carried out in agreement with the Superintendency of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape (*Soprintendenza Archeologia Belle Arti e Paesaggio*). It has also been subjected to a Strategic Environmental Assessment, detailed in the report of 2017, aimed at "safeguarding, protecting and improving the quality of the environment;

protecting human health; and using natural resources in a prudent and rational way”, and to an Impact Assessment focusing on the existing SCI. In other words, the project has undergone assessment by national and regional environmental authorities, and has been shown to respect the regional, national and European objectives in this area.

### **Awareness-raising**

Astino is a centre for the promotion and enforcement of the values of the landscape and of European identity. The overall aim is to make Astino a point of reference as far as landscape is concerned, at local, regional and European levels.

A plan for cultural activities for students of every age-group and level has been realised, not least through the presence of the Botanical Gardens. A calendar of events for families and the broader public includes courses, educational workshops, science cafés, conferences, exhibitions, and specific displays. Among these, an exhibition dedicated to viticulture across the centuries is now being completed, through the restoration of five terraces. Particular attention has been paid to intergenerational dialogue, as in the case of the event “Grandparents, Let Me Introduce You to Astino” (“*Nonni vi presento Astino*” on 2 October 2019), in which primary and secondary school children recounted to their grandparents some of the curious events that have happened over the past centuries at Astino.

This rich offering of educational and cultural events has made Astino a privileged destination, at both a local and regional level, particularly at week-ends. The multidisciplinary higher education initiatives and related seminars contribute to promotion of the values of the European Landscape Convention, as well as training specialists in landscape appraisal and operations. The annual Summer University programme has now reached its 17th edition, and is designed to promote the values of the European Landscape Convention.

Certain initiatives of global relevance, such as Astino hosting the G7 meeting on agriculture, have reinforced the role of the site in the promotion of biodiversity.

Finally, a master’s course in Landscape Studies is being planned with Milan Polytechnic and the

Universities of Weihenstephan, Florence and Bergamo.

### **Aspects connected to individual and collective well-being and social development**

Individual well-being has been pursued on various levels. In the first place, the inhabitants of the valley, who had recently laid claim to a space which had fallen into a state of marginality and disuse, now find themselves living in a high-quality landscape, from both an aesthetic and health perspective. This has benefitted the community as a whole. Citizens have seen the area within their municipality become newly connected to the city; it is no longer just a cut-through car route, thanks to the network of trails, cycle and walking paths conceived in accordance with the soft mobility model. Astino has been included in the initiatives connected to the Smart City project of Bergamo, and these have brought wi-fi coverage.

The integration of tourist, recreational, cultural and educational services, available in the valley through its agricultural production, and the development of its agro-food products, allows users to enjoy the landscape by immersing themselves in the culture of the place: in this way, the consumer experience is transformed into an opportunity for cultural and social enrichment. Individual well-being has been promoted, not only by making Astino into a treasure-trove of nature, culture and biodiversity open to collective enjoyment, but also through pathways into the labour market for disadvantaged persons who have been involved in various agricultural activities, thanks to the co-operative, and through targeted initiatives to give the families and children of the city access to vegetable gardens. Moreover, the spaces that have been recovered are available for use as meeting places for various associations (Children’s Theatre [*Teatro dei bambini*], a summer school, oratories, scout meetings etc.). On-site sales are organised for the agricultural products of the valley, with the possibility that customers can directly harvest the produce themselves.

#### **Website:**

- ▶ [www.fondazionemia.it/it/astino/premio-del-paesaggio](http://www.fondazionemia.it/it/astino/premio-del-paesaggio)



# The Salt of Life

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## Summary of the Project

“The Salt of Life” project was implemented in Atanasovsko Lake zone, one of the pivotal biodiversity hot-spots in the Black Sea Biogeographical region. The Lake is part of the Burgas Wetland Complex, one of three most significant wetland complexes for the gathering of flocks of waterfowl along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast.

The beautiful and colourful Atanasovsko Lake, as it is now known, is largely the result of a symbiosis between Man and Nature. Significant modification for the purposes of salt production made the site rich and important for European nature. The Black Sea coast is now largely affected by urbanisation, and thus the lagoon is of strategic importance for the conservation of biological diversity along this coastline.

Project actions directly addressed the identified threats to the Atanasovsko Lake lagoon that contributed to the long-term decline of these priority habitat coastal lagoons which comprise 21% of the total lake area, and the project communicated the importance of the Atanasovsko Lake salt-works which harbour one of the key Natura 2000 sites, addressing the importance of the salt, and hence the project’s motto, the Salt of Life.



Atanasovsko Lake. © Todor Bozhkov

## Central aims of the Project

The “Salt of Life” project aims to secure the long-term preservation of the Atanasovsko Lake coastal lagoon. The specific project objectives are to:

- ▶ establish a functional, efficient and sustainable infrastructure for water management and control of the coastal lagoon at Atanasovsko Lake. This aims to provide long-term improvements of habitat conditions and adaptation to the effects of climate change, including changing rainfall patterns and the rise in the sea level;
- ▶ reduce the impact of direct and indirect threats on Atanasovsko Lake lagoon and its priority bird species by securing sustainable habitat management, including improvements both to existing and new breeding sites for priority bird species;
- ▶ monitor and evaluate the effects of proposed habitat restoration measures on the lagoon, and other significant habitats, and bird species included in Annex 1 of the Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds;
- ▶ during the project, feeding this information into future site management plans;
- ▶ improve the visitor experience at the site and disseminate the project results to a wide European audience of site managers, ecologists and the public in general;
- ▶ enhance public understanding of the ecological, economic and social values of coastal lagoons and raise support for the conservation of priority coastal habitats and bird species.



Atanasovsko Lake. © SpasUzunov

## Outcome

The optimal maintenance of the favourable state of Atanasovsko Lake has been accomplished through the restoration and repair of the system of dykes and barriers, the management of water levels and the salinity of the basins. This ensures that the water circulates in the basins, a vital feature for the favourable conditions of the lagoon.



Building islands. © Zlatin Trendafilov

“The Salt of Life” project aims to reduce the effect of floods and to improve the natural ecological processes in the lake. To achieve this, the 23 km-long bypass channel surrounding the lake was cleaned, thus preventing freshwater influx which changes the ecosystem. The channel is also the main artery of the lagoon, providing a connection to the sea. It collects water from the rivers that flow into the lake and discharges them into the sea. In addition, 20.5 km of demolished dykes and barriers have been repaired to provide more effective water management of the lake and this has led to the improved condition of the 1150\* habitat type<sup>9</sup> and enhanced salt production efficiency.

Five artificial islands were built for the nesting and resting of key bird species in Atanasovsko Lake, providing protection from both flooding and predators.

Thanks to the work on the project and the involvement of highly qualified experts, we now know the lake better, and understand the complex processes that take place in it.

The impact of the project actions has reached a wide range of people who are now informed of the wealth of the area and the benefits of protected territories and the Natura 2000 protected zones. Understanding and respect have increased for the processes taking place in the lake, its biodiversity, Bulgarian sea salt production and a fascination for the salt extraction process. What is more, an emotional connection between the people and the lake has developed.

The project team worked to reverse the generally indifferent attitude of the local and national public through a series of information tools telling the *Tale for the Lake, Salt, Birds and People*. An innovative travelling exhibition, “Symbiotic”, was hosted in Bulgaria’s 13 largest cities. The now-annual Salt of Life Festival is an event rich with ambience, offering visitors the opportunity to experience the life of salt workers or take the unique opportunity of a ride on the Salt Train, only possible during the fest. Efforts

9. <https://eunis.eea.europa.eu/habitats/10007>.

culminated in the establishment and promotion of the Trail of the Salt: 400,000 people have explored the trail over the last five years.



© SpasUzunov

### Sustainable territorial development

The project is a part of the sustainable development policy at European Union, national and regional level. It contributes to the development and implementation of European Union policy and legislation in the area of nature and biodiversity, in the Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, and the Birds and Habitats Directives. It contributes to the achievement of all the specific objectives of sub-programme Environment in the priority area Nature, set out in Article 11 (Specific objectives for the priority area Nature and Biodiversity) of Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the establishment of a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 614/2007.

The project is in accordance with the key documents of local planning: the Municipal Master Plan, the Municipal Development Plan and the Integrated Urban Regeneration and Development Plan.

The project conservation activities are in line and implement some of the activities included in the Action Plan for Managed Reserve Atanasovsko Lake, adopted with the Order of the Minister of the Environment and Water, No. ПД-1378/17.11.2003.

The particular combination of the cultural and natural, material and spiritual values of Atanasovsko Lake make it a perfect educational setting in which one can learn about history, geography, economics and ecology. Salt has been produced using this extensive traditional method for a century, and it is instrumental in sustaining the richness of the area. This symbiosis of Man and Lake is central to the message of the project.

The project worked actively to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Burgas by contributing to the inclusion of Atanasovsko Lake as the main element of the urban environment of the city. Over 2 M.€ of direct investments have been provided to

restore the lagoon and improve the tourist and visitor infrastructure of the Lake, the “green” connection of the city with the sea and the sea garden, offering opportunities for recreation, sports, environmentally-friendly tourism and environmental education. The project has also contributed to the diversification of the tourist product of Burgas Municipality. The number of people who benefit from the free spa treatments using the healing mud and lye from the lake, increases every year. In August 2013 there were typically 2,400 visitors per day: in 2018 it was an average of 4,700. In total, over 400,000 visitors to the Salt Trail and the lye and mud pools have enjoyed the non-commercial benefits. The cultural values of the lake are enhanced and utilised through the annual Salt Festival, birthday celebration events, exhibitions, the Atanasovden celebration (celebrating St Atanasii’s name day), open-air art exhibitions, film shoots, videos, photography, etc. Atanasovsko Lake inspires many artists in different media.



© George Dragiev

The project has investigated and analysed the possibilities for support of traditional salt production in the lake through agri-environmental schemes and other compensatory mechanisms. A major problem is the fact that the extraction of salt from sea water using solar evaporation is not an agricultural activity, but is rather categorised under industrial mining. This minimises the possibility for salt producers to have access to measures from the Rural Development Programme, which is an obstacle to development and support of the industry, not only in Bulgaria but also in many countries around Europe.

Environmentally friendly companies have been developed to create new products, including chocolate with sea salt from the lake, soap with soda, fleur de sel. All products associate the origin of the salt with the protected area. 23 new jobs were created (15 in Black Sea Salinas Ltd., five in BBF and three in BSPB). In addition to direct investment and job creation, financial revenue is generated for local businesses providing goods and services around the lake (cafeterias, car parks, souvenir shops, salt

and other lake products) all benefitting from the increased visitor stream.

The project successfully countered the pre-existing environmental damage such as flooding of the lake and the surrounding area, prevented pollution from illegal sewage water discharge, and encouraged the building of the Oceanarium and Aqua Park on the perimeter of the lake.



© Diana Pavlova

### Exemplary value

The lake itself and surrounding territories constitute a protected Natura 2000 site, parts of which are also a Managed reserve and a Protected area, which have various conservation and sustainable use targets and restrictions. The landscape is full of the life of both birds and humans, all benefitting from the location and rich natural resources – lye, mud, salt, the picturesque views of the landscape and the proximity to beaches.

The project is one of the most complex and intricate attempts for habitat restoration in Europe and certainly the most advanced coastal wetland active management undertaken in Bulgaria and the Black Sea region. Therefore, the project has great demonstrative value in several aspects. Firstly, the project developed new experience and knowledge in direct wetland restoration, thus introducing a model for tackling a complex and important conservation problem. It has provided a highly useful case study of large-scale restoration works in coastal areas that are suffering the effects of climate change.

Secondly, the project has supported the environmentally-friendly economic activity of traditional salt production, contributing to the favourable conservation status of the habitats and providing sustainable income generation for the local community. This is a good demonstration of the environmental, economic and social benefits produced by the lagoon ecosystem.



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Following sound conservation logic, this project integrates a suite of complementary approaches and interventions that have proved to be effective elsewhere in the European Union, in order to ensure the long-term conservation of the coastal lagoon ecosystem and its biodiversity. The project has applied an ecosystem-based management approach that considers the entire ecosystem of the lake, including the presence of humans. Thus, the ecosystem is maintained in a healthy, productive and resilient condition providing benefits for the citizens of Burgas and its tourists. These include:

- ▶ direct conservation measures, which have improved the water management and 46% of the Coastal lagoon habitat 1150,<sup>10</sup> the hydrological and hydrochemical parameters have all reached favourable values. An innovative technology for the restoration of wooden barriers through the construction of small dykes has been introduced by Burgas Salinas Ltd. (the operator in the Salinas) due to the higher efficiency and smaller fragmentation effects on the habitat type 1150. 2,500 m of damaged wooden barrier have been repaired as small dykes; 20,500 m of restored earth dykes, wooden barriers and small dykes are key elements in maintaining the water regime of the habitat 1150, ensuring more than 10 ha. of favourable breeding territories for the target bird species; the predator protection system (a pilot project for Bulgaria) has been tested annually over an area of 2.5 ha. (and 3,100 m of dykes). It has secured the most valuable nesting grounds in Atanasovsko Lake. This activity has been very important for limiting predator threat;
- ▶ within the project, the bypass channel of Atanasovsko Lake has been thoroughly cleaned for the first time since its construction. This ensures the protection of the habitat 1150 from future flooding, and adaptation to climate change, as well as limiting the inflow of polluted water from agriculture and settlements;
- ▶ the experience of the design and technology for building artificial habitats was evaluated and the most suitable form for the conditions of Atanasovsko Lake were built;
- ▶ support of traditional salt production as an environmentally-friendly practice for the natural resources of the lagoon;
- ▶ enhancement of the visitor experience in a characteristic Natura 2000 site by developing interpretative systems and enhancing public support for biodiversity conservation through media work, the improvement of tourist interpretation,

10. EUNIS – Factsheet for Coastal lagoons (europa.eu), <https://eunis.eea.europa.eu/habitats/10007>.



and establishment of an Atanasovsko Lake Public Council;

- ▶ the innovative drone technology for monitoring has been tested for the first time in a Bulgarian protected area. It proved to be an appropriate and useful method, especially at remote locations with difficult access. The drone technology will be even more useful for future conservation objectives.

The project reinforced the partnership with the private company, Black Sea Salinas Ltd., which operates in the Salinas, providing mutual benefits and a common vision for the long-term protection and sustainable use of the coastal lagoon site. This partnership was further extended by involving other key stakeholders by the development of a participatory management model of the Atanasovsko Lake Public Council. The exemplary value of “The Salt of Life” project was acknowledged by the prestigious European Award Natura 2000 in 2018 where it was a finalist in the Communication category for demonstrating innovative, cost-effective, original ideas that are both replicable and sustainable. Thanks to the high public interest for the website section “Inspired by the Lake” the project was invited to inspire the guests of the official Awards ceremony in Brussels. The DUNE dancers performed the “Lake” dance in the background of an inspiring video dedicated to Atanasovsko Lake.



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### Public participation

Stakeholders of the valuable protected area gathered to create the Public Council of Atanasovsko Lake. This Council engages local authorities with various competences and responsibilities related to: management of the protected areas; spatial planning and management; consulting land owners and users, and ensuring both scientific and public opinions. Thus, they have engaged the Regional Inspectorate for Environment and Water, Burgas; the Regional Governor; the Municipality of Burgas; Burgas Airport; the Bulgarian Academy of Science, NGOs and others. The Council has met 12 times and has proved a successful platform for ensuring

participatory management of the lagoon and its broader surrounding landscape, involving scientists, entrepreneurs, local NGOs, local and national government policymakers, farmers, protected area managers and community leaders, in order to work locally, share experiences and find balanced solutions.

The greatest success of the project came about because the Municipality of Burgas recognised the lake landscape as one of the region’s greatest assets and began promoting it in its vision, including it in all regional strategic documents and communication materials.



© Diana Pavlova

### Awareness-raising

The project has been targeted to different groups, with the ultimate objective of positively transforming the public attitude towards the lake and its surrounding landscape. The lake is now one of the most popular natural sites in Bulgaria.

Through various unconventional and yet informative actions, the project has played a crucial role in raising awareness about the protection of the lagoon landscape, the Natura 2000 requirements and therefore the benefits stemming from this status, particularly concerning biodiversity and salt production.

Through its “symBiotic” exhibition, the project reached 30,000 people across the country, engaging them through interactive modules and enhancing their knowledge by using the learning-by-doing method. The exhibition travelled to 13 major cities in Bulgaria and attracted audiences of all ages and interests, providing both educational experience and entertainment.

A Salt Trail was built and equipped with attractive, highly informative sign-boards. The trail itself is an asphalt path covered with attractive drawings. Visited by 400,000 people, surely their knowledge has been enhanced. The two walking trails represent the major attractions in the landscape here and a major success is the fact that they are now part

of the official walking network of Burgas. Thanks to their growing popularity and design for easy maintenance and repair, this is a guarantee that the Municipality will be able to continue maintenance in the future.

Students have been invited into the field in order to proactively engage them. In one year over 2,000 pupils attended the project's education programme, becoming the young caretakers of the lake which has familiarised them with its conservation value. To extend the reach to the neighbouring territories, a special Wetlands Tour was designed, and five schools have visited the Natura 2000 site, and presentations and quizzes have been provided to over 800 students.

Through traditional and social media, the project has involved hundreds of thousands of people in life-changing experiences provided by the Lake. 1,950 publicity elements have been produced over four years in national and regional media and there are over 2,000 supporters on Facebook.

A Public Discussion Platform was established during the project, involving all stakeholders. This proved a successful forum for sharing expectations, knowledge and experience. State-of-the-art communication models were tested and were appreciated by other partners, which has proved their usefulness for the future.



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The Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water, Burgas (RIEW), the statutory regional institution responsible for the planning and management of the protected site, played a significant role in the major communication activities of the project. On the other hand, the successful project results and positive outreach enhanced communication activities conducted by RIEW. In this way, RIEW demonstrated willingness and commitment to inherit some of the project communication activities, such as the "Birthday of the reserve" and "Biodiversity carnival" events.

Another unconventional approach is the annual Salt Festival, inspiring people from Burgas and the

country to come to know the lake. It is a meeting point for artists and creative people sharing their vision of the symbiosis between nature and man, the importance of safeguarding culture and traditions through art projects, performances and exhibitions. The Salt Festival allows visitors to physically touch the lake and get involved in the harvest of the "white gold", to understand what the salt is used for and, through fun activities, why lye and mud are so healthy. Initially planned as a biennial event, the Salt Festival is now being held in August each year, due to the great interest and its special atmosphere.

The Lake is the only place which celebrates its birthday and name day (according the Bulgarian tradition) and invites its supporters twice a year. The birthday of the managed reserve Atanasovsko Lake is 12 August. The celebration is organised jointly with the RIEW, Burgas, and includes a variety of events, and a big cake.

Named after St Atanassii and having the Bulgarian name Atanas, the lake's name day is on 18 January. It is now celebrated with a half-marathon named after the lake, which can be accomplished by running or cycling along the water's edge. With over 100 participants, winter does not appear a problem.

A unique approach has been tested within the project, offering a dedicated culinary show, broadcast on national TV. The precious lake salt, called *fleur de sel*, is only produced in Bulgaria, here in Atanasovsko Lake. It is very specific for its rose colour, tender flavour and sea scent. Presented in the first edition of the *Food Hunters TV* show by the famous Bulgarian master chef Andre Tokev, this reached a totally different public with culinary and tradition interest.

In partnership with the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (NGO), 100 bus stops in the town of Burgas have been branded with attractive photographs and short, easy-to-read information about the three Natura 2000 sites around Burgas and their bird species. This innovation reaches thousands of people while waiting for their bus, and has received positive and impressive feedback.

Within the project, 2015 was announced as the Year of Atanasovsko Lake lagoon, providing the opportunity to reach a high number of supporters all over the country by promoting the lake landscape through a variety of actions, materials and events.

During the summer tourist season, a photo exhibition named "The Birds, the People and the Salt of Burgas" was presented on nine large billboards in the main square of Burgas. Bearing in mind it is a tourist spot, an estimated 120,000 tourists and residents of Burgas saw the exhibition.

The video clips created within the project have proved their worth, creating long-lasting interest

thanks to the internet and the YouTube channel. Using a drone, a video was produced entitled "The colours of the lagoon". The animation "The water cycle of Atanasovsko lake" was presented at the Albanian Environmental Film Festival in 2016, reaching a transnational audience. Subsequently it was included in the selection of the Green Go Short films contest. Also translated into English, it has been seen by more than 20,000 people.

#### Films

- ▶ The Salt of Life: a tale of lake, salt, birds and people: <https://youtu.be/iHfl80pnDw>
- ▶ Atanasovsko Lake water cycle: <https://youtu.be/vLidCMMOapM>
- ▶ The colours of the lagoon: <https://youtu.be/cqYcpddaQ34>



# Protection of the valuable non-forest habitats and landscapes characteristic for the area of Orle Gniazda Landscape Park

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## Complex of Landscape Parks of the Silesian Voivodeship, Poland

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## Summary of the Project

The comprehensive actions undertaken within this project facilitated beneficial landscape, environmental, cultural and historical outcomes. Model operations were conducted in the field of sustainable planning and landscape management which contributed to revealing and emphasising calcareous hills with rock outliers, constituting a unique characteristic both at national and European level. The thermophilous non-forest habitats are now protected, restored and preserved; the developed methods for nature conservation and combating invasive alien species are being reproduced by similar institutions. The knowledge, experience and results of the project have been widely distributed and popularised within the framework of conferences, educational, informational, publishing and promotional activities of the Silesia Province Landscape Park Complex (ZPKWS), both in Poland and abroad.



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## Central aims of the Project

- ▶ to develop model operations in the field of sustainable planning and landscape management;
- ▶ to realise the aims of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats, wild fauna and flora;
- ▶ to conserve, with complex protection, the 100 ha. of valuable non-forest habitats (xerothermic and rock grasslands) in Orle Gniazda Landscape Park in the area of Krakow-Czystochowa Upland, in the territory of four NATURA 2000 refuges: Ostoja Olsztynsko-Mirowska, Ostoja Zlotopotocka, Ostoja Kroczycka, Ostoja Srodkowojurajska;
- ▶ to protect, conserve, improve and restore the natural, landscape, cultural and historical values of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland;
- ▶ to protect valuable and endangered biodiversity and the unique geo-diversity of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland;
- ▶ to conserve and protect 6.5 ha. of rock grasslands from unrestricted climbing traffic;
- ▶ to protect domestic flora by removal of invasive alien species, in particular giant knotweed, from a 1.5 ha. area;
- ▶ to protect non-forest habitats threatened with the intense penetration of the area by humans in 18 tourist hubs and the most frequently visited spots, by erecting suitable tourist infrastructure;
- ▶ to conserve endangered breeds of farm animals (sheep and goats); restore the flock-tending farming culture, thus maintaining local traditions and customs related to a flocktending economy; develop and indicate new methods and techniques for a flock-tending economy;
- ▶ to activate the local community (in the nine municipalities where the project was implemented) by introducing the community to natural environmental conservation, indicating directions for engagement in a rational agricultural economy and tourism;
- ▶ to reduce the threat of anthropogenic impact on the environment in the most valuable areas of Natura 2000 refuges, through preventative actions in the form of patrols carried out by Wildlife Services, police and State Forests services;
- ▶ to expand and improve the knowledge level concerning conservation of an open, seminatural ecosystem, achieved through meetings with the local community and educational workshops;



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## Outcome

- ▶ protection and conservation of the unique Jura landscape – the upper Jura limestone formations create a mosaic of hills and scenic rock outliers;
- ▶ development of new methods and measures for active protection and combating of invasive alien species, constituting an example of sustainable landscape policy;
- ▶ distribution of the acquired knowledge and experience in the field of active nature conservation, both at national and international level, and reproducing methods developed by other institutions;
- ▶ activation of local authorities and communities in the implementation of actions for the benefit of the landscape and biodiverse conservation;
- ▶ implementation of the project at trans-provincial level (the provinces of Silesia and Little Poland);
- ▶ protection, restoration and improvement of thermophilous habitats (approximately 100 ha.), xerothermic and rock grasslands of *Festuco-Brometea* (6210) containing *Galium cracoviense* (2189), an endemic species, and the spatially and dynamically connected coppices of juniper that are distributed in xerothermic grasslands and moorlands (5130);
- ▶ protection of approximately 6.5 ha. of rock grasslands (6210-1) and calcareous rock walls containing crevice vegetation, including communities of *Potentilletalia caulescentis* (8210) from unrestricted climbing traffic, restoring climbing trails and anchors and descent posts, minimising penetration of rock summits by climbers, thus positively influencing the condition of rock grasslands;
- ▶ protection and conservation of endemic species *Cochlearia polonica* (2109);
- ▶ protection of domestic flora and fauna by eliminating the invasive alien species (IAS) giant knotweed (*Reynoutria sachalinensis*) from the area of Dolina Wodca valley (1.5 ha.); refuge Ostoja Srodkowojurajska is developing new methods for combating giant knotweed; distributing the

knowledge acquired in this field at both national and international level;



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- ▶ implementation of the premises of international, national and regional acts, including: the Bern Convention of 1979; the European Commission Directive no. 92/43/EEC dated 21 May 1992; the Nature Conservation Act; the Regulation of the Minister for the Environment concerning conservation of species; Polish Red Data Book; regional red lists of hazards and others;
- ▶ reduction of the threat of the anthropogenic impact on the environment in the most valuable areas of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland, by introducing preventative patrols;
- ▶ protection of the natural habitats in the Jura region that are threatened with anthropogenic impact on the environment by channelling tourist traffic, achieved by creating tourist infrastructures in 18 tourist hubs and frequently-visited spots;
- ▶ purchase of 11 ha. of environmentally-valuable land which are now dedicated to goals relating to nature conservation;
- ▶ maintenance of local traditions and customs related to a flock-tending economy; development and indication of new methods and measures for a flock-tending economy;
- ▶ increased participation of the local community in maintenance of local traditions and customs, as well as engaging tourists in flock-tending, active nature and landscape conservation;
- ▶ interested homestead dwellers trained in breeding sheep and goats, and prospective future grazing in open areas in certain smaller towns near the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland;
- ▶ expansion of the ecological awareness of residents and workshop participants;
- ▶ informational, educational, publishing and promotional activities;
- ▶ the local authorities and community activated through introduction to the subject of nature conservation, indicating possible directions for engagement in a rational agricultural and tourism economy;

- ▶ establishment of co-operation at national and international level with the purpose of developing effective forms and methods for protection and conservation of thermophilous habitats;
- ▶ distribution and popularisation of knowledge concerning conservation of open ecosystems and methods for combating giant knotweed;
- ▶ establishment of long-term co-operation with local residents, town halls, municipality offices, services and organisations engaged in nature conservation which will contribute to implementing effective protective measures;
- ▶ implementation of the project and its results have increased the interest of subsidising units in conservation of open ecosystems.



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### Sustainable territorial development

The project is part of the sustainable development policy, contributing to social and economic development of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland through activation of the local community – residents, local governments, tourists, children and youths, as well as the employees of emergency and law enforcement services and non-governmental organisations, and in accordance with the equal opportunities and non-discrimination principle which includes accessibility for persons with disabilities. No significant inequalities based on gender were identified in the project implementation. Tasks realised under the project concerning raising environmental awareness encouraged the seeking of alternative, environmentally-friendly sources of income by becoming active and involved in the field of nature conservation which positively influenced the development of rural tourism, gastronomy and commerce, as well as the services related to tourist traffic management. This simultaneously contributed to the improvement of the living conditions for the local community.

Thermophilous species and habitats are some of the most valuable and endangered components of the Polish and European natural environment. Within decades these ecosystems will disappear without protective measures. The social and economic changes that occurred during the latter half of the

20th century (intensification of farming, pollution and contamination of the environment, development of invasive species, unprofitability of farming land) led to the gradual deterioration of landscape and natural wealth (abandonment of Jura hills containing rock outliers, growth and development of invasive and expansive species, loss of environmentally valuable locations). The project addressed these undesirable changes. In accordance with international, national and local laws, the project protected, restored and preserved the valuable and unique landscape and natural values of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland. By engaging and activating farmers and promoting extensive agricultural economy (particularly flock-tending) the project is contributing to the conservation and protection of the traditions and culture of the region.



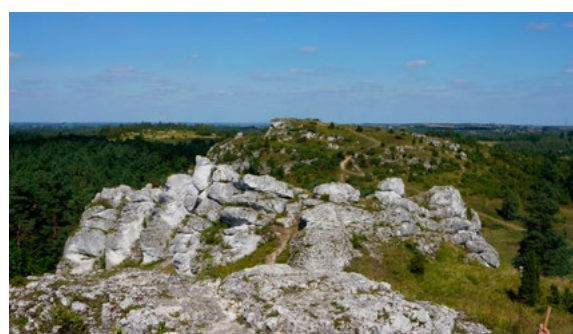
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The project's activities are some of the main means of counteracting natural environment degradation, loss of natural resources, and protecting the unique landscape and biodiversity. Natural habitats (ecosystems) and species sanctuaries in the protected areas have been restored to their proper state. The negative effects of the overgrowth of valuable semi-natural open ecosystems were curtailed by: removal of undergrowth of trees and bushes; removal of tree stumps and rootstock; removal of invasive alien species, in particular giant knotweed; cleaning up of illegal landfills; channelling climbing and tourist traffic; environmental monitoring and preventative patrols. These actions have contributed to revealing and emphasising the white rock formations, growth and improvement of the existence of thermophilous fauna and flora and the improvement, restoration and development of the priority habitats of the xerothermic grassland type. Co-operation with local governments inhibited the advancement of illegal holiday home development in the vicinity of the ecosystems which are now under protection.

Through its informational, promotional and educational activities, the project has contributed to raising the level of the society's ecological awareness and environmental conservation, as well as conservation of the tradition, culture and history of this region. In addition, the project was and remains the tool for activating local authorities and

communities, by introducing them to the subject of natural environment conservation and suggesting directions for engaging in rational agricultural policy and tourism. The scope of the project activities has contributed significantly to: the improvement and expansion of knowledge concerning conservation of open ecosystems; the increased engagement of the local community in maintaining local traditions and customs and; the increased tourist interest in flock-tending and active nature conservation.

The complexity, comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the project activities have positively influenced reinforcement of natural, social, economic, cultural and aesthetic values for the landscape and improvement of the condition of the deteriorated environment.



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### Exemplary value

The project constitutes a model of good landscape practices for others to follow. The exemplary character, intensity and modernity of the realised activities presented and developed a successful scheme for the implementation of protective measures in the area of open habitats and species, simultaneously providing a template for use of the flocktending economy as an instrument of nature conservation, maintaining the traditions and culture of Jura.

The widespread practice of grazing sheep in the area of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland vanished in the latter half of the twentieth century and, as a result, several generations of residents of this region have not had the opportunity to acquire knowledge and experience regarding the economy of flock-tending. Identifying the techniques, measures and methods for engaging in this activity in contemporary times was one of the important components of re-implementing grazing. The social and economic transformation in the latter half of the twentieth century resulted in the increased expansion of forest and shrubbery communities. In recent years, as a result of the discontinuation of agriculture and tree-felling for renewable fuel, the traditional features of the Jura landscape began to disappear. Imperceptibly, rock formations were obstructed by encroaching shrubbery and forest. The succession

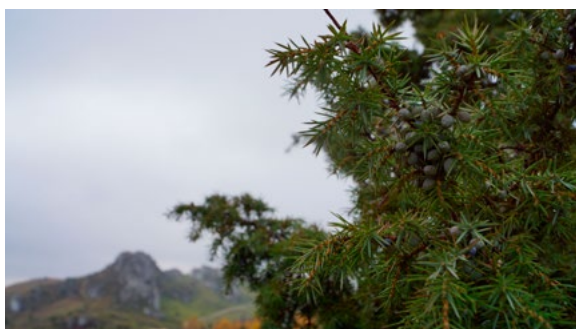


of trees and bushes resulted in overshadowing and changes to the humidity and thermal conditions of habitats, leading to subsidence and the loss of phytophilous ecosystems, along with the precious symbiotic species of plants and animals. The memory of the traditions of the people who had lived here for many generations slowly faded, along with the landscape of Jura. Within the span of a few decades, the unique features of the places, formed over the course of centuries by the intermingling of natural and cultural processes, continued to vanish. The loss of the extraordinary and precious values of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland was increasingly apparent. Grazing carried out under the project popularised the knowledge of grazing, including its use as an instrument of nature conservation. The actions carried out within the framework of the project expanded the ecological awareness of the local community and significantly raised the level of acceptance for the realised tasks. These activities allowed us to reintroduce and popularise grazing in the region of Jura.

Mobile grazing became an example to follow for the selected institutions engaged in nature conservation activities, as well as for people simply wishing to take up flock-tending once again.

After noticing the first results of field work, many individuals, both resident and visitors, were increasingly and eagerly enquiring of field agents and ZPKWS employees about the possibility of becoming involved in grazing. The enquiries primarily concerned the appropriate breed of sheep, adequate animal staffing, grazing period and the possibility for engaging in grazing within the framework of nature conservation projects. In each instance, they were educated about the purposefulness of sheep and goat grazing as an effective method of active nature protection and the opportunity for maintaining regional customs related with a flock-tending economy.

The methods and means for combating giant knotweed developed under the project became the template for other institutions engaged in eliminating this species from the natural environment.



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The comprehensiveness of the actions taken under the project attained satisfactory landscape and environmental effects. The template developed under the project can be successfully reproduced in other areas with similar characteristics. The co-operation with other beneficiaries, institutions with a similar operational profile in Poland and in Europe (Czech Republic, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia and Italy) guarantees that the applied and developed methods and actions will be reproduced and utilised in other locations and under other projects in the European Union. Other LIFE+ projects, institutions engaged in nature conservation, representatives of local governments and individuals (sheep breeders and residents of Jura) have turned to ZPKWS requesting to share the experience acquired, mainly in the field of grazing, but also the experience concerning logging, grubbing-up and removal of giant knotweed.

The project activities constitute a package of practical know-how, information which has been successfully reproduced and emulated in other locations and different projects both in Poland and Europe. Information, including monitoring data and compilations concerning the project are publicly available. Reports of the implementation of project activities are discussed during conferences organised by ZPKWS and under the co-operation of the framework of networking (presentations on the national and international forum, among the scientific circles, local authorities, in schools and within the community). The acquired experience and developed practices are used by other institutions of a similar profile, and by ourselves, in realising similar tasks. The acquired data and experience became a template and contributed to perfecting the methods and means of protecting thermophilous biocenoses and elimination of invasive species.

### Public participation

The conducted educational, promotional, informational, publishing and preventative activities also produced positive results for the conservation of the landscape, nature and culture of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland. These activities contributed to reducing the threat of anthropogenic impact on the environment of the most valuable areas, and expanded the ecological awareness of the residents and tourists visiting the area.

The networking co-operation under ZPKWS resulted in the project being presented to various audiences, on both national and international forums, among scientific circles, local authorities, in schools and within communities.

Co-operation with various entities during the implementation of the project allowed for the increase in the ecological awareness concerning the protection

of valuable non-forest habitats in the unique area of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland. During the implementation of individual tasks, there was ongoing co-operation between town halls and municipal offices, village administrators, services, nature conservation organisations and local residents, including co-operation through procuring permits for engaging in works on plots of land, carrying out preventative patrols, and conducting inspections in the areas covered by the project. During the field excursions to external entities the information concerning the project, its premises and the produced results, were regularly transmitted.

The meetings and talks with local authorities and communities allowed for expansion of ecological awareness, the demonstration of the natural and landscape value of the areas of Krakow-Czystochowa Upland and impressing the importance of engaging in active conservation in this area.

After familiarising themselves with the subject of the project, and noticing the first results of their fieldwork, the residents would frequently and eagerly talk with ZPKWS employees. Initially, they would inquire about implementation of the project and then with great passion and sentiment would talk about the past farming economy in the area. In numerous instances they emphasised that they were pleased that these actions have been taken to uncover the calcareous outliers and that the livestock had returned to the selected areas of Krakow-Czystochowa Upland. The older generation unambiguously let it be understood that for them the image of grazing sheep and goats brought back memories of childhood and were certain that the animals are an inseparable element of the tradition and culture of this region.



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The educational and promotional activities produced positive effects for conservation of species and habitats covered by the project, contributed to the reduction of the threat of anthropogenic impact on the environment of the most valuable xerothermic areas in the Silesia province and expanded the

ecological awareness of residents and tourists visiting the region. A major increase was recorded in involvement of the local community and authorities in maintaining local traditions, customs and interest in flock-tending and active nature protection among the community. Both residents and tourists, from Silesia, across Poland and from abroad wished to be involved and a total of 5,550 individuals took part in educational and scientific activities. Participants were from all age groups (pre-school institutions, all levels of education, organised groups, youth, adults and elders).

The conducted activities positively encourage the society to participate in the decision-making process. The project contributed to achievement of the goals presented in the strategic documents that are binding at international level (including the European Landscape Convention, through conservation of the landscape, landscape management and landscape planning); at national level (including "The programme of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity: the Action Plan for the period 2015-2020"; the National Regional Development Strategy 2030, indicating the acceleration of the transformation of the economic profile of Silesia); regional and local levels, including Silesia Development Strategy, Silesia Province 2030, strategic goal C. Silesia Province is a region of high environmental and spatial quality; the Strategic Goals for nature conservation in the province of Silesia are set up to the year 2030 for the conservation and protection of areas with high landscape value, as well as stopping degradation of landscape and restoration of spatial order.

### Awareness-raising

Within the Province of Silesia an extraordinary diversity of landscape exists, mainly the result of the diversity of its natural characteristics (primarily geological, geo-morphological and hydrological) and anthropogenic characteristics (chiefly related to various forms of land-use and the varying degree of naturalness and anthropogenic processes affecting the space within the province). Simultaneously, the areas of inimitable and unique landscape and natural value exist (the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland and Orle Gniazda Landscape Park) and the protected areas in the province constitute more than 20% of the surface.

Integrated conservation of nature, landscape and cultural heritage have resulted in the positive social reception of the results in the landscape. The sustainable economy under the project allows for broader possibilities to continue the activities developed under the project, particularly the economy aimed at conserving the existing and unique values in the form of calcareous rock outliers, and the vast

hills of the landscape. This awareness of the landscape was positively consolidated for residents, and has provided the foundation for strengthening the European identity, and encouraging co-operation in the field to protect and preserve natural, landscape and cultural values. Support from European funds formed the foundation for the perpetuation of good practices that could be adopted to protect and preserve valuable areas. Implementation of the project (including development of protective measures, methods for their implementation and the results of the conducted works) contributed to the better reception of the project by the local community, the local authorities and the organisations engaged in nature conservation. This appreciation of the project's operations has resulted in easier procurement of permits from the authorities for subsequent fieldwork. After witnessing the first results of fieldwork which revealed rock outcrops and provided livestock grazing, both residents and visitors to Jura realised the importance of implementing these protective measures and carrying out protective works, as discontinuation of mowing and grazing will in just a few years result in the expansion of unrestricted secondary succession and loss of landscape, the natural and cultural values of the region and, consequently, the loss of this landscape for future generations.

By impressing upon the local community the value of the conservation and improvement of the landscape, the natural and cultural values of the Jura region, it is hoped this will also influence the economic standing of the community, without threatening the condition of the natural environment and landscape. A general lesson about respecting the environment constantly raises ecological awareness regarding conservation of landscape, nature, history, tradition and culture. Expanding the Jura society's ecological awareness has significantly improved the acceptance of the realised tasks. People have come to understand the importance of co-operation and the role they play in implementing coordinated projects in the field of environmental protection and conservation of the cultural heritage of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland. During all the meetings and discussions, the importance of human-landscape co-operation has been emphasised.



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## Protection of the valuable non-forest habitats and landscapes characteristic for the area of Orle Gniazda Landscape Park

The Silesia Province Landscape Park Complex (*Zespół Parku Krajobrazowego Województwa Śląskiego, ZPKWS*) is a provincial self-governing organisational unit.

ZPKWS implements actions in the field of protection of natural, historical and cultural values, and protects landscape in order to preserve landscape values and popularise these values in conditions of sustainable development in eight landscape parks. These parks constitute a legally regulated form of environmental protection.

ZPKWS has realised various tasks, including:

- ▶ inventorying and protection of natural habitats, localities of plant, animal and fungi species subject to species-specific protection and their habitats, as well as inanimate nature conservation;
- ▶ identification and assessment of both existing and possible internal and external threats to the landscape park, and applying for implementation of actions aimed at eliminating or reducing these threats and their effects. In addition, further actions aimed at improving the operations and protection of a landscape park were implemented;
- ▶ collection of documentation concerning natural and historical, cultural and ethnographic values;
- ▶ realisation of tasks related to conservation of other forms of environmental protection within the borders of a national park;
- ▶ provision of information concerning nature conservation for people staying in the protected areas;
- ▶ realisation of educational tasks;
- ▶ co-operation with local governments, landscape park administrators, environmental organisations and other entities relating to the conservation of a landscape park.

Since its foundation, ZPKWS has been realising actions relating to the conservation of landscape and protection of valuable natural habitats, as well as the conservation of species within its borders. ZPKWS is strongly involved in realising the statutory tasks of the unit. The organisation has extensive experience, including receiving a significant number of grants for implementation of the operations related to the protection of valuable natural habitats, as well as conservation of rare and endangered

species. Over recent years it has implemented numerous projects, including:

- ▶ Project Life1 I Nat/PL/000432 “Protection of valuable natural non-forest habitats typical of the Orle Gniazda Landscape Park” within the framework of the Life+ (Nature and Biodiversity) component. This project scored the highest points of all the nature-related applications throughout Europe. The total cost of the project was 1,780,837 €.
- ▶ Project Life12 Nat/PL/000081 “Conservation of non-forest habitats in the area of landscape parks in the Beskid Mountains” within the framework of the Life+ (Nature and Biodiversity) component. Total cost of the project was 2,033,768 €.
- ▶ “Conservation of the mosaic spatial arrangement of natural habitats in the catchment area of Biala Przemysza River” implemented with a co-financing agreement, total cost of the project being 1,499,550 €.
- ▶ “Protection of the endangered rock habitats in Orle Gniazda Landscape Park” realised in 2007-2008 and funded from the resources of the EkoFundusz foundation. The following habitats were protected: (6210) xerothermic grassland (*Festuco-Brometea*) and thermophilous grasses, *Asplenion setentrionalis-Festucion pallentis* in the areas of the refuges Ostoja Kroczycka and Ostoja Srodkowojurajska.
- ▶ “Protection of the endangered habitats in the selected areas of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland (purchase of land)” realised in 2007-2008 and funded from the resources of the EkoFundusz foundation. The following habitats were protected: xerothermic grassland (*Festuco-Brometea*) and thermophilous grasslands *Asplenion setentrionalis-Festucion pallentis* in Ostoja Kroczycka (and additionally the meadows (habitat code, 6410) located outside of the Natura 2000 programme area).

Implemented within the framework of the Regional Environmental Protection and Water Management Fund in Katowice co-financing:

- ▶ “Protection of the priority habitats included under the Natura 2000 programme in the area of Orle Gniazda Landscape Park” realised in 2008-2009, protecting xerothermic grassland (*Festuco-Brometea*) and thermophilous grasslands *Asplenion setentrionalis-Festucion pallentis* in Ostoja Kroczycka, Ostoja Olsztynsko-Mirowska and Ostoja Srodkowojurajska.
- ▶ “Complex protection of valuable natural non-forest habitats in Orle Gniazda Landscape Park”, realised in 2009, protecting xerothermic grassland and thermophilous grasslands *Asplenion*

*setentrionalis-Festucion pallentis* in Ostoja Kroczycka and Ostoja Srodkowojurajska.

- ▶ “Protection of the valuable natural habitats and non-forest landscapes in the area of Orle Gniazda Landscape Park, realised in 2009. 18.5 ha. of habitats was subjected to protection of xerothermic grassland and thermophilous grasslands, *Asplenion setentrionalis-Festucion pallentis*, in Ostoja Kroczycka.
- ▶ “Active protection of grasslands and non-forest habitats in Orle Gniazda Landscape Park”, 2017. The areas of xerothermic grasslands, rock grasslands and juniper coppices in thermophilous grasslands: moorlands (5130) were protected by the introduction of extensive traditional sheep and goat grazing, and removal of the undergrowth of trees and bushes.
- ▶ “Flowery Meadows”: the programme of conservation of non-forest communities in the area of Beskid Landscape Parks, in the area of Jelesnia municipality.

### Description of the Project

“Protection of valuable and non-forest habitats and landscapes characteristic for the area of Orle Gniazda Landscape Park”

The Krakow-Czystochowa Upland, commonly called Jura which, “... until recently created an impression of a mountainous landscape devoid of water... The entirety presents a picturesque landscape of jagged rocks rising at times from fields, dotted with ruins of castles... Steep and rocky slopes are covered with broad-leaf forests whereas the mounds of sand in the valleys are covered with poor and pygmy coniferous forest. Pastures are scattered with juniper and ferns. Strong emphasis and prominence of these characteristic components resulted from centuries of extensive grazing of livestock, sheep and goats in particular...” (Bronikowski 1929, quoting Czylok et al, 2010).

The Krakow-Czystochowa Upland and the Orle Gniazda Landscape Park, being one of the eight landscape parks located in Silesia province, distinguishes itself with the wealth and quaint beauty of natural phenomena and the extraordinary lie of the land – the unique landscape of the mosaic of rock outliers.

The exceptionally rich and diverse character of the environment of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland is the result of its complex geological history and geomorphological processes: initially the Jurassic, Pleistocene and Holocene history of its formation, and the sustained erosion during interglacial periods. These factors formed the foundation of plant life and the extraordinary diversity of habitats. It is a unique terrain where, within a few metres, a mosaic

of plant communities which differ from each other in terms of floral composition and ecological character can be found (Michalik 1974, Szafer, Zarzycki 1977, Wika et al 2000, Michalik 2002). Phytocenoses of xerothermic communities come into contact with forest communities, and the thermophilous rock vegetation comes into contact with hygrophilous communities and damp rocks (Szafer, Zarzycki 1977). The specific feature of the flora of Jura is the aggregation of the plant species with various trophic, thermic, humidity and soil property-related requirements in a small area. It is a place of soil contrasts, resulting from the proximity of calcareous rocks to sands, loesses, humus soils and cold karst springs. The core of the flora consists of native species and permanently domesticated antophytes growing in natural and semi-natural communities. This area is characterised by the co-existence of various geographical elements representing remote and varied climatic areas (Szafer, Zarzycki 1977, Wika 1986).

The rocky landscape of Jura forms the characteristic outline of the panorama of the Upland and is one of the greatest landscape and natural values of the land. The wealth of this region was formed through the processes accompanying the evolution of our planet initiated more than 150 million years ago, on the floor of the Jurassic Sea. The striking prominence of the white rock outliers is also the effect of extensive livestock grazing, in particular sheep and goats, conducted here for many centuries, with mowing and the use of forests and trees as the source of firewood and lumber. Such use contributed to the development of the characteristic bio-centric arrangement of this region.

The Jurassic hills, containing open xerothermic habitats in the Upland, evolved over many centuries, due primarily to extensive flock tending. Grazing had been discontinued in recent decades and, as a result of the secondary succession process, forest communities began to develop, leading to deterioration and loss of the landscape, natural, historical and cultural values of the region.

In recent years, awareness of the necessity to protect the characteristic natural qualities of the Upland has increased, with the restoration and conservation of its biological diversity, unique features of the landscape and restoration of the flock-tending culture.

A prerequisite for satisfactory results of active protection of the biodiversity and landscape of Jura is a proper approach to the problem, which will also affect the economic aspect. It is important to ensure that conservation efforts are introduced when preparing the detailed schedule of operations. The perception of the landscape of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland and Jura are now changing. People are increasingly aware of the loss of its

inimitable and extraordinary values. To salvage and preserve the biological and landscape diversity of this region, the concept of integrated culture and environmental protection, which will constitute a component of the regional strategy of sustainable development, must be spread among the population, and preferably with the participation of local residents.

In order to protect the calcareous hills of Jura that are covered with grass and juniper, the invasive trees and bushes have been removed from the area. However, the results are temporary because within two or three growing seasons numerous sprigs and outgrowths emerge from the trunks and roots that remain after logging. For permanent restoration of the grassland communities and the landscape of Jura, sustained and active protection is necessary, particularly by introducing proper grazing with sheep and goats, which serve as "natural lawnmowers". The animals bite the regrowing sprigs and scarify the surface layer of soil by traversing the slopes. This leads to active erosion in the areas where excess humus has accumulated. The value of utilising livestock in conservation efforts is that, during grazing, certain species of plants are consumed while others are avoided. Such selective eating aids the formation of the natural values of grasses. The grazing animals select the plants with soft leaves and avoid plants with a xeromorphic structure. The species which are left alone create the characteristic, colourful and fragrant aspect of the xerothermic grasslands. Thus, the surface of the Jura hills is once again being uncovered, and the unique landscape characteristics are becoming restored.

In order to restore the former natural features of Jura, not long ago called "the land of white rocks", it is necessary to take a number of well-co-ordinated actions falling under the scope of active nature conservation and these are organised by the Silesia Province Landscape Park Complex which addresses the undesirable changes that have occurred in the landscape, nature and culture.

ZPKWS has for several decades realised various tasks, varying in scale, in the field of active nature conservation. The passive conservation (establishing reserves and sanctuaries or entering species into the endangered species list) is not sufficient to preserve the valuable landscape and endangered natural habitats. Longstanding regression of farming, including the crisis of sheep breeding, resulted in the terrain of the Upland becoming overgrown with thermophilous bushes (buckthorn, alder buckthorn, dogwood, blackthorn) as well as an undergrowth of various tree species, in particular pine, birch, beech, poplar, aspen, hornbeam and hawthorn. This undergrowth obstructs the picturesque landscape and began to dominate the remaining plants, thus

active protection is necessary. The object of active nature conservation is the inhibition of detrimental changes in the Upland landscape and deterioration of the biodiversity of this area.

The introduction of a programme was necessary, including regular removal of the undergrowth of trees and bushes, grubbing-up selected areas, mowing and grazing. Within the framework of co-operation with the local community, various informational and promotional activities concerning specific forms of agriculture were realised, including the breeding of sheep and goats. During consultations, the local residents emphasised that mowing, flock-tending and felling for firewood have recently become non-profitable, while conflicts of interests were also noted between the goals of conservation and the ecological awareness of residents. In this context, an educational programme was planned concerning common interests, human-landscape co-operation, and indicating possibilities for the development of tourism.

Realisation of a complex, large-scale undertaking resolved the undesirable changes taking place in the landscape, nature, history and culture of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland and Orle Gniazda Landscape Park.

The unique landscape of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland and the thermophilous habitats are the most valuable in the region and, at the same time, among the most endangered components of the natural environment of Poland and Europe. Over several decades, the unique features of these places, formed over centuries of natural and cultural intermingling, continued to vanish. The loss of extraordinary and valuable characteristics became increasingly apparent. In the next 20-30 years, the landscape, natural, cultural and historical values of Jura may vanish if these protective measures planned under the project are not implemented (for example, logging, grubbing-up, grazing, cleaning up illegal landfills, channelling the climbing and tourism traffic, environmental monitoring, preventative patrols, promotion, education, information, increasing environmental awareness of the local populace). Subjecting the selected, valuable areas to appropriate treatment allowed for inhibition of the advancing secondary succession process. Stopping the negative effects of the overgrowth of these valuable semi-natural open ecosystems contributed to the improved existence of the thermophilous flora and fauna and improvement, restoration and development of the landscape.

### Description of the project

“Protection of the valuable non-forest habitats and landscapes characteristic for the area of Orle Gniazda Landscape Park”, implemented between

September 2013 and December 2017, is the largest realised initiative among the projects implemented by ZPKWS. Within the framework of ZPKWS' operations, all the developed methods and measures are being successfully reproduced and implemented within the framework of maintaining the ecological impact, and thus the durability of the project. Bearing in mind the advantages of fulfilling the assignments and the experience acquired in previous years, long-term protective measures are now being planned.

The main premises and goals of the project are to:

- ▶ develop models for operating within the scope of sustainable planning and landscape management;
- ▶ implement the Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats, wild fauna and flora;
- ▶ conserve, improve and protect 100 ha. of valuable non-forest habitats threatened with: overgrowth due to the discontinuation of farming and grazing; illegal development and tourism; and advancing secondary succession within the four Natura 2000 refuges. This has been accomplished through the implementation of activities providing examples of best practice (rock and xerothermic grasslands; juniper coppices distributed on the xerothermic and rock grasslands, and unique flora, including *Galium cracoviense*); and calcareous and neutrophilous rocks containing pioneer vegetation. The ecosystems are included among the most valuable and yet endangered components of the natural environment of Europe, forming the arrangements of landscape and natural sequences, the wildlife corridors.
- ▶ protect, conserve, improve and restore the natural, landscape, cultural and historical values of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland;
- ▶ protect valuable and endangered biodiversity, and the unique geo-diversity of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland;
- ▶ protect and preserve 6.5 ha. of rock grassland from the ever-increasing traffic which contributes to the deterioration of rocks and the degradation of plant vegetation, through organising and decongesting traffic;
- ▶ protect domestic flora through removal of the invasive alien species, giant knotweed (*Reynoutria sachalinensis*), from an area of 1.5 ha.;
- ▶ protect the existing population of *Cochlearia polonica* around the Centuria river springs of Ostoja Srodkowojurajska, including purchase of land;
- ▶ environmental, botanical, zoological and geomorphological monitoring – verification of the

neutral state "0" and environmental monitoring during project implementation;

- ▶ protect the non-forest habitat threatened with the intense penetration of the area by humans, focusing on 18 hubs and the most frequently visited spots, by erecting tourist infrastructure, and protecting areas threatened with intense anthropisation resulting from "wild tourism and recreation" by erecting suitable tourist infrastructure in the spots most frequently visited by tourists;
- ▶ activate the community that is local to the project through introduction to nature conservation, indicating alternatives for a rational farming economy and tourism, raising environmental awareness and, indirectly, improving local economical standing and income;
- ▶ conduct a supplementary informational campaign directed at various social groups by organising educational workshops for children, youth and other groups, with publications directed to scientific circles, local government, climbing clubs and speleological (caving) groups;
- ▶ reduce the threat of anthropogenic impact on the environment in the area of four Natura 2000 refuges through preventive measures, in the form of the patrols conducted by Wildlife Services, the police and National Forest Services;
- ▶ improve and expand knowledge concerning protection and conservation of open, semi-natural ecosystems through meetings with the local community and educational workshops;
- ▶ protect cultural heritage by conservation of endangered livestock species (sheep and goats), restoring flock-tending agriculture, maintaining local traditions and customs related to a flock-tending economy, developing and indicating new methods and measures for a flock-tending economy;

### Project activities

Two co-ordinating beneficiary offices were established in Bydżin and Smolen, and equipment for conducting field operations was purchased. Designs for the tourist infrastructure were created.

#### *Co-operation with entities and integration of the local community*

Over the course of the realisation of individual tasks, co-operation was established with town halls and municipal offices, village administrators, services and organisations related to nature conservation, as well as with local residents. Information concerning the project, its premises and goals, was always communicated during field excursions. Informational meetings with the local population were organised and conducted. During the meetings, a multimedia

presentation was delivered which allowed participants to become familiar with the activities, the implementation and scope of the project, followed by a panel discussion during which the issues concerning financing the project, its premises and the results of the conducted works were discussed. During the meetings, particular attention was drawn to the importance of the implementation of active protection in the area, and that effective nature conservation is impossible without involving the local community in the activities.

Former and the few remaining sheep and goat breeders were encouraged, with emphasis that the actions which relate to nature conservation can benefit farmers and breeders, as well as the environment and the Upland landscape. Achievements to date were demonstrated, noting that, without further aid to the breeders and shepherds, active conservation would not be possible. The meetings allowed for expansion of residents' ecological awareness, impressing upon the community the natural and landscape value of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland. As the representatives of the institution engaged in nature conservation, and for the local government units organising and participating in meetings, this was an experience which allowed to expand and improve knowledge and experience. Understanding the practices developed so far by residents, and learning about their new expectations, proved important. Developing and creating a new scenario of conservation activities resulted in effective and successful co-operation for the benefit of a regional strategy of sustainable development, planning and landscape management.

#### *Creating a database*

An electronic database containing a collection of maps was created to record the project's activities. The data were accumulated in the form of vector data collected by the project employees through the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers and a multimedia tablet with Geographic Information System (GIS) software. The use of a mobile device with appropriate GIS software significantly improved field work and the quality of the collected spatial data.

#### *Purchase of environmentally valuable land*

Under the project, 11 ha. of environmentally-valuable land was purchased, including 8 ha. of the basin of the Centuria river. It is the most important site of distribution of an endemic species, *Cochlearia polonica*, and is of key importance for its conservation. 2.7 ha. of xerothermic and rock grassland habitats were also acquired. All purchased plots have a disclosed entry in the Land and Mortgage Register concerning the intended use of the purchased land: nature conservation.

### *Removal of undergrowth of trees and bushes*

Activities occurred across the entire area of Jura hills (72 ha.) in two stages. Logging contributed greatly to the restoration of the landscape value (rock outcrops) and the restoration of the xerothermic character of the Jura hills within the project. Logging constituted the first and very significant stage of the complex landscape and nature conservation of this region.

### *Removal of tree stumps from the grasslands*

Tree stumps of hornbeam, poplar and filbert were removed in the 5.25 ha. of thermophilous habitats. The expansionary nature of these species threatens the ecosystem of thermophilous biocenoses and the unique components of this landscape. Thus, the succession of expansive species and reduction in secondary overgrowing of the rocks containing thermophilous biocenoses was halted.

### *Introduction of grazing*

Grazing is an important stage of the regional strategy for sustainable development, planning and landscape management. 100 ha. of thermophilous habitats are now grazed, regularly supervised by both employees of the project and employed consultants. Grazing was managed by contractors chosen via a selection procedure and employed by local sub-contractors; the animals were either purchased under the project or privately owned by farmers.

In order to facilitate efficient execution of the task, veterinary care was provided, hay, straw and oats were purchased, as well as the necessary grazing infrastructure and equipment was loaned to the farmers. The project contributed to the increased interest in grazing of new farmers and the formation of small homesteads interested in breeding sheep and goats. In future, they will graze in the open areas within the framework of nature conservation projects, in and around certain small towns of the area.

These innovations resulted in ZPKWS becoming a pioneer institution in the field of operations regarding open habitats. The developed action plan is being replicated as a template by institutions at national and international level, with results in the protection, conservation and restoration of precious landscapes, nature, cultural and historical values, within both Poland and Europe.

### *Conservation of the conditions of the Cochlearia polonica habitats*

A resolution of the City Council of Łazy Owing has recognised the area as the monument of inanimate nature, "Complex of springs of the Centuria river", affording it legal protection. The environment was monitored on an ongoing basis and underwater sensors were purchased and installed to study the

hydrological conditions in detail. Readings are being taken: such data and its ongoing analysis enables rapid preventative action in case of a deterioration in the conditions of the *Cochlearia polonica* habitat being identified, which are at first frequently imperceptible.

A two-stage study of the habitat of *Cochlearia polonica* was conducted, expanded by environmental monitoring using parameters and indicators of the State Environmental Monitoring and photogrammetric study and conducted using a drone. The complexity of the task allows us to constantly monitor the habitat conditions required for growth and development of *Cochlearia polonica*.

### *Removal of giant knotweed*

A four-stage intensive elimination programme was conducted of this invasive alien species, giant knotweed (*Reynoutria sachalinensis*) from the area within valley Dolina Wodca (1.5 ha.), including:

- ▶ manual and mechanised mowing of the giant knotweed;
- ▶ deep ploughing combined with extraction of rootstock;
- ▶ ploughing to a depth of 40 cm below surface level, combined with extraction of rootstock;
- ▶ harrowing of the area after ploughing, combined with extraction of rootstock;
- ▶ manual removal of sprigs and rootstock of giant knotweed where inaccessible to machinery;
- ▶ spreading black agro-textile and staking it;
- ▶ removal of sprigs and rootstock of giant knotweed in specific spots;
- ▶ thorough cleaning and organising the area after each operation;
- ▶ removal of the produced biomass and waste and disposal (reprocessing) in the location permitted by law.

The activities related to the removal of giant knotweed resulted in its significant decrease in density and competitiveness with domestic species; the natural and landscape values of valley Dolina Wodca, one of the most scenic regions of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland, were uncovered and preserved. It is exceptionally important, considering the fact that elimination of giant knotweed is costly and time-consuming, because a more effective and efficient method for elimination of this species is yet to be developed.

### *Active conservation of rock grasslands by directing climbing traffic*

With co-operation between ZPKWS, the Regional Directorate of Environmental Protection in Katowice, the Polish Mountaineering Association



and an ornithologist, 771 climbing trails were designated on 75 rock formations. The area of Ostoja Srodkwojurajska was furnished with 1,222 rings and 135 descent posts; Ostoja Kroczycka was furnished with 1,730 rings and 176 descent posts. Trails were situated in order to avoid summits of calcareous rocks where valuable and endangered rock grasslands are distributed. All the created anchors and descent posts are compliant with standards of the Rock Climbing Commission of Polish Mountaineering Association.

#### *Cleaning up illegal landfills from the grasslands*

Illegal landfills that endangered both landscape and the environment were cleared from about 100 Jura hills. The grasslands were cleaned, illegal landfills were cleared and the waste was transported to a location permitted by law.

#### *Active protection through preventative patrols*

The most frequently recorded environmental offences are people entering into the protected and forest areas with motorised vehicles, staying in the areas prohibited to tourist traffic in the area of nature sanctuaries, exploring caves and rock climbing in prohibited areas and starting bonfires. During preventative patrols, services were primarily geared for prevention but, in the case of discovering flagrant environmental offences, fines were imposed by Police or Forest Watch. The preventative patrols frequently met tourists interested in improving their environmental awareness, and were often asked what is allowed and prohibited in the patrolled and protected areas, including inquiries of: whether climbing in nature sanctuaries is allowed; camping in the protected areas is permitted; why starting bonfires in the protected habitats near calcareous rock outliers or in the forest is prohibited. In order to educate the public, answers were given on the grounds of an appropriate legal act.

#### *Channelling tourist traffic*

The tourist infrastructure necessary for directing and channelling tourist traffic towards the intended areas was installed in order to eliminate threats resulting from uncontrolled exploration of the area (littering, destruction of habitats and plant communities). The object was to direct the tourist traffic towards the intended areas, the 18 hubs and most frequently visited spots. The erected tourist infrastructure includes roofed bowers, cycle racks, litter bins, information and educational boards. Tourist points of interest do not clash with the areas where protected species of plants and animals are distributed. Relevant offices of towns, municipalities and forest inspectorate exercise care over the resting stops, particularly regarding timely and scheduled garbage removal. The erected infrastructure

resulted in tourist traffic flowing freely along the trails and educational paths located in the area.

#### *Environmental monitoring*

Botanical, zoological and geo-morphological monitoring was conducted. The operations under the project aimed to study, analyse and evaluate the condition of the natural environment. The landscape value and the influence of the realised tasks on the landscape of the Upland were assessed. The detailed scientific monitoring reports compiled during monitoring serve to record realised statutory activities and protective tasks.

#### *Evaluation of the social and economic influence of the planned actions on the local economy and society, as well as the function of the ecosystem*

A two-stage survey of the local community was conducted. The first stage took place before the project activities were initiated. Analysis of the survey indicates that the residents possessed a basic knowledge of the elementary principles of nature conservation. However, certain aspects of these issues are still little known to the community. The second survey was carried out after the conclusion of the project and the analysis indicates that the residents have noticed the improvement in the environment of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland, and are satisfied with the new tourist infrastructure. The respondents indicated the importance of the implementation of protective measures in the area of thermophilous habitats, xerothermic and rock grasslands. A significant number of interviewees indicated the need to engage in educational activities which enable development of a pro-ecological attitude. After the analysis was conducted, it was ascertained that the ecological awareness of the community had improved as a result of the project. The survey was conducted among the local community, during the field excursions to the areas covered by the project.

#### *Networking with other projects*

Trips were made to other beneficiaries and nature conservation institutions, parent institutions and institutions that subsidised activities: beneficiaries were welcomed, platform meetings and thematic meetings were organised. The object of the task was to exchange information concerning the implementation of projects and engage in co-operation between projects and institutions, at both national and international level. This has provided an excellent opportunity to exchange views on operations.

#### *Project implementation monitoring*

Project implementation monitoring served as a tool for internal supervision of tasks and enabled early reaction to uncover possible threats to protection

of the sustainable planning and management of the landscape. The progress on realisation of project tasks is monitored on an ongoing basis.

#### *Work of the Steering Committee*

The Committee is composed of professionals in botany, zoology, inanimate nature and landscape conservation. In addition, representatives of the police force, forest inspectorate, town halls, municipal offices and representatives of farmers and representatives of tourist industry were invited. The members of the advisory body supervised the project implementation, including expressing opinions on the project.

#### *Promotional, educational, informational and publishing activities under the project*

Popularisation, informational and promotional activities became an important component of the project. Co-operation was established with institutions, organisations and the local community, at all levels. It was apparent that, without participation of all these units, and without reaching the community, the project would have no chance of success and that the conservation of the most valuable areas would not endure. This was the reason for the widely publicised informational and popularisation activities.

In preparation for conducting educational activities, a design for the educational campaign "Getting to know grasslands – grazing is no small business" was prepared and subjected to practical evaluation, after positive evaluation by the Environmental Education Division of ZPKWS. Classes for 4,787 individuals have been carried out in 192 groups. Educational activities were carried out in accordance with the adopted framework programme, for example:

- ▶ a classroom teaching element: a multimedia presentation on the subject of thermophilous habitats;
- ▶ a field teaching element: the object is to learn about thermophilous habitats, using the classroom-acquired knowledge during the field trips;
- ▶ catering: a two-course dinner is provided.

Where possible, the employees of the project conduct regular classes, in order to popularise the information on the project and its related aspects. Groups from across Poland have participated in these classes including pre-school institutions, schools of all levels, organised groups (Polish Tourist Society guides, Farmers' Wives Association, members of the local government, the local community, members of "solectwo" units and others).

500 educational packages have been distributed, each package containing:

- ▶ theoretical problems: the script for a lesson adapted to five age groups (pre-school, grades 1-3 and 4-6, middle school, high school);
- ▶ handouts: colouring books, crosswords, cut-outs, quizzes and more;
- ▶ multimedia aids: multimedia presentation, with a slideshow on a USB stick;
- ▶ a set of stickers depicting selected thermophilous species;
- ▶ a Memory educational game or an "old maid" card game;
- ▶ t-shirts;
- ▶ a storage container (ring binder and a laminated bag).

The distributed packages enrich the traditional classes carried out in school and allow teachers to explain conservation of xerothermic grasslands to pupils. Furthermore, they constitute a good aid for both children and youths who were absent when the educational activities were carried out.

In order to ensure the continuity of education of the conservation of landscape, nature, history and culture of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland, a lesson was introduced in the Environmental Education Division of ZPKWS.

A website was launched in two language versions (Polish and English) and is regularly updated. Two promotional documentaries were produced: the first introduces the project, the implementation plans and expectations of ZPKWS, local authorities and the community. The second was produced after the conclusion of the project, to present its outcome as part of conferential, informational and publishing activities at regional, national and international level. Similar information in the form of articles was published in the local press and popular science magazines.

Two international conferences were organised to launch and conclude the project, and numerous informational and educational boards were erected in the area covered by the project. A number of promotional papers and materials were published, including 2,000 copies of the multimedia album, a guide for climbers and potholers, annual wall calendars, promotional gadgets, a layman report, a scientific report and others.

The promotional, educational, informational and publishing activity of the project was all-inclusive, aimed at all age groups of various interests and levels of education. The universal character and varied form of the popularisation and informational activities were directed towards a wide audience.

As a result of these actions, fruitful co-operation was established with authorities of towns, municipalities

and their residents. The activities contributed to the endorsement of the ideas and goals of the project and promoted good practices which benefit from the natural wealth and nature conservation of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland.

The local community learned about new ways to protect and preserve their landscape, and nature conservation, from their own homestead to the terrain directly covered by the project.

#### Summary

Over recent decades, the unique features of the Krakow-Czystochowa Upland and the Orle Gniazda Landscape Park, formed by the intermingling of centuries of natural and cultural processes, had continued to vanish. The loss of the extraordinary and precious features of the region were increasingly apparent. In order to protect, restore and preserve the Upland landscape and its natural, historical and cultural values, the ZPKWS implemented a complex project covering a number of well-co-ordinated protective measures. Implementing the multitude of planned comprehensive actions made it possible to achieve satisfactory landscape, environmental, cultural and historical effects. The undertaking significantly influenced the intensification of the regional strategy for sustainable development and landscape management.

Experiences acquired in recent years indicate that the issue of active protection of nature, biodiversity and landscape should be approached holistically, including the economic aspect. The comprehensiveness of the actions taken under the project achieved satisfactory results in numerous fields (landscape, nature, history, culture and tradition). The methods and formulas developed for the implementation of protective measures (grazing, logging, grubbing up, removal of undergrowth of trees and bushes, eradication of invasive alien species) became a template to emulate for other units, for example, institutions with a similar operational profile, NGOs, breeders, farmers, etc. These templates can be successfully reproduced in regions with similar characteristics. Co-operation with Polish and European units of a similar profile will guarantee that the applied and developed methods and measures will be reproduced and applied in other areas and during projects within the European Union. To date, other LIFE+ projects, institutions engaged in nature conservation, representatives of local governments and individuals (sheep breeders and residents of Jura) have turned to ZPKWS requesting a presentation of the knowledge acquired in this field, mainly concerning grazing but also related to logging, grubbing-up and eradication of giant knotweed.

Observations and acquired experience indicate that, in general, the actions related with active protection

of nature and landscape, including conservation of non-forest xerothermic grassland habitats, should be implemented in the following order:

- ▶ creation of a detailed environmental inventory of the area that will be subjected to treatment and the resulting spatial, temporal and qualitative arrangement of actions to be taken;
- ▶ mechanical removal of undergrowth of trees and bushes;
- ▶ intensive grazing of livestock in the cleared areas in the following growing seasons;
- ▶ seasonal grazing of sheep and goats systematically continued to maintain the biological and landscape outcome which will present the opportunity for widely engaging local communities in the subject of nature conservation and restoration of characteristic features of the landscape;
- ▶ botanical, zoological and geo-morphological monitoring of the short-term effects of the implemented protective measures and planning the scope of the subsequent stages of the conducted operations.

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# The Land of Bees

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### Summary of the Project

The Land of Bees is a project addressing one of the European Union's priority topics, education in the field of beekeeping. The kRAJ NGO built a unique education centre and operates educational apiaries for the lay and professional public, organising experiential programmes for all types of school, day camps and other activities to systematically raise awareness of the importance of bees and natural pollinators for the environment. It implements beekeeping courses for beginners and free courses for the long-term unemployed, to whom it also provides material aid and helps graduates of the courses with the sale of bee products. Engaged in social entrepreneurship, the NGO founded a wax processing workshop and a carpentry workshop for hive production. People are engaged from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and marginalised groups to process bee products. The NGO also educates professionals, develops co-operation in the region and supports community life. By expanding bee families in the landscape and making gardens favourable to pollinators, it contributes to increasing the landscape biodiversity.



© The kRAJ Archives

## Central aims of the Project

The main goal of the project was to build a sustainable landscape by protecting pollinators and ensuring pollination by bees and other natural pollinators, and to set up prime examples for tackling the extinction of pollinators in the natural landscape for European countries.

The kRAJ NGO is focused on the emergent pan-European topic of landscape management through beekeeping and pollination, education of the importance of bees and pollinators, and increasing landscape biodiversity. By its activities, the NGO presents the sustainable principles of beekeeping, and educates the lay and professional public about the importance of bees both for humans and the landscape. Operating unique educational centres in Kokava and Rimavicou, it implements its programme throughout Slovakia.

The NGO deals not only with the acute problem associated with pollinator decline in the environment, but also develops sustainable economic and social well-being in the region.

The NGO was established in 2007 and started operating in Poltár district in 2013, at a time when there was a 25.6% unemployment rate. This is a district with the permanently the lowest job availability in the whole of Slovakia. The main reason for this is the disappearance of the 200-year-old tradition of glass production here, which had made the area famous. Job opportunities had been provided by several glass factories, but these gradually disappeared after 1989. Thus, the return to traditional beekeeping in this region is extremely important.

As part of social entrepreneurship, the NGO involves people from the region in processing bee products and the production of hives; helps skilled beekeepers with the sale of their products; and trains and materially supports the long-term unemployed in their beekeeping undertakings or bee product processing. The NGO co-operates with local farmers in the management of the traditional landscape.

The project thus solves not only the Slovak but also the global problem with the death of pollinators such as bees, solitary bees, bumblebees, butterflies, etc.

Some of the goals of the project can be defined as follows:

- ▶ to systematically address beekeeping and beekeeping education in the region, and thus build on the 65-year-old tradition of beekeeping in the family of the founder of the NGO and the family's long-term experience with environmental education;

- ▶ to build an education centre and establish an educational apiary as an exemplary and replicable model, open all year round, and accessible to the general public;
- ▶ to implement courses for beginners to develop the tradition of beekeeping, educating future beekeepers from all over Slovakia. Each graduate is trained to be a responsible beekeeper, aware of the risk of bee diseases, using ecological approaches that are friendly and sensitive to the environment;
- ▶ to implement free, year-round beekeeper-training courses for the unemployed and give them the opportunity to obtain a new form of subsistence in an economically-poor region; providing novice beekeepers with material help;
- ▶ to help the graduates of the courses with the sale of bee products;
- ▶ to systematically raise awareness about the importance of bees and natural pollinators for the environment and the general public, and to actively engage the general public in helping pollinators;
- ▶ to promote beekeeping among the local population;
- ▶ to implement the experiential programme "A Beekeeper for a day" in the educational apiaries, not only for schools in the region in the form of day camps but also for anyone interested in beekeeping, whether from Slovakia or abroad. The participant becomes a beekeeper for at least a day;
- ▶ to implement experiential and research education about butterflies, bumble bees and solitary bees;
- ▶ to create a programme for schools on the importance of sustainable traditional rural management, to establish and run a beekeeping club in a primary school;
- ▶ to create a workshop for the processing of wax, intermediate goods for beekeepers, the production of candles and decorations, and to have social entrepreneurship in the area;
- ▶ to establish a carpentry workshop for the production of hives and beekeeping equipment, and to encourage social entrepreneurship in the area;
- ▶ to involve and train people from marginalised groups (people with mild mental and physical disabilities, the long-term unemployed) to work with bee products, also in co-operation with social services homes;
- ▶ to develop co-operation and self-government with schools, professional public, social services homes and other partners;

- ▶ to support networking, partnership building, exchange of experience and information, as well as sharing good practice on the subject of bees and beekeeping;
- ▶ to involve companies on a voluntary basis, and to help companies develop green policies;
- ▶ to educate the professional public, to broker professional discussions and dialogue between different stakeholders;
- ▶ to spread awareness through the issue of publications, organising professional events, participation and lectures at professional events;
- ▶ to become an example of good practice and to motivate other organisations in social entrepreneurship, regional development, and activities beneficial to the landscape;
- ▶ to support community life in the region.

## Outcome

### The project outputs can be defined as follows:

- ▶ establishment of two educational apiaries (Kokava and Rimavicou, Lučenec) which create the background for educational activities for all age groups. They offer the concept of an open apiary where it is possible to hold workshops during the season. Part of the apiary also serves as a community apiary and provides space for people who do not have land and have nowhere to place their bee colonies. In addition to the programmes for the general public, the apiary also has programmes for beginner, advanced and professional beekeepers, with a focus on examples of ecological practice in beekeeping. Apiaries are used for awareness and education of visitors from all over Slovakia, and increasingly from other European countries. The programme can be conducted in English or Hungarian.

### Activities in the field of environmental education about the importance of pollinators for the environment:

- ▶ more than 6,000 pupils of all age-groups (from kindergartens to universities, but mostly primary schools) completed the experiential education programme. They learned directly about the importance of bees and pollinators with open hives. For many pupils, it was their first contact with bees, so the project also becomes a programme for overcoming the fear of the unknown. Thanks to this, the participants often become friends of bees and pollinators;
- ▶ the "Beekeeper for a day" programme has been attended by 2,500 people who became familiar with the work of the beekeeper and learned how the world of insects, our lives, and the sustainability of the landscape are interconnected. The

visitors learnt about other important pollinators as well, including solitary bees, bumblebees and butterflies;

- ▶ the creation since 2013 of a beekeeping club for the pupils of primary schools, focusing on long-term and systemic education of pupils, the future beekeepers;
- ▶ the implementation of the "Beekeeping Sunday" event;
- ▶ active involvement of the general public in helping pollinators (creation of insect hotels for beneficial insects and hives for bumblebees).

### The implementation of beekeeping courses

- ▶ 32 people from marginalised groups, or long-term unemployed, have graduated from a free year-long beekeeper training course. On completing the course, graduates receive a hive and a bee colony, five years' free rental of basic beekeeping equipment, support from a lecturer, medicines and marketing support. The only condition for the free rental is the continuation of beekeeping and the preservation of ecological principles. After five years, the hive and the beekeeping tools become the property of the new beekeeper.
- ▶ 630 graduates have completed beekeeping courses. Particular emphasis is placed on making good and responsible beekeepers out of the beginners, using organic methods, respecting land limits and traditional farming. Invasive plants are also an important topic since beekeepers are often the spreaders of melliferous, but proliferating, plants.
- ▶ the project enabled course graduates to acquire a new skill, giving them the opportunity to gain a new source of income.

### Active creation of conditions for improving the position of pollinators

The number of new apiaries has increased in the region. This has improved the pollination activity and biodiversity of 26,394 ha.

### Implementation of the "Fair Honey" project (*Férový med*)

The kRAJ NGO helps to sell the products of the course graduates and beekeepers of the region. The sale of honey and other beekeeping products is based on sale at fair prices, both for sellers and customers. To receive this aid, honey producers must commit to a sustainable method of beekeeping. Honey is sold under the regional brand, *Gemer-Malohont*. The product label contains information about the beekeeper and his or her personal story.

### Results in the field of social entrepreneurship with respect to the environment

- ▶ establishment of two workshops for carpentry and wax processing.

The carpentry workshop produces top-bar hives, which enable cheap and time-efficient beekeeping, giving people with lower incomes the opportunity to start the profession. The workshop also produces wooden products which create suitable conditions for nests to facilitate the breeding of bumblebees and solitary bees.

The wax workshop processes beeswax and produces candles and decorations. It offers beekeepers a custom manufacture based on pure wax. The NGO employs three people in the wax processing workshop. The hand-cut utility glass which was made in the non-operational local glass factories is also used for the production of candles, as a symbolic reminder of the region's past fame.

- ▶ 50 people from marginalised groups (with mild mental and physical disabilities, the long-term unemployed) have been trained to process the bee products. During the course they have learned how to produce hand rolled and poured wax candles, ornaments and natural medicines (balms and creams) from bee products.

### Publishing, and educational professional activity

- ▶ the *Včely.Čo* conference introduced participants to the ecological treatment of bee colonies and alternative approaches to conventional beekeeping;
- ▶ six publications on the importance of bees and pollinators have been issued, with original texts in the English language, in co-operation with ByBi, a Norwegian organisation, on how bees and pollinators can be a route to education and social entrepreneurship;
- ▶ educational materials have been modified into methodological sheets, so they can be easily distributed to organisations and interested people. Bees are presented as an important link between human life and the landscape;
- ▶ lectures and presentations have been given at professional events;
- ▶ companies have been helped to develop green policies.

### Networking and development of co-operation in the region

- ▶ an important aspect of the activities of kRAJ NGO is its contribution to the development of co-operation in the region, both institutionally and communally. Co-operation with local

farmers in the management of the traditional landscape is important;

- ▶ the activity of the NGO has brought an important source of information, contacts and assistance to the area, thus contributing to the development of this rural region;
- ▶ the NGO implements awareness-raising events in the region and actively engages the public in helping pollinators, and liaises with public institutions. In providing the beekeeping workplace and production of bee products, it co-operates with social services homes, and local farmers in land management;
- ▶ more and more visitors are interested in this work. A secondary effect of the project which is proving beneficial to local residents and businesses, is the resultant need for accommodation, catering services and the sale of regional products;
- ▶ corporate volunteering is also important, as public events are attended by employees of various companies, and the NGO assists companies in building green policies.
- ▶ in co-operation with the company Granvia, a programme was implemented to support bees and natural pollinators on a section of the R1 expressway near Nitra city.



*Experiential education for schools in educational apiary.*  
© kRAJ NGO archives

### Sustainable territorial development

The project addresses the environmentally important topic of pollinator preservation, linked closely to the environmental sustainability of the landscape, and human life within it.

The project is based on the concept of sustainable territorial development and strives for the sustainability of the territory by developing and maintaining pollination services and the biodiversity of pollinators.

The implementation of the project increased the quality of the landscape. The project is based on the



sustainable use of the landscape, maintaining the harmony of man and landscape, and preserving cultural traditions.

Proof of this approach is the preservation of the characteristic landscape features, its functionality and the increased prosperity of the landscape.



*Beekeeping courses are visited by people from all over Slovakia every year. © kRAJ NGO archives*

### **Improving the environmental values of the landscape**

Education and awareness about the emerging environmental problem of pollinator loss that is affecting Europe, and across the world, is the basis of the project.

The Včelí kRaj project is designed to increase the understanding of beekeeping for both the lay and professional public. It teaches people of all ages how relationships in the landscape are interconnected, how important bees are to the global ecosystem, the food chain, agricultural production, and how the extinction of pollinators can have far-reaching consequences for both humans and their living environment. The education of new beekeepers emphasises the ecological approach to beekeeping and landscape management.



*The environmental training is conducted in a pleasant, non-traditional way. © kRAJ NGO archives*

The project increases the biodiversity of the landscape through the traditional farming methods, maintaining flower meadows, diverse plant communities and creating suitable conditions for pollinators.

In addition to education, the NGO also actively creates conditions to improve the situation of the pollinators. It helps to build small and ecological apiaries (fewer than 10 bee colonies in each locality) where there is a shortage of beekeepers and bee colonies. At the same time, it creates conditions for natural pollinators, such as solitary bees, bumblebees and butterflies.

The NGO's vision of European beekeeping is to encourage small, local family beekeeping farms, the advantage of which is the reduced likelihood of diseases and parasites and this results in less pressure on native pollinators.



*For all ages. Aim is to inspire children to be friends of bees, motivate protection in older age groups. © kRAJ NGO archives*

### **Improving the social values of the landscape**

One of the important features of the project is its social and human aspect. The project connects the landscape and the people in it, and brings benefits to society in various ways – participating in the preservation and promotion of beekeeping, supporting biodiversity of the landscape, developing a social economy and co-operation in the region. By engaging the general public, it develops community life and deepens the identity of mankind with its landscape.

From a social standpoint, the project also addresses groups from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. The free year-round beekeeping training courses for the long-term unemployed and marginalised groups provide them not only with knowledge and skills but also provide material help in the form of a beehive with a bee colony and beekeeping equipment. It helps them gain a new source of income.



*Free graduate courses, students receive material beehive aid, a bee colony and basic beekeeping equipment. © kRAJ NGO archives*

The NGO's effort has led to economic sustainability, with graduates trained to sell their bee products, a significant financial aid to their family budget.

Beekeeping in Slovakia is very conservative and, until recently, it was mainly the domain of older men. The NGO has brought a new perspective on beekeeping as a job or a hobby, and mobilised new groups of people that were not typical for the industry. Women are also enthusiastic about beekeeping, teaching people with mild mental and physical disabilities how to process bee products.

### Economic values

Beekeeping and pollinator care significantly increase the economic value of the landscape. Beekeeping incrementally increases the harvest of agricultural crops, increases biodiversity in the landscape and brings profits from sustainable tourism.



*kRAJ NGO goal – raise good, ecological beekeepers. © kRAJ NGO archives*

The project helps to keep a person in the landscape and to create conditions for a dignified life.

The economic benefits of the project can be found at different levels:

- ▶ the construction of apiaries improves pollination in the landscape, thus improving agricultural production;
- ▶ it educates new beekeepers to whom it brings a new means of subsistence;
- ▶ it brings jobs, since the project creates green jobs in one of the poorest regions of Slovakia;
- ▶ it contributes to the development of sustainable rural tourism. Visitors of various activities provided by the NGO bring economic benefit to other subjects operating in the region (accommodation and catering services, sale of regional products, etc.), positively effecting the development of agrotourism;
- ▶ the project supports and enhances ecosystem services.



*kRAJ NGO involves Roma in beekeeping. © kRAJ NGO archives*

### Cultural values

Beekeeping belongs to the traditional cultural landscape of Slovakia, as well as the whole of Europe.

In recent years, there has been a significant decline in beekeeping at a national level, and also significantly at the regional level, and consequently a decrease both in the number of beekeepers and bee colonies. Economic demands have caused the outflow of young people from the countryside to cities and abroad, but also causes bee diseases and parasites. For example, the Malohont and Gemer region has recently been affected by a plague of bee broods, leading to the reduction of bee colonies and beekeepers.

The project activities have significantly contributed to the preservation and promotion of beekeeping as a traditional way of subsistence in Slovakia, by establishing new apiaries, training beekeepers, and creating favourable conditions for the development of related activities.

The project contributes to the preservation of the cultural tradition of the beekeeping craft. The NGO conducted events for both the lay public and professionals.



*© kRAJ NGO archives*

## Aesthetic values

The project clearly contributes to the preservation of landscape values, characteristic features of the landscape, and at the same time the functionality of the landscape.

Beekeeping is one of the characteristic features of the landscape. It also brings a certain *genius loci* to the landscape, especially rural areas. The view of the apiary is idyllic and brings harmony to the landscape.

Small apiaries, built by the NGO, fulfil traditional land management and preserve the authenticity of the environment. Constant land management by humans maintains the diversity of the landscape, its value and eliminates undesirable processes (succession, desolation, degradation).

## Exemplary value

The project is exemplary in several aspects:

- ▶ in terms of complexity and the systematic approach to the subject of bees and beekeeping. The project trains new beekeepers, providing environmental education at all school levels, awareness-raising of the general public about bees and their importance, social entrepreneurship in bee and related products, maintenance of traditional subsistence in the landscape, and maintaining co-operation of the main project partners;
- ▶ it is an example of an approach to land usage and its resources based on ecological principles, in terms of the human and social aspect, since it provides employment for marginalised groups;
- ▶ Včelí kRAJ is the first educational apiary in Slovakia that is open to the general public. It is a new, exemplary and replicable model of an open apiary for general public access. It is dedicated to both professionals and the lay public, and the apiary is open throughout the year. Its main selling point is its experiential education, enabling visitors to learn about the world of bees;
- ▶ based on the model of the educational apiary, similar projects are being created. The social entrepreneurship programme has also become an inspiration for other organisations, and this NGO project is even given as a model in other fields. Programmes for schools, the public and future beekeepers have been also implemented in other parts of Slovakia;
- ▶ Včelí kRAJ publications spread the know-how to schools, environmental centres, social companies and other beekeeping organisations.



© kRAJ NGO archives

## Public participation

The NGO Včelí kRAJ operates in a region where very few non-governmental organisations work, and it thus addresses the need to involve people in civic activities in different ways. The NGO mainly uses volunteering as a way of spreading information about the importance of bees for the landscape.

The main route for the public to be involved is the education of new beekeepers, thanks to whom it has been possible to actively increase pollination activity in various parts of Slovakia. So far, more than 660 applicants have completed beekeeping courses. The NGO carried out a number of educational and training activities for pupils and students at all levels, and for the general public. More than 6,000 pupils and 2,500 adults have taken part in the activities.

The project actively involves the public in helping pollinators in the form of the production of insect hotels for beneficial insects and hives for bumblebees. It also involves private companies in corporate volunteering, and helps companies build green policies.

Corporate volunteering has also triggered good experiences for employees of DM drugstore, Tatra Bank and the Pontis Foundation who took part in public events.

### *Compliance with concepts*

At all levels, the NGO's strategies and concepts are grounded in the need to protect pollinators and ensure pollination by bees and natural pollinators.

The project is in accordance with national, regional and local policies. Včelí kRAJ is part of the planning document, Sectorial Concept of Environmental Education, Training and Awareness until 2025. The NGO activity is also in line with and supports the following programmes: Agenda 21 and the National Strategy for Biodiversity Protection until 2020. At regional and local level, it is aligned with

the Economic and Social Development Plan of the Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region and the Economic and Social Development Plan of the municipality of Kokava and Rimavicou.



*Work with marginalised groups – producing hand-made candles. © kRAJ NGO archives*

### **Awareness-raising**

Through its various activities, the project raises the awareness of the general public about the environment, its values and the importance of the environment for human development. It is not just raising awareness of the importance for the landscape of bees and beekeeping, but the project also provides new information and insights into the perception of consistency in the landscape, the interconnectedness of elements and functional relationships in the landscape, the need for a sensitive and ecological approach to the landscape to increase its prosperity, and the need for sustainable farming in the landscape.

The project emphasises the irreplaceable importance of bees and natural pollinators in the functioning of relations in the environment. It conveys the urgency of the current issue of pollinator extinction to all age groups in an acceptable form and draws attention to the fragile relations in the environment, suggesting how each individual can actively help to make a positive difference. In particular, the organisation pursues the goal to contribute to increasing the number of natural pollinators in the environment.

The NGO operates in a region where civic engagement has been low for a long time and it thus fills an otherwise empty space with its activities. As a regional actor, the organisation is dynamically involved in national activities for civil society. It operates in a region with a significant share of the Roma minority and it has become important to combine practical, comprehensible and useful activities, such as beekeeping, with the broader mission of breaking down prejudices and strengthening the position of the Roma in a region where employment opportunities and living standards are limited. The NGO's model social workshops are often cited to other emerging initiatives in this field.

The project is beneficial for the public good, maintaining the tradition of beekeeping in the landscape and biodiversity of the landscape, which brings benefit to the people of the region and deepens the identity of mankind with his or her landscape.

Website:

► <https://kraj.sk>

## **Workshop 2/Atelier 2**

**Managed Landscapes –  
Strong actions, from a perspective  
of sustainable development, to ensure  
the regular upkeep of a landscape,  
so as to guide and harmonise changes**

**Des paysages gérés –  
Des actions visant, dans une perspective  
de développement durable,  
à entretenir le paysage afin de guider  
et d'harmoniser les transformations**



# Bothnian Bay Coastal Meadows Management

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## **Summary of the Project**

In the Bothnian Bay coastal meadows management project, the objective has been to restore and maintain the landscape and habitats of the uniquely extensive coastal meadows. The meadows have resulted from traditional agriculture but became degraded due to recent changes in agricultural practice. Now over 4,000 hectares of meadows have now been restored.

An operating model for the management of the coastal areas was developed at the beginning of the project. This involved identifying valuable coastal meadow sites, finding suitable measures for restoring them to the target state and finding a local farmer to implement these measures with funding from agri-environmental support. With the help of the pilot sites, the use of the operating model has been extended to the entire project area.

The success of the project means that the traditional, expansive coastal meadows in the Bothnian Bay have been restored to their former glory. The successful management of the landscape in the Bothnian Bay is the result of long-term and extensive co-operation.



© Mika Kastell

## Central aims of the Project

The main objectives of the Bothnian Bay coastal meadows management project have been to:

- ▶ restore and maintain the landscape and habitats of Finland's most extensive coastal meadows which are unique in their biodiversity. The meadows of the Bay of Liminganlahti and Hailuoto Island are the core of the coastal meadow chain, and both are recognised as nationally-valuable landscapes.<sup>11</sup> The cessation of mowing and grazing that had resulted from the structural change in agriculture, together with the eutrophication of coastal waters, resulted in large areas of coastal meadows becoming overgrown with reeds and other vegetation;
- ▶ create an operating model which will enable the management of coastal meadows to be expanded to the entire project area, and which can also be applied elsewhere;
- ▶ establish the widest possible range of coastal pastures throughout the coastal area, in order to serve as attractive examples which could encourage farmers or agricultural entrepreneurs to set up new pastures;
- ▶ plan the management of areas, according to their characteristics, in order to ensure the best outcome;
- ▶ monitor the impacts of landscape management, the habitat types and species and, where necessary, make changes to the management plans and methods to better meet the purpose;
- ▶ implement landscape management and planning through broad-based co-operation between nature conservation and agricultural authorities, landowners, farmers and organisations;
- ▶ implement the EU Natura 2000 conservation objectives;
- ▶ systematically increase the area of coastal meadows under management. At the start of the 2000s, the national target was to triple the area covered by traditional rural biotopes. For the North Ostrobothnia ELY Centre, this meant a target of approximately 2,000 hectares;

- ▶ increase the awareness of private landowners, farmers and other citizens about the landscape of the project area and its management, as well as the value and significance of these landscapes;
- ▶ secure the commitment and motivation of farmers to manage the contract areas;
- ▶ plan and implement management in areas where this cannot be supported by agri-environmental payments;
- ▶ implement planning of the coastal meadow management, in parallel with planning of protected areas;
- ▶ secure the ecological function of the area as a whole;
- ▶ enrich the landscape with the help of grazing animals.



© Saara Pouta

## Outcome

The central aims of the project have been achieved brilliantly. Through the project, the quantity of coastal meadows under management has increased from approximately 200 ha. to its current total of over 4,000 ha. The project has addressed the landscape itself, the vulnerable habitat types and the area's species. The successful management of the landscape and nature of coastal meadows in the Bothnian Bay is the result of long-term and extensive co-operation and a shared will. Similar measures and procedures can also be applied elsewhere, both in Finland and Europe.

## Key results

- ▶ Over 4,000 ha. of traditional, expansive and uniquely extensive coastal meadows have been restored to their former glory. The different sites in the project area have become significant functional and diverse entities, formed from various pasture and mowing areas, which feature multifaceted traditional landscapes, different habitat types and diverse wetland biota.
- ▶ An operating model was developed to identify valuable coastal meadow sites, find suitable measures for returning them to the target state,

11. The nationally-valuable landscapes were confirmed in 1995 by government resolution. These are Finland's most typical cultural landscapes, whose value is based on their diverse, culturally-shaped nature, managed agricultural landscape and traditional building stock. The identification of national-valuable landscapes is used to secure the preservation of typical and vibrant rural landscapes, and to attract interest in landscape management. The national land use targets laid down in the Land Use and Building Act require that valuable landscapes are taken into account in land use decisions for these areas.



and locate a local farmer to implement these measures. The measures are primarily implemented by local farmers on their own or leased coastal areas, in return for agri-environmental support.

- ▶ Pilot sites were established at the beginning of the project and they played a key role in the success and expansion of the project as new farmers were able to familiarise themselves with the methods and become interested in the management of coastal meadows, through the positive experience of others.
- ▶ Management is planned individually for each meadow site. In the planning process, the starting point is that the measures must promote the objectives of landscape and nature management at the site. In most areas, the land management plans are prepared either by the farmers themselves or by consultants contracted by the farmers. The ELY Centres evaluate the management plans and, where necessary, make recommendations regarding the proposed management measures and practices. This procedure ensures that landscape and biodiversity aspects are taken into account in decision-making.
- ▶ Management contracts are renewed at regular 5-year intervals. This makes it possible to assess the regular management methods and quality of management and, if necessary, to update the plans and management practices to better meet the purpose.
- ▶ The management of coastal meadows has been carried out through broad-based co-operation and networks from the very start of the project. This has included nature conservation authorities, rural authorities, landowners, farmers and other organisations. In the core areas, where extensive management area entities were formed, management objectives have been defined in broad-based co-operation collectives.
- ▶ The coastal meadows of the Bothnian Bay are included in the European Union Habitats Directive under the habitat type “Boreal Baltic coastal meadows”, which is one of the key conservation types for Natura 2000 areas within the project area. Thanks to the purposeful, long-term management measures, the status of the habitat type has been upgraded from “unfavourable-bad” to “unfavourable-inadequate”. Coastal meadows are also of central importance for wetland birds and unique plant communities and they too have benefited from the management.
- ▶ The target set for the area covered by landscape management at the beginning of the project has been reached and exceeded. At the beginning of the project, two grazing areas with a total area of 170 ha. were established. By the early 2000s,

there were already more than 1,000 ha. of coastal pastures in the core areas of the Bothnian Bay. In 2020, there are now over 4,000 ha. of managed coastal meadows.



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- ▶ Awareness has increased among private landowners, farmers and other citizens regarding the landscape and its management, as well as the value and significance of these landscapes. Citizen awareness has been increased by participation in the project, by dissemination of information on the project and familiarisation with the project area (for example through visits to the Liminganlahti Visitor Centre). Extensive marketing was carried out during the early stages of the project and information and advisory events for farmers have been organised from the very start of the project and has continued throughout the project in different forms.
- ▶ The coastal meadows within the area are managed by around 50 farmers, all of whom are committed and motivated to manage their contract areas. Special support for agriculture, followed by agri-environmental payments, constitute an attractive and functional compensation system, and this is a prerequisite for the management of landscapes and biodiversity.
- ▶ Where agri-environmental support of management has not been possible, the management is instead carried out by local environmental organisations, hunting associations or environmental authorities.
- ▶ The management planning of the coastal area is carried out alongside the establishment of protected areas. The majority of the managed coastal meadows are located in nature conservation areas. The decisions to establish protected areas directly included the possibility of grazing and mowing, as well as carrying out the necessary basic restoration measures, in accordance with the approved plan.
- ▶ The different habitat types and wetland biota within the project area form a range of unique

ecological combinations. Both regional coverage and connectivity between the project areas have simultaneously increased significantly during the project.

- ▶ Grazing animals revitalise the landscape and are an enriching element in the landscape. It is easy for citizens to familiarise themselves with the impacts of grazing, especially through visits to the Liminganlahti Visitor Centre, located in the project area. Learning about grazing animals also increases positive attitudes towards agriculture and rural areas.



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### Sustainable territorial development

The operating model and associated measures developed in the Bothnian Bay coastal meadows management project are part of a sustainable development policy and are implemented in harmony with the operations of the regional organisation. Hailuoto Island and the Liminka plains, located within the project area, are nationally valuable landscapes. In fact, Hailuoto has also been categorised as one of Finland's national landscapes. The project has contributed to the enhancement of environmental, social, economic, cultural and aesthetic values of the landscape in several ways.

#### *Environmental sustainability*

The coastal meadows located in the project area are the largest in Finland and unique in terms of their landscape and biodiversity. The largest of the managed coastal meadows are included in the Natura 2000 network, and most of the areas are located in nature conservation areas. The majority of managed coastal meadows are located in private nature conservation areas, or as habitat types within wider protected areas. Numerous decisions made by the ELY Centre on the delimitation of this habitat type have ensured the preservation of coastal meadows located outside protected areas.

Almost every coastal meadow vegetation type can be found in the large pasture meadows within the

project area, and many of the upland sites have become wooded coastal forests, dominated by deciduous tree species. Coastal meadows are of central importance for wetland birds, and the unique plant communities reflect the unique combination of ecological conditions in the Bothnian Bay, namely land uplift, ice cover during the winter season and low-salt brackish water. The important plants and animals that were identified in the area were taken into account when preparing the management plans which cover the landscape itself, the vulnerable habitat types, and the area's species.

The coastal meadows of the Bothnian Bay are included in the European Union Habitats Directive under the habitat type "Boreal Baltic coastal meadows", one of the key conservation types for Natura 2000 areas within the project area, which contains nearly one fifth of the total area covered by this habitat type in the Baltic Sea region, and 60% of the total area within Finland itself. The restoration and management measures carried out in the project area have been central to the conservation of coastal meadows and the preservation of this habitat type as a whole. Thanks to these purposeful, long-term management measures, the status of the habitat type has been upgraded from "unfavourable-bad" to "unfavourable-inadequate".

The extensive coastal pastures are very important for wetland birds. More than 100 bird species use the shallow coastal waters that are connected to the coastal meadows and the surrounding waters as breeding, feeding and migratory resting areas. For several wetland bird species, many of which are endangered, the project area is Finland's most important breeding or migratory resting area. The enormous number of migratory birds in the project area is based on the unique combination of large coastal meadows, shallow and highly productive bird waters and seamlessly integrated, expansive farming areas. The unique nature of the area and its significance for the bird population can be seen especially in the landscape of the Liminka plains. Thanks to the active conservation and management measures, the significance of the project area for bird life has further increased.



© Kari Koivula

Each year, hundreds of thousands of migratory birds benefit from the coastal meadows in the Bothnian Bay. The core parts of the project area – stretching from municipality of Siikajoki to Hailuoto Island and through the Bay of Liminganlahti to the archipelago area of the former municipality Haukipudas – have been identified as one of Finland's internationally important bird areas (IBA, Birdlife International). The key parts of the project area are connected to the Natura 2000 network as special protected areas (SPA) under the EU Birds Directive. These sites play an important role in promoting the conservation objectives of the Birds Directive in Finland and, more broadly, in the European Union as a whole. The populations of many protected bird species in these areas are significant for the Natura 2000 network.

Plant species found on the shores of the Arctic Ocean and the White Sea, native plants in the Gulf of Bothnia and rarities found in salt marshes continue to be species typical to the coastal meadows of the Bothnian Bay. Many of these species are endangered and would not survive in the area without the management measures that are in place. Of the strictly protected species in Appendices II and IV to the EU Habitats Directive, the species found in coastal meadows and other associated coastal wetlands and shallow coastal waters are Siberian primrose, a small true grass called *Puccinellia phryganodes*, four-leaved mare's tail and the Baltic water-plantain. The conservation and management of the habitats of these species will contribute towards the objectives of the Natura 2000 network.

Coastal grazing is also a cost-effective way to clean water systems and the management of coastal meadows, thus also supporting the protection of the Baltic Sea. The vegetation along the coastline collects large amounts of nutrients from the water and sediment. When livestock eat the plants along the coastline and within the water, the nutrients are transported back to dry land.

Erosion is controlled by planning the correct grazing load for each coastal area, taking into account the conditions of the growing season. In addition to cows, sheep are used in landscape management, as these are particularly suitable for pasture rearing on beaches, heaths and dunes which produce low yields and are sensitive to erosion. Sheep also increase the openness of the landscape by, for example, maintaining the movement of sand, which is a prerequisite for the preservation of beaches and dunes. Grazing increases animal welfare, as it provides them with living conditions that are natural for their species. Where necessary, coastal meadows are also managed mechanically by mowing, an effective way to remove dense areas of common reeds and other vegetation.

The Bay of Liminganlahti Visitor Centre is located in the project area and provides visitors with environmental education via exhibitions and tutorials regarding the landscape and nature of the project area. The Visitor Centre is also an attractive domestic – and thus ecological – tourist destination.



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### *Cultural sustainability*

Expansive coastal meadows with low vegetation are characteristic of the coastal landscapes of the Bothnian Bay. The key landscape and natural values of the project area are linked to centuries of coastal peasant settlements and traditional agriculture. In traditional agriculture, the hay of natural meadows was used as animal feed, both by grazing and mowing. The continuous use over several centuries of the land in this way led to the formation of the largest and most well-known coastal meadows in the Bothnian Bay and the field plains, and the local building culture developed in connection with these, best represented by homesteads in the nationally valued landscapes of Hailuoto Island and the Liminka plains.

The success of the project means that the traditional and uniquely extensive coastal meadows have been restored across large areas. Thanks to the management of traditional landscapes, current generations are able to familiarise themselves with how traditional agriculture has influenced the Finnish landscape and what the landscape has looked like. Understanding local cultural history encourages a better understanding of the roots that affect the present. Management of the landscapes of the project area is part of the maintenance of a diverse historical and cultural heritage.

The managed coastal landscapes have also been opened up to culture lovers in new ways. For example, the Hailuoto Theatre Festival uses the Pöllä sheep pasture as a stage for its July events.

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*

The coastal meadows are managed by local farmers with funding via agri-environmental grants, supporting nature and landscape management which is economically important to the agricultural entrepreneurs involved in the project, and has a positive knock-on effect on the rest of the regional economy.

Not all sites are managed with agri-environmental support as, in some cases, the measures are not used as part of agriculture and so the measures are financed through separate funding that is granted by the Ministry of the Environment, or by a discretionary government transfer. The management and restoration work itself is carried out by contractors as purchased services. The total of such special areas during the span of the project amounts to around 400 ha.

The management of landscapes in the project area has increased the attractiveness of the area and thus made it even more appealing as a tourist destination. Tens of thousands of Finns visit the area every year and more than 5,000 foreign visitors come to the Bay. The operating model and associated measures developed in the bay's coastal meadow management project is part of a sustainable development policy and is implemented in harmony with the operations of the regional organisation. Hailuoto Island has been categorised as one of Finland's national landscapes. The project has contributed to the enhancement of aesthetic values of the landscape in the following ways.

#### *Aesthetic sustainability*

The Bothnian Bay coastal meadows management project has significantly increased the aesthetic value of the area. Thanks to the project, the coastal meadows and pastures that had become overgrown have been restored to their former glory, and are once again open and uniquely expansive.

The Bothnian Bay coastal meadows management project has also repaired and prevented damage to the environment, and enriched the landscape. As a result of the structural change in agriculture, the traditional grazing of coastal meadows had almost entirely ceased by the end of the 1960s, and the majority of coastal meadows became overgrown due to lack of management. At the start of the project, less than 200 hectares of coastal meadows were under management: following the project, traditional open coastal meadows have been restored to large areas, with more than 4,000 ha. now under management. Thanks to the management, the landscape has become richer and more diverse, and the

grazing animals are themselves an element that enriches the landscape.

#### **Exemplary value**

The project can be considered of exemplary value. The landscape has been managed, protected and developed in an exemplary, long-term, purposeful and cost-effective manner. In addition to the benefits for the landscape, the activities have also benefited local authorities, local farmers, landowners and citizens living or travelling within the area.

At the beginning of the project, work was carried out to develop an operating model for nature and landscape management in the coastal areas. Following the example of the pilot areas, the operating model has been extended to the entire project area. It involves identifying valuable coastal meadow sites, finding suitable measures for returning them to the target state, and locating a farmer who will implement the measures. The operating model developed, and the measures taken, can serve as an example of compliance with good practices and can be applied elsewhere, both in Finland and Europe.



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Policies and measures that can serve as an example of good practice for others:

- ▶ By creating an operating model for the management of coastal meadows, the tried and tested practices have been effectively expanded to the entire project area. In this way, it has been possible to systematically increase the area of coastal meadows under management.
- ▶ At the beginning of the project, an ambitious target was set for how much of the total area of coastal meadows would be managed. At the start of the 2000s, the national target was to triple the area covered by managed traditional rural biotopes. For the North Ostrobothnia ELY Centre, this meant a target of approximately 2,000 ha. By pursuing this goal with a determined and long-term approach, the target has been

achieved and exceeded. Currently, there are over 4,000 ha. of managed coastal meadows. Thus, the project serves as an example of how objectives that appear at first unattainable are indeed possible.

- ▶ Landscape management and planning have been implemented through broad-based co-operation between nature conservation authorities, landowners, farmers and organisations. The success of the project is the result of long-term and extensive co-operation and a shared will.
- ▶ The management measures are primarily implemented by local farmers in their own or their leased coastal areas, in return for agri-environmental support which is economically important to the agricultural entrepreneurs involved in the project and has a positive knock-on effect on the regional economy.
- ▶ Farmers have become committed and motivated in the management of their contract areas, thanks to the attractive and effective compensation system, and their motivation has also been boosted by information on the importance and significance of landscape and nature management.
- ▶ Planning of the management of coastal meadows has been carried out in parallel with the planning of protected areas. The majority of managed coastal meadows are located in private nature conservation areas or as habitat types within wider protected areas. The protected areas include grazing and mowing, as well as necessary basic restoration measures, in accordance with the approved plan. Solving management and protection issues in the same context has often made it easier to make potentially difficult conservation decisions.
- ▶ The ELY Centre has made numerous decisions on the delimitation of this habitat type which has ensured the preservation of coastal meadows located outside the protected areas, thus helping maintain the coverage and interconnected nature of the different areas.
- ▶ Citizen awareness of the value, significance and transformation of the landscape has been increased. Citizens have been involved in the project and information has been offered to them through channels such as news bulletins and activities at the Liminganlahti Visitor Centre.
- ▶ In addition to being a good means of managing coastal meadows, the grazing animals have also enriched the landscape.



© Kalle Hellström

### Public participation

The project actively encourages public participation in the decision-making process. In the Bothnian Bay coastal meadows management project, private landowners and farmers have played a key role in planning and implementation of the project. A large proportion of landowners in the neighbouring areas have been reached by means of the different real estate units. Management of the coastal meadows has been carried out through broad-based co-operation and networks, from the very beginning of the project. The parties involved have included nature conservation authorities, rural authorities, landowners, farmers and a number of different organisations. The setting of management objectives has been carried out in broad-based co-operation collectives in some of the key areas where extensive management sites have been formed.

Seven local working groups were central to activities of the LIFE project in the Bay of Liminganlahti. These local working groups, led by the North Ostrobothnia Environment Centre, participated in activities such as the planning of the protection, management, use and setting of objectives for the southern parts of the Bay of Liminganlahti and Hailuoto Island. Over three years, the working groups met many times and contributed to target-setting and the selection of locations, bringing local expertise into areas such as the identification of suitable sites for management. The groups also included representatives of the largest landowners (real estate units).

Management plans have been drawn up for large nature conservation and Natura 2000 areas, and these have included establishing the objectives for the management of coastal meadows. Furthermore, the plans for management and use have been prepared in co-operation with various stakeholders.

In most of the areas, the actual management plans are prepared either by the farmers themselves or consultants contracted by the farmers.

The Bothnian Bay coastal meadows management project has been implemented in keeping with the landscape policy of national, regional and local authorities, including the European Landscape Convention, the Finnish Land Use and Building Act, Finnish environmental legislation and the Cultural Environment Strategy. The areas making up Hailuoto Island and the Liminka plains, located within the project area, are nationally valuable landscapes. Indeed, Hailuoto Island has also been categorised as one of Finland's national landscapes. Protected nature reserves ensure that the special values of the area are safeguarded.

### Awareness-raising

The extensive management of coastal meadows and provision of information on this project has increased public awareness of the importance of landscape in terms of human development, consolidation of European identity, individual and collective well-being.

The Bothnian Bay coastal meadows management project is strongly linked to local cultural history and the restoration and safeguarding of its associated values. As part of the project, the special values of the area have been brought to the attention of the local citizens, in order to increase their understanding of the multidimensional significance of the landscape. The project has increased the public awareness of the value, importance and transformation of the landscapes of the region.

Through the project's activities, awareness has increased among private landowners, farmers and other citizens regarding the landscape and its management, as well as the value and significance of these landscapes, and increasing public awareness of the importance of landscape in terms of individual and collective well-being.

Open, grazed coastal meadows have been an important part of traditional agriculture and thus the landscape of this area. 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. Through its focus on cultural history, the Bothnian Bay coastal meadow management project increases understanding of the impact of the landscape on European and local identity.

Because traditional agriculture mainly ceased with the previous generation of farmers, coastal grazing was an unfamiliar prospect for many livestock farmers at the start of the project. Through the example of the pilot areas, new farmers have been able to increase their understanding of the management and grazing of coastal meadows.

Extensive marketing was carried out during the early stages of the project, in co-operation with the North Ostrobothnia ELY Centre, rural authorities, and the rural advisory organisation. In addition, events for farmers have been organised at municipal and sub-regional level. This kind of information-sharing with farmers has continued in different forms throughout the project.

Over the years, information on the project has been provided at information events, initially held ten times a year. Information on the project was also provided in connection with other events. For example, more than 30 planning and information events were organised during the LIFE project (1996-1998) for key actors in the region. Regional training, information and advisory events that focused on agri-environmental support were initiated, in co-operation with the agricultural authorities, and held on an annual basis. At a later stage, ProAgria presented the management of coastal meadows in dozens of advisory events broadly aimed at farmers throughout the project area. Training and advisory events are organised every few years for farmers who are committed to the agri-environmental agreements.

In addition, the management of coastal meadows has been presented in several press articles and radio interviews; information on the project and its activities has been distributed online and through brochures and other publications throughout the project's lifespan. The project has been presented in several European countries and also at European Union level, for the sharing of best practices.

Citizen awareness has increased through participation in the project, by information and familiarisation with the project area and its management; for example through visits to the Bay of Liminganlahti Visitor Centre. Liminka Municipality, Metsähallitus and the European Regional Development Fund have made it easy for visitors to familiarise themselves with the unique landscapes and nature by visiting the Visitor Centre and its surroundings where the landscape and nature of the area are presented through multifaceted and impressive exhibitions.

The guides explain management of traditional landscapes, and thus also the local cultural history, as part of the guided walks provided to large groups of visitors every year. The nature and importance of landscape management that makes use of grazing animals is also presented on the website of the Visitor Centre.

The Visitor Centre for the Bay of Liminganlahti and bird towers are located in the nationally-valuable landscape area of the Liminka plains, and at the heart of the managed coastal meadows. There are twenty bird towers in active use in the project area.

Through the activities of the Visitor Centre, a wide range of Finnish and foreign visitor groups (more than 50,000 visitors per year) have access to the landscape of the Bay of Liminganlahti and the nature found in the pasture areas. The wide expanses of managed coastal landscapes and wetland nature are on display to every visitor. The Visitor Centre is located at the heart of the management area, and in front of it is Pitkänokka, one of the largest coastal meadows in the Baltic Sea area. The grazing animals are right there for all the visitors to see.

Through their visits to the Visitor Centre, the project area is also introduced to groups of children from kindergartens and schools, giving them the chance to familiarise themselves with the landscape, landscape management and nature in the area. Accessibility has also been taken into account in the activities of the Visitor Centre, so it is possible,

for example, for those with wheelchairs or prams to familiarise themselves with the landscape and landscape management of the project area.

Grazing animals are a popular target for photos, and visitors to the project area share their images of the landscape and grazing animals on platforms such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, and their own blogs. The grazing animals are a big source of interest for younger visitors.

The coastal landscapes managed in Hailuoto Island have been brought to the attention of culture lovers through their use as a stage for a midsummer theatre festival.

Interaction and dialogue continue with landowners, farmers and other citizens within the project area.





# Landscapes are speaking

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## Latvian Fund for Nature, Latvia

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## Summary of the Project

The project “Landscapes are speaking. Nature diversity in Latvian landscapes” was dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Latvian State and is grounded in a vision of Latvia’s future landscape. This vision, defined by nature experts of the Latvian Fund for Nature, is a look to the future, combined with respect for the past and values of nature – a landscape where people live and work sustainably and in harmony with cultural and historical heritage and biodiversity. Latvia’s future landscape – the one that children will see and live in – is created and decided today. Therefore, the main goal of the project was to create ways for the future vision to become reality, and we started with a task to raise awareness of Latvian society about connection to landscape and biodiversity on different levels, and how the actions of today impact the future landscape.



*Joint work event for veteran trees. © Latvian Fund for Nature*

At the centre of the project was:

- ▶ A Landscape Manifesto (in Latvian: <https://ainavasruna.lv/ainavas-manifests>), incorporating the main messages of the project.
- ▶ A communications campaign where different elements of landscape in Latvia “speak” on behalf of landscape and nature. The stories are told in five videos of landscape elements – a tree, a rock, a homestead, a meadow and a curve – with the voices of famous Latvian actors and musicians, available at the website [www.ainavasruna.lv](http://www.ainavasruna.lv).
- ▶ The stories of five landscape elements were complemented by practical advice – “What I can do to help?” – that included simple actions that almost everyone can incorporate in their everyday lives.
- ▶ People were invited for an exciting virtual trip “Then and Now”, to visit today’s familiar landscapes as they once were around one hundred years ago, using a collection of ancient postcards and contemporary photos of the same places. People were encouraged to participate in the exhibition and submit their own “Then and Now” photos.
- ▶ The campaign was further followed and complemented by practical and on-site activities devoted to sustainable landscape management at farm, local government and individual level: the practical level was also further developed into factsheets and educational materials.
- ▶ Another level was added by research entitled “Landscapes are speaking. Changes in Latvian landscapes and their values in the last century” by Vidzeme University. The research was presented to the Latvian media, receiving wide coverage, and to municipal planners.



© Latvian Fund for Nature

### Central aims of the Project

- ▶ To develop and strengthen a vision where sustainable and harmonious landscape is the factor that connects nature values, our history, a good quality of individual life and economic activity. The project aimed to raise awareness of the

impact and importance of our actions today on the future landscape.

- ▶ To convey this vision through a communications campaign centred on five elements of landscape – a tree, a rock, a meadow, a homestead and a curve. Through these elements, stories were told about the importance of culture, history and nature embedded in the landscape, presented both on video and the website, and people were encouraged to cherish and protect these elements and, thus, the future landscape.
- ▶ To research and reflect on past landscapes, the factors that created them and how the ideals of landscape were shaped in the past, as well as tapping into attitudes and values of today’s landscape “owners” – the people who live in countryside. Research by Vidzeme University was carried out and helped to define the future vision more precisely.
- ▶ To understand and evaluate the changes of Latvia’s landscape in the past century via a virtual exhibition “Then and Now”, paying special attention to subsequent changes of nature and biodiversity.
- ▶ In order to create and disseminate practical knowledge about how to create landscapes that are nature-rich and add to quality of life for people, seminars and on-site events were organised, and guides and educational materials were developed.



Abava Valley, then and now.

© Latvian Fund for Nature

## Outcomes

- ▶ A successful communications campaign created more than 50 media publications (internet, printed, TV and radio) with a total media audience of 1,605,115, and reaching 200,000 people on social media (Facebook and video views on YouTube).
- ▶ A website [www.ainavasruna.lv](http://www.ainavasruna.lv) was created and serves as a resource centre.
- ▶ 300 people were involved in seminars and on-site practical events.
- ▶ Factsheets were created and disseminated with practical advice and guidelines for landscape management.
- ▶ Extensive research entitled “Landscapes are speaking. Homestead and landscape quality in context of nature diversity” was carried out by Vidzeme University and presented to the general public, the media and municipal planners.



Joint work for veteran trees. © Latvian Fund for Nature

## Sustainable territorial development

The project has contributed to the understanding of landscape values from the perspective of nature diversity, by addressing the general public and encouraging them to preserve nature in the landscape, providing them with specific and practical recommendations. The project also addressed audiences that directly impact development of territories, the farmers and local government planners. Thus, the added value of the project to sustainable territorial development was a view of the landscape through the lens of nature diversity, both at levels of landscape management and individual action.

The project helped to raise awareness about the threats to biodiversity in the current landscapes and offered ways to help nature at both individual and municipal levels.



Gauja river, then and now.  
© Latvian Fund for Nature

## Exemplary value

The activities carried out during the project and the communication materials created will not lose their relevance with time, being widely applicable in time and space. The communications materials (videos, website, virtual exhibition, videos of seminars) can be used as educational and inspirational material for different audiences. The factsheets and guidelines created with experts are freely available and can be used as guidance for management of private land. For example, the guidelines entitled “How to preserve the roots of trees”, “How to take care of trees”, “Why and how to preserve rocks and rock piles” are widely applicable and created for people without prior knowledge of the subjects discussed.



Children make an insect house.  
© Latvian Fund for Nature

## Public participation

“Landscapes are speaking” was primarily a communications project with the aim of raising awareness of mankind’s impact on landscape and nature, and thus the Latvian society was directly and indirectly involved and engaged throughout the project, and indirectly encouraged to impact decision-making processes related to the landscape in, for example, their municipalities. The general public participated directly in project events including open air events in different landscapes, informative seminars which discussed options to impact the decision-making processes. The events focused on various target audiences, including farmers, young families, educators and people with a second home in the countryside.



Landscape care work at Turaida Museum Reserve.  
© Latvian Fund for Nature

## Awareness-raising

The project “Landscapes are speaking” was successful in awareness-raising regarding the landscape and the role of nature conservation. The central element of the campaign consisted of videos illustrating several landscape elements (a tree, a rock, a curve, a homestead and a meadow) which told their stories, stressing the importance of these elements for nature, but also for personal well-being and national identity. The main message was a call to the viewer to take care of these elements and thus, nature and the landscape. The project provided a deeper level to understanding of landscapes and nature, but also showed that it is closely tied with aesthetic, social, economic and historic aspects. The videos showed how landscape is important to humans and their identity, as it is part of how people are formed, and therefore our actions today will impact the identities of tomorrow’s generations.



Project opening event. © Latvian Fund for Nature

The seminars held during the project for farmers and municipal planners were also recorded and made available for everyone on the Latvian Nature Fund’s YouTube channel with more than 18,000 subscribers. The awareness of landscape and nature was further strengthened by the engagement of people through on-site work events in various parts of Latvia. All events had a specific theme, including the wooded meadow landscape in Turaida; nature-friendly action in parks and gardens in Lēdurga; and the “freeing” of a noble oak tree in Sipi.

The extensive research carried out by Vidzeme University added to the understanding of the Latvian landscape (<https://ainavasruna.lv/petijuma-rezultati/veikts-apjomigs-petijums-par-latvijas-ainavu>, in Latvian) as it showed the changes to the Latvian landscape in the last century, the sources of today’s ideals of landscape in present Latvia, and analysed the views on landscapes, homesteads and nature of current homestead owners.

The audience reach in the project was 200,000 (Facebook and video views); media reach was 1,605,115 (with around 50 publications describing the project); participants of seminars and on-site events: 276.

## Videos:

- ▶ Curve is speaking
- ▶ Farmstead is speaking
- ▶ Meadow is speaking
- ▶ Oak tree is speaking
- ▶ Rock is speaking



Landscape planning seminar. © Latvian Fund for Nature

# Living Landscape: the Fjord Coast Regional- and Geopark

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Municipalities of Solund, Fjaler, Askvoll and Hyllestad, Norway

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Representative of the Project

**Ms Trude J Søylen**

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**Mr Kristian Bjørnstad**

*Head of Secretariat of Norwegian Parks Association*

## Summary of the Project

Through the Fjord Coast Regional- and Geopark (the Coastal Park) the residents of four municipalities work together to preserve, develop and communicate the culture and nature in their region. The Coastal Park is a long-term project, gradually moving towards environmental, social and economic sustainable development.

Through practical knowledge of Old Norwegian Sheep husbandry in a central Sheep Society, locals are now learning how to produce their own food and at the same time protect the threatened coastal heath. They are making a communal effort to maintain one of Europe's oldest cultural landscapes and its species diversity. At the same time, they are passing on intangible cultural heritage by involving children and young people in traditional husbandry with sheep roaming outside all year, and burning back heather. The Coastal Park also has a collaborative project aimed at preserving old buildings associated with the strong coastal cultural heritage of the area.



*Teaching action-born knowledge – Roar Moe at Little Færøy. © David Zadig*



*Old Norse Sheep in burnback. © Pascal Baudonell*

## Central aims of the project

The Fjord Coast Regional- and Geopark is a platform for long-term co-operation between local people, local businesses, schools, organisations and the municipalities. Its mission is to preserve and develop the region's natural and cultural heritage.

The Coastal Park shall:

- ▶ raise awareness and improve the understanding of the interaction between landscape and culture, including geology, biodiversity and cultural heritage;
- ▶ show how these assets are being challenged by changes in resource use, climate change and natural hazards; and
- ▶ strengthen identity and pride by raising awareness and increasing a sense of ownership of local natural and cultural assets.

Sustainable development through partnership agreements, long-term brand building and enhancing competence are key factors.



*Celebrating 17 May, Norway's national day.  
© David Zadig*

## Outcome

In addition to the primary results, such as food production and preservation of an endangered landscape, the results of the co-operation in the Coastal Park include locals experiencing learning, a sense of ownership, cohesion, integration and health benefits – and building identity. People are connecting with the landscape, traditions and each other, creating a sense of “we”.

Hardbakke Old Norwegian Sheep Society is the biggest success story so far. Founded as a co-operative society by local people it contributes to:

- ▶ better public health, by providing a low threshold offer, open and available to all;
- ▶ activating people who do not usually take part in activities;
- ▶ integrating newcomers in a natural and active way;

- ▶ providing a pedagogic platform for knowledge transfer and learning;
- ▶ ensuring that intangible cultural heritage of traditional and action-borne knowledge are passed on to new generations.

Participation and ownership in the Sheep Society and all the activities result in greater awareness, pride and a sense of common identity.



*One of our partners, Jensbua. © Ove Losnegård*

## Sustainable territorial development

For 5,000 years, farmers along the coast of Western Europe have used fire to shape the landscape and, for just as long, they have maintained an ecological balance in their farming. What took many thousands of years to develop has almost completely disappeared within the space of a few generations. The landscape has to be used in order to be preserved. The Coastal Park has assumed responsibility for protecting what is left in this region of our shared European cultural heritage.

In Hardbakke Old Norwegian Sheep Society, families and individuals can purchase shares in sheep and help preserve and develop endangered coastal heathland as part of an active collaboration between people and animals. Through volunteering days spent clearing and burning back, the participants are passing on the traditional method of managing the landscape and thereby helping to ensure that the coastal heath can maintain its ecological function. In this way, overgrown areas have also been restored to coastal heathland.

The Old Norwegian Sheep live on the coastal heath throughout the year, finding all their food there. These animals are fully adapted to life in these surroundings and eat various types of heather, grass, herbs, bushes and shoots. They also roam areas exposed at low tide to eat seaweed, which forms an important part of their diet. This is how they exploit marginal resources. Wool and food produced with zero input from concentrated feed is highly sustainable.

Species diversity, outdoor activities and the maintenance of a distinctive open landscape delight both locals and visitors. The Sheep Society gives locals a chance to be involved in food production processes by taking part in the butchering and processing of sheep. This changes people's attitudes with regard to what it takes to produce food. People perhaps find it a bit harder to throw away food when they understand the context.



*Craftsmen preserving culture.* © Trude Søylen

Well-managed heathland stores more carbon than a regrown willow thicket. Evergreen heather has an advantage over deciduous forest in that it also photosynthesises during the winter months. Heathland differs from forest and thicket in that most of the carbon is stored in the soil and roots, this means that if the heath is still there, the carbon is still there.

Annual voluntary action to save old buildings ensures that a coastal cultural monument is restored, while it also focuses attention on building preservation and coastal culture. Four local companies contribute their expertise for free and thus salvage something the owner does not him or herself have the finances or know-how to preserve. At the same time, they show people how they can preserve this cultural heritage. The focus is on the importance of good materials that endure and that are suitable for what they are being used for. Restoration of old buildings is more sustainable than building new ones.



*Old Norwegian Sheep Society.* © Stig Steinsund

The Coastal Park forms part of local, regional and national sustainability policy by:

- ▶ producing food locally, based on traditional methods, which results in local sustainable value, socially, culturally, ecologically and economically;
- ▶ organising Hardbakke Old Norwegian Sheep Society and raising awareness about the landscape and the traditions associated with sheep husbandry, which contribute to preserving and maintaining some of the last remaining coastal heath along Europe's western coast;
- ▶ stopping the eradication of species of heather by preserving and maintaining their habitats and preventing the landscape from becoming overgrown again;
- ▶ organising "first aid for old buildings" and partnerships with Bergen School of Architecture and other key partners, in order to preserve the coastal landscape's building heritage (as old boathouses) that are monuments from another time and serve as testimony to the lives of those who lived in this landscape before us;
- ▶ at least one cultural monument is saved from dilapidation each year, thereby maintaining and passing on intangible cultural heritage through action-borne knowledge and traditional craft techniques;
- ▶ preserving and using old buildings and passing on the knowledge of how to do this, which is less resource intensive and more eco-friendly than new building;
- ▶ The Coastal Park takes a holistic and long-term approach to its work. It avoids "silo thinking" through a long-term strategy for sustainable development based on co-operation across non-profit and commercial interests. This also fulfils Sustainable Development Goal no. 17.



*The Island Kingdom of Solund.* © David Zadig

### Exemplary value

The work of the Coastal Park in relation to the landscape has great transfer value and is highlighted as an example to follow. It is creating local engagement and motivating volunteering. The Norwegian Parks Association will use the model involving local Sheep Societies as a reference project for other rural regions and Regional Parks. The Coastal Park is also part of a research project called "To stir a landscape" (*Å vøla et landskap*).

The Coastal Park has worked strategically and continuously to promote the landscape and its assets, in co-operation with the municipalities, organisations and private individuals. The model that the Coastal Park represents, based on the principles of the European Landscape Convention, has great transfer value for other rural areas where the industrialisation of farming and depopulation have led to the landscape changing in an unwanted direction.

Through involvement and participation, locals, children and young people gain a sense of ownership of the landscape, which in turn leads them to take responsibility for preserving it. Taking part in practical activities provides experience and know-how that cannot be compared with learning the theory. Co-operation in the Coastal Park also contributes to knowledge transfer and awareness-raising beyond the local community.



Coastal culture sailboat. © David Zadig

### Public participation

The Regional Parks in the Norwegian Parks Association function with a bottom-up approach and often have many partners who are engaged in the development of their local communities. The Regional Park model is based on the municipalities participating in the co-operation as active partners: the Coastal Park also co-operates with Vestland County Council through its development plan.

It is a local decision to establish a Regional Park and the initiative can come from individuals, special interest organisations or local authorities. All of the interventions relating to land use are steered by the

Planning and Building Act that has a strong focus on public participation and local democracy.

The Coastal Park is a democratic organisation in which the 38 partners and members have great influence on the park's priority areas and activities. The decision-making processes are transparent, and all of the members can provide input and vote on resolutions at the annual general meeting. The Coastal Park's activities are steered by a long-term strategy drawn up in a collaboration between the members. This is manifested in the 10-year charter.



Norse sheep in coastal heathland. © Trude Søylen

### Awareness-raising

People in this area did not know that they were living in a cultural landscape and were largely unaware of how the landscape had been formed by burning back and grazing over several thousand years. They also did not know how to preserve it and prevent it from disappearing, due to regrowth and development. The establishment of Hardbakke Old Norwegian Sheep Society made an effective contribution to the knowledge of how to manage the landscape and animals, in line with historical and sustainable principles being implemented locally, integrating them into the teaching and timetables of the kindergartens and schools. The action-borne knowledge of how the historical cultural landscape came to be and how it can be preserved for future generations is thus being passed on. This also creates an awareness of how food is produced, which can be an important counterweight to the alienation many experience when considering where their food comes from.

This special landscape with its distinctive underlying geology provides a basis for value creation in the region. This includes Norway's largest quarry from the Viking era and Middle Ages, which lies within the Coastal Park's boundaries. The millstones they extracted from this area were sold throughout Scandinavia. Today, there is a museum linked to the quarry called the Millstone Park. Pupils from local schools learn throughout their education,



and from hands-on experience, how people lived and sustained themselves in the region more than 1,000 years ago and can later pass this on themselves, as guides for visitors.

The coastal culture is strong in this region and the annual voluntary “first aid for building preservation” was established to create awareness of the value of coastal cultural monuments such as *grindbygg* timber-framing. This building tradition has remained unchanged since the Viking period and is typical for outbuildings such as boathouses. The architectural field course helps to raise awareness of our tangible and intangible coastal culture and focuses the attention on building preservation and the place and role of coastal cultural monuments in the landscape.



*The Bride's Skirt geology.* © Per Storemyr

#### Websites:

- ▶ [www.fjordkystpark.no](http://www.fjordkystpark.no)
- ▶ [www.sognefjordenkystpark.no](http://www.sognefjordenkystpark.no)
- ▶ [www.nkka.no](http://www.nkka.no)
- ▶ [www.facebook.com/fjordkystparken](https://www.facebook.com/fjordkystparken)



# Brda tourist destination development

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Community of Brda, Institute for Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport Brda, Slovenia

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Representative of the Project

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## Summary of the Project

The Municipality of Brda covers two thirds of the entire terraced landscape that stretches in western Slovenia between the River Soča, Mounts Sabotin and Korada and the Friulian plain. Pursuit of the best wine and fruit growing produce resulted in terraces being built on the hillsides. There is a long history and tradition which is preserved to this day and is promoted by a responsible spatial planning policy by the Municipality. Its focus is to ensure the authenticity of the terraced landscape, as well as the traditional and predominantly manual agricultural work, by integrating the old with the new. The exceptional landscape, its remarkable wines and fruits, especially cherries, and the traditions linked to cultivation, enhance the tourist destination management, which is oriented especially towards experiencing contact with the area and its people. It places at the forefront the exceptional value of the landscape, the intergenerational co-operation on farms, and product development, based on the products born of the soil: wine, fruit and olives. The autochthonous aspect of the landscape is also preserved with the development of boutique tourism which values high quality products that are now drawing attention to themselves with awards from all over the world.



© Damijan Simčič, Zoso Photography

## Central aims of the Project

The project's first and foremost aim was to give support to the Municipality's primary activity, agriculture. By developing its recognition, the destination has come full circle: it has paved the way for the sale of local products (wine, cherries, dried fruit, liqueurs, jams and olive oil) which now provide a future to the intergenerational farms typical of this area. At the same time, this recognition stimulated the restoration of agricultural areas, which over the centuries maintained the terracing, as this was the only effective method of land use. The ever-growing number of tourist visits also required restoration works of important infrastructural elements and a rearrangement of villages (road and sewage systems, cultural heritage – Dobrovo Castle, Vipolže Villa and the Medieval village of Šmartno). Furthermore, tourism development laid its foundation on the historical trade connections, thanks to the Alp-Adriatic Centre for Cross-Border Co-operation. Gradually, the increased recognition led to an enhancement of the tourist offer: agricultural products were quickly joined by overnight accommodation (in two decades, the number of beds increased from just a few in 1994 to over 700 scattered around the entire destination), various food services (from inns, pubs, tasting rooms to restaurants) emerged as did other complementary and service activities.



© Damijan Simčič, Zoso Photography

## Outcome

The outcome of the Brda tourist destination development can be seen in several areas:

### *The restoration and maintenance of the terraced agricultural landscape*

European incentives enabled the farmers to restore old vineyards and orchards and modernise the terraces. With the help of the agricultural advisory service, they selected the most suitable crops, paying particular attention to autochthonous varieties. This enabled conservation of the typical terraced landscape characterised by a predominantly manual cultivation method. As a result, the landscape gained both a modern and an autochthonous aspect.

### *The conservation of autochthonous varieties (rebula, olive trees, cherry trees)*

The locals and the providers built the landscape's recognition on the value of autochthony. Hence, the main roles were taken by the rebula, olive oils and cherries. The rebula has flourished for decades, thanks to the determination of local winemakers and the masterclass, Brda Home of Rebula, thus placing the territory of Brda on the world wine map. Fifty years after the frost of 1929, olive growing has seen a revival, and further expansion in the last decade. Both the rebula and olive oils have won prizes at the most prestigious competitions across the world.

### *Olive growing revival*

The revived olive growing story in Brda had its milestones at the turn of the millennium, with the foundation of the olive growers' association and, five years later, with the European project (UELIJE) which enabled the association to register the autochthonous varieties and purchase an oil press. The result of the first pioneers, among whom it is worth mentioning Bruno Podveršič, was the recognition of olive growing as an important complementary offer in Brda. From scarcely 100 trees in the mid-seventies, olive growing has become so popular that nowadays over 100,000 trees are found in the area. Olive growing is also attracting a growing number of young people. Hence, the areas in Brda, which were once covered with olive groves, are now featuring restored olive groves again, thus recreating the landscape's former appearance.



© Damijan Simčič, Zoso Photography

### *Cherry festival*

The Cherry festival is the festival of all festivals and a Municipal holiday in Brda. Cherries represent the farmer's first income of the season. In the past they were even sold in Imperial Russia (according to the legend quoted by the historian Štefan Kocijančič in 1853). To this day, they represent an important source of income to the farms of Brda. The cherry festival began as an homage to the first fruit of the season, but it quickly established itself as an

important event during which the local fruit growers sell a large portion of their produce from their own homesteads. As the result of the growing demand and supply, local farmers have gathered in a common Fruit Growers Association of Brda, and are now developing a common brand name.

*The beginning of the tourist offer – agrotourism and hotels*

The 1990s represented a milestone in the development of Brda's tourist offer. In Medana, with its great concentration of large landowners, an association was born which brought together the so-called young acquirers (Simčič, Ščurek, Dolfo). Gradually, agrotourism also began to develop, firstly in the remote border village of Breg near Golo Brdo. As the recognition of Brda and its products grew over the years, so did the demand for beds and dining facilities. This stimulated the locals (and with the support of European Union funds) to integrate the offer with dining, accommodation and other complementary services. Nowadays these services are found in almost every village and engage entire families.

*Foundation of the Tourist Information Centre and the Institute for Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport Brda – corporate image of stalls and promotional material*

An organisational unit was created that would serve as the backbone to the diverse supply, providing numerous promotional activities and visits to Italy, the Austrian Carinthia and twinned municipalities, and at the same time giving tourists information about what Brda has to offer. Thus, in 2000 the Tourist Information Centre was opened and, 10 years later, it was upgraded to the Institute for Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport, Brda. It was then possible to create uniform promotional material, a labelling system, signposts (the Goriška Brda wine road) and stalls, which resulted in the steady growth of visitors. In 2010, Brda registered a little over 15,000 overnight stays: four years later, this number had increased by 60 percent.



© Damijan Simčič, Zoso Photography

## Renovation of Dobrovo Castle, the medieval village of Šmartno and Vipolže Villa

Brda has three main historical tourist sites. The Dobrovo Castle was renovated at the end of the 1980s and, since its inauguration, its rooms have hosted the permanent exhibition dedicated to Zoran Mušič. The Castle is one of the most visited in the Goriška Region. Apart from the existing content, the premises are being upgraded, as is the Rebula Centre and the Bagueri Cellar in the basement. The exceptional view on Brda's terraced landscape and its medieval spirit have attracted a growing number of visitors to the medieval village of Šmartno, which is now registered as a cultural monument of local importance.

This recognition required renovation of the centre, which was realised with European funds. After the renovation, many suppliers recognised the opportunity it provided, and now Šmartno has a family hotel, private boutique accommodation, dining facilities, local product suppliers (natural cosmetics, ceramics), a museum exhibition, the House of Culture, a gallery, and premises of Brda's cultural associations. Šmartno has also become the site of various events that value local products. The Vipolže Villa (the only cultural monument of national value in the wider area) has, after its renovation, established itself as the Municipality's main multicultural and business centre. Situated at the heart of the terraced landscape, it is the only protocol premise in this part of Slovenia. This is where events at local and international level can take place, well integrated with local suppliers. Furthermore, this is an incentive to further upgrade and optimise the quality of the local supply. Dobrovo Castle and Vipolže Villa are also official wedding venues. Brda is world-renowned as one of the most beautiful wedding destinations.



Terase Vedrijan. © Damijan Simčič, Zoso Photography

## Worldwide recognition of the area's uniqueness

The picture-perfect landscape, the mineral content of the opoka soil, and the resilient and loving nature of the locals have, over the years, become a renowned and inviting combination.

Brda has been featured in the most prominent media, including the "11 great wine regions you may

not know about – CNN”, The New York Times, Forbes, The Guardian and many others. This is the result of promotional activities of single winemakers and the municipality’s Institute for Tourism, which has in recent years confirmed how unique the territory on which they create their products is. As a result, the masterclass event, Brda Home of Rebula, was created, sparking an immense worldwide recognition of this cross-border territory.



*Terase Vedrijan. © Damijan Simčič, Zoso Photography*

### Sustainable territorial development

Brda’s tourist destination development project is part of the Municipality’s sustainable development policy. Its aim is the long-term reinforcement of the distinctive characteristics of the terraced landscape through the development of an autochthonous, sustainable, green and ecologically-oriented offer of this area. From the very start, the tourist destination development has been envisaged as a support to the main economic activity of agriculture (i.e., wine-growing, fruit-growing and later olive-growing). The landscape’s values (environmental, cultural and aesthetic) are an integral part of the promotional activities carried out by the Institute for Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport Brda. Its title already illustrates the multidisciplinary nature of its work. Brda’s landscape is composed of a multitude of experiences, picturesque views, local hospitality, high quality products grown on its soil (marl, opoka), natural and cultural jewels that represent the cherry on top of its entire itinerary cake. The destination’s tourist development has combined all these values into a common offer and the combination has proven successful with tourists.



*Po Brdih jesen. © Damijan Simčič, Zoso Photography*

Brda has never seen any environmental or urban damage, as the local farmers have always been conscious of and respectful towards nature. The concern for posterity has always been to the fore, especially the awareness that nature with agriculture is a factory without a roof that demands deep respect. Consequently, we can see that most farmers are involved in nature-friendly growing methods and they take into account the sustainable guidelines of the agricultural advisory services. The sustainable guidelines are also followed by accommodation and catering suppliers. Since 2016, the destination has been part of the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism; through its policies it directs the suppliers towards environmentally-friendly actions. In 2016, the destination was awarded the silver Green Destination label, and in 2019 the golden label. In 2019 and 2020, it was listed among the 100 most green and sustainable destinations in the world. A growing number of local suppliers have environmental and eco labels. In 2019, the destination was proclaimed the best rural community in Slovenia, and in the year 2020 it is the Slovenian candidate for the best European Union rural community.



*Terase Vedrijan. © Damijan Simčič, Zoso Photography*

### Exemplary value

Brda’s tourist destination development project has successfully combined cross-border co-operation, effective planning, absorption of European Union funds and attention to the needs of local residents who are the suppliers to the local area. There is a growing acknowledgement of wine, fruit and olive growers and other suppliers, and now there is an adequate sewage system. Bringing together various actors has created a winning combination.

Good practice is demonstrated by the projects “Open Cellars” and “Open Homesteads” and the Masterclasses “Brda Home of Rebula”, “Brda and Wine” and the Cherry Festival.

“Open Cellars” is an event during which winegrowers open their cellars to visitors who can taste their wines. It is a group action which confirms strength in numbers. The same can be said about the project Masterclass “Brda Home of Rebula” which was born on the initiative of local Slovene and Italian

winegrowers to capture the attention and invite the most renowned enogastronomic media to learn about the territory that is home to the rebula.

“Open Homesteads” is a development from the “Open Cellars” project with a list of cellars, dining and other suppliers where visitors are welcome all year round. The list is updated every two months from March to November and it has been upgraded by offering the “Hop-on shuttle”. The project “Brda and Wine” is enogastronomic in nature and includes all the best Brda has to offer; gastronomy, wine and local products, available to visitors to taste by purchasing a ticket to the festival in the medieval village of Šmartno.



*Terase Vedrijan. © Damijan Simčič, Zoso Photography*

The Cherry Festival is the most important event in Brda. It is a holiday that remembers the road once travelled by the cherries. The Festival invites the twinned municipalities, and is very popular with visitors from Austrian Carinthia, where the Municipality of Brda also arranges mini cherry festivals.

### Public participation

From the beginning, Brda’s tourist destination development has been designed according to the bottom-up approach, thus the public and the local inhabitants are tightly intertwined in the development of the tourist offers. Over recent years, and thanks to the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism, the project has expanded into wider national politics. The development of the tourist offer has had a strong impact on this area, which is primarily agricultural and without any industry, by promoting the activities of younger generations in their local environment and creating green jobs.

The Municipality’s task for this project and, consequently, the task of the Institute for Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport Brda, was primarily to identify the needs of local suppliers, to offer them support and gather them into successful promotional stories. The modernised infrastructure and creation of favourable conditions benefit not only the primary economic sector (agriculture, tourism), but also the development of the accompanying entrepreneurship and artisanship. A new small business area is currently under construction.

The locals are also involved in the local political decision-making process through their counsellors who decide on the development of new projects in the Municipality of Brda, and approve the strategies.



*Terase Vedrijan. © Damijan Simčič, Zoso Photography*

### Awareness-raising

Brda’s tourist destination development project most definitely raises public awareness of the importance of landscape in the sense of human development, strengthening the European identity and also individual and collective prosperity. It is in fact a project that strengthens the importance of a terraced landscape that serves as the basis for local supply and is characterised by its cross-border nature, interculturalism and European values, such as co-operation and the creation of common projects.

Public awareness is raised through various local events (Brda and Wine, Cherry Festival, St Martin’s Day), events at international level (Masterclass Brda Home of Rebula, Eco Marathon, MTB Marathon and Castles in the Areas) and projects that are being realised in co-operation with universities and world-renowned architects.

The project also illustrates to the public that co-operation is of key importance for development and that a landscape in which autochthonous elements are preserved is inviting to visitors from near and far.

Appreciation of the importance of preserving the identity of a landscape is now spread among the locals through numerous local associations such as the Fruit Grower, Olive Grower and Beekeeper Associations of Brda, the Brda Wine Consortium and the Klet Brda co-operative wine cellar, which boasts over 400 members.



*Po Brdih jesen. © Damijan Simčič, Zoso Photography*





## **Workshop 3/Atelier 3**

**Planned Landscapes –  
Strong forward-looking actions,  
to enhance, restore or  
create landscapes**

**Des paysages aménagés –  
Des actions présentant  
un caractère prospectif visant  
la mise en valeur, la restauration  
ou la création de paysages**



# Herdade da Contenda, a tale of resilience for nature

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## **Summary of the Project**

This project encompasses the implementation of a landscape policy in a territory of around 5,270 ha. called the Contenda Estate (Herdade da Contenda), belonging to Moura Local Authority, a Portuguese Municipality situated on the border with Spain. The importance of this cross-border landscape goes back to the Middle Ages, to a time when it was managed as one community. A regular target of discussions between Portugal and Spain, this vast property was divided between the two countries at the end of the 19th century.

The Portuguese part was managed by the Municipality, which leased the land for agricultural production. Over-exploitation led to the land's decline and loss of biodiversity, abandonment and the degradation of the landscape. The Local Authority, working together with the Forest Services (now the Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests), implemented policies of regeneration and landscape value in two phases, transforming it into an appealing territory of great scenic and ecological wealth.



© Daniel Pinheiro

## Central aims of the Project

- ▶ to promote landscape management, in its diverse components, aiming to give value to the ecological, landscape heritage that exists in the Contenda Estate;
- ▶ to promote the development of pedagogical, educational activities, to ensure awareness of the importance of landscape;
- ▶ to ensure community and stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process for the landscape of the Contenda Estate;
- ▶ to promote the sustainable exploration of activities relating to agriculture and livestock, beekeeping and hunting;
- ▶ to promote the recovery of waterlines, including the revitalisation of the river banks;



*Serpentine goats in agro-silvo pastoral landscape.*  
© Antonio Cunha

- ▶ to promote the development of tourist activities relating to nature tourism, enjoyment and contemplation of the landscape, for example walks, riding, dark sky and fauna observation and birdwatching;
- ▶ to promote sustainable forest exploration, contributing to the mitigation of climate change and reducing the risk of forest fires via the encouragement of species adapted to local edaphoclimatic conditions;
- ▶ to promote scientific research within the areas of landscape, forest, biodiversity and hunting;
- ▶ to deepen cross-border co-operation with the Municipalities of Aroche and Encinasola, and the adjacent public area managers.



*One of 20 small dams in Contenda.* © Pinto Moreira



*Holm oak montado.* © Daniel Pinheiro

## Outcomes

The following results have already been noted:

Phase 1 and Phase 2, since 1958:

- ▶ beginning at the end of the 1950s, reforestation of 3,000 ha. of degraded landscape with indigenous species namely holm oak, cork oak and stone pine (umbrella pine);
- ▶ installation and upkeep of 20 beehives with a honey extraction, processing and packing centre (“The Honey House”);
- ▶ management of a permanent livestock of Portuguese native breeds (Serpentine goats and black Merino sheep) that have won various prizes at both regional and national level;
- ▶ national Hunting Area created in 1989;
- ▶ recovery of habitats for the Iberian Lynx and cinerous vulture.

Phase 2, since 2012:

- ▶ recovery of the riverbank gallery of the Murtigão River and the Iberian Minnow carp (Saramugo – *Anaocypris hispanica*) habitat (fish species classified with the extinction risk of “critically endangered” according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List);



*Densely wooded landscape.* © Pedro Rocha

- ▶ restoration of five historic buildings associated with smuggling routes and former forest services;

- ▶ creation of a 39 km walking trail network with explanation boards for walkers to observe heritage, fauna and the night sky;
- ▶ installation and upkeep of a vulture feeding station and visitor observatory;
- ▶ recovery of the red deer population and the removal of a herd of cows, in order to save the “montado”;
- ▶ placing and recovery of dozens of nests and platforms for the cineros vulture, resulting in the renewed nesting of the species;



*Herdada da Contenda – Preservation of cineros vulture. © dgterritorio.gov.pt*

- ▶ development of partnerships with schools and training centres with dozens of visits to the Contenda Estate, and professional traineeships;
- ▶ various awareness-raising activities in the local and regional context, involving hundreds of participants;
- ▶ meetings to listen to the community, presenting and collecting ideas for the future of the Contenda Estate;
- ▶ publication of pamphlets to raise awareness of the values of landscape and distribution amongst the community and visitors.



*Pedestrian path. © Pinto Moreira*

### **Sustainable territorial development**

The project area is totally integrated in the Nature network 2000/Rede Natura 2000, as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA), a European policy that aims to ensure

the upkeep and recovery of biodiversity in the European territory, via the creation of an ecological network on a European scale. More recent interventions in the Contenda Estate are also included in the National Strategy for Nature Conservation and Biodiversity 2030, a national strategy that aims to provide Portugal’s contribution to the fulfilment of the goals of Agenda 2030 of the United Nations for Sustainable Development.

Over recent years, the state of conservation of this landscape has improved but also the promotion of knowledge for its own intrinsic worth has been encouraged, promoting its appropriation by society. For that purpose: plantations have been established to encourage the recovery of indigenous plant cover; water points have been created at strategic places; extra food is provided in critical periods (both for herbivores such as the deer and scavenger birds); shelters have been created (for example for the European rabbit); and nesting areas for the cineros vulture have been constructed and reinforced; there are also defined routes, an image and a brand have been developed and events organised to appeal to different audiences.



*Hiking through Contenda. © Pinto Moreira*

A biodiversity session in 2015 was integrated within the Festival Terra Sem Sombra (“land without shade”), bringing together more than a hundred participants. This made it possible to contribute to the improvement of the environment by recovering degraded landscape, where the tree cover had been degraded or destroyed, and the species of indigenous fauna, two of which were in danger of extinction and had lost their nesting, shelter and feeding places. In social and economic terms, this municipal property is no longer an abandoned territory but is now an attractive landscape of reference where it has been possible to create jobs (the permanent Contenda Estate team has 12 salaried posts). The Contenda Estate now mobilises visitors interested in its natural and cultural heritage, giving pride to its citizens. A place of recreation, leisure and contemplation, it is also a place to gain a connection with Nature and to get to know it, especially for the younger generation. Managed in a sustainable way, the Contenda Estate has launched products such as honey, goat’s milk, goat and lamb meat onto the market.

The implemented landscape policy reversed the tendency of decline and abandonment that the Contenda Estate had been subjected to. From an arid territory, where agricultural activity was residual and biodiversity loss was accentuated, it has become a landscape rich in terms of biodiversity and great scenic quality. The present management practices adopted allow the objectives recommended by the Nature Network 2000/Rede Natura 2000 to be ensured, including: the use of machinery and adequate equipment in forest interventions; plantations on contour lines; a regular census of hunting and protected species; respect for nesting periods; and the protection of natural regeneration through the use of individual protectors.



Teaching and professional training. © Antonio Cunha

### Exemplary value

The project brings together a set of conditions that give it exemplary value, providing an inspiring example that can be emulated in other contexts and environments with similar challenges, namely:

- ▶ Integration of a cross-border landscape (article 9 of the European Landscape Convention) that was until 1893 part of a community territory. In spite of the established division of this territory, there is no physical border or fence at present and this situation has been consensual between the countries. The animals of the Contenda Estate, such as red deer, wild boar, cinerous vulture and other species roam freely between Portugal and Spain. The cross-border territory has a common management practice for protection of the forest against wild fire.
- ▶ Improved tree cover using native species are managed in the northern area within an agroforestry system traditionally known as the *montado*. This system carries out important functions: the conservation of the land; the regulation of the hydrological cycle; and the removal of carbon from the atmosphere. It is an extraordinary Mediterranean forest ecosystem, extremely rich in terms of biodiversity and has been identified as most important for the conservation of nature, both at a national and European level.

- ▶ The recovery of the Contenda Estate landscape has come to be seen as an example of reference and a case study with regard to the recovery of degraded land, counteracting the process of degradation that had been occurring. It has been confirmed as a success story for the recovery of biodiversity of fauna and flora.
- ▶ The Contenda Estate has a reserve of cork oaks (*Quercus Suber*) where the cork has not been removed, possibly the only case in the world. It is a native forest species found in the western area of the Mediterranean, and for this reason has exemplary value.
- ▶ The Contenda Estate landscape accommodates an important colony of cinerous vultures, estimated at 10 breeding pairs, a species which had been considered extinct in Portugal and which, at present, has begun recolonisation, due to the efforts associated with the recovery of this landscape.
- ▶ There is an important red deer population in the Contenda Estate, estimated at around 1,300 individuals that roam freely in the territory. This is a species that forms the landscape by their intervention in habitats and thus they are intrinsically associated with Contenda's landscape.
- ▶ In 2010, the Contenda Estate was considered a place of interest within the work integrated in Long Term Ecological Research, due to its diverse landscape, scenic interest and the recovery of its biodiversity, and this provides a platform of communication, documentation and collaboration amongst scientists developing research on the environment.
- ▶ The management of the landscape continues to be a reference point in terms of the sustainability of its practices which integrate the following measures, amongst others: maintaining low grazing rates; protection of natural regeneration of forest species; adoption of measures against forest wild fires (structural prevention and vigilance); use of machinery and adequate techniques for the fragility of the more sensitive forest spaces; restoration and upkeep of the existing building heritage.



Herdada da Contenda: an awareness-raising activity. © dgterritorio.gov.pt

## Public participation

Measures and initiatives have been developed to encourage public participation and community involvement in the elaboration and implementation of this landscape policy.

All planning and specific nature conservation projects for landscape recovery were presented for public consultation, including the Plan for the Ordering and Management of the Contenda Estate and the Plan for the forest management of the Contenda Estate.

Participative processes have increased in the last decade, including actions to collect opinions and contributions on the management of this landscape, and future challenges to be faced, such as:

- ▶ Technical and scientific conferences organised at the Contenda Estate. The first of these conferences was in April 2013, bringing together researchers and present and former colleagues of intervention in the Contenda Estate, in order to get to know the work that has been carried out and the work still in progress, and to study social memories of the territory.
- ▶ In 2016, the VII Forum 21, organised by Moura Local Authority and dedicated to the future of the municipality, had as its theme “What will Contenda be like in the future?” The best use of the Contenda Estate’s diverse potential was debated in this meeting, both for Santo Aleixo da Restauração, the parish where Contenda is situated, and the municipality of Moura itself.

The Technical and Scientific Board and the Consulting Board for the Hunting Area also fulfil the aims of participation of society in the management of the Contenda Estate.

LIFE projects have also been presented to the community, regarding the recovery and promotion of the Iberian Lynx habitat, the promotion of the cinereous vulture’s habitat and the conservation of the Iberian Minnow carp, the saramugo, the smallest fish in the fauna of the Guadiana River basin. Within the scope of these projects, visits to the Contenda Estate were promoted, information and public participation sessions were developed and awareness-raising sessions held for schools.



*Herdada da Contenda: birdwatching.*  
© dgterritorio.gov.pt

The landscape policy implemented in the Contenda Estate is in line with other policies implemented at national level, including the National Programme of Policies for the Ordering of the Territory, the last revision of which, dating from 2019, foresaw measures to be implemented: “Give value to the territory via its landscape”, “Claim biodiversity as a territorial asset”, “Giving value to the resource of land”, “Ordering and revitalising forest territories”.

The regional Plan for the Ordering of the Forests of the Lower Alentejo (2006) is also a reference in line with this landscape policy as an instrument of forest management, having attributed the statute of “Model Forest” to the Contenda Estate. Here, unique conditions come together for the development of research, experimentation and demonstration of innovative forestry techniques grounded in improved economic returns. The exemplary research project Square Kilometre Array (SKA) is an international project that develops innovative technology in the area of radio astronomy.

## Awareness-raising

The Contenda Estate is a privileged space for raising society’s awareness of the value of landscape and measures to be adopted for its safeguarding, contributing to the increase of awareness in society via the many activities which target the community, students, researchers and professionals.

Throughout the last decade, various awareness-raising initiatives have been implemented to show the importance of landscape, including promoting good management practices within a Mediterranean environment. The following activities are examples of these initiatives:

- ▶ the first discussion group about the Contenda Estate was organised in February 2013, targeting local people and aiming to collect proposals for the Contenda Estate’s future management;
- ▶ the XII Forum was organised in May 2017 by the National School of Hunting, Fishing and Biodiversity, with the theme “Tourism and Nature”;
- ▶ between 2015 and 2020, dozens of walks were organised in the Contenda Estate;
- ▶ joint initiatives were established between the School of Hunting and Nature Conservation, Comoiprel, an agricultural co-operative with its headquarters in the municipality, and the Moura Local Authority.
- ▶ [www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=L3extUYz8Tc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=L3extUYz8Tc);
- ▶ activities open to the public with the theme of biodiversity have been implemented (“Around the Contenda Estate – biodiversity in the border area” within the FTSS 2015 programme, a

festival that promotes erudite music within the Alentejo).

Various co-operation initiatives with institutions have been rolled out since 2012, linked to teaching and professional training, and highlighting field trips from these institutions within the training context; the Contenda Estate also hosts professional traineeships. Protocols have been signed with Évora University and the Professional School Al-Sud.

The Contenda Estate has recently created a webpage ([www.herdadedacontenda.pt](http://www.herdadedacontenda.pt)) and a Facebook page. The former was accessed 30,897 times between April and October 2020, whilst the Facebook page gained 760 followers from January 2020 to the present date.

The initiative to vote online for the name of a baby cinerous vulture born in Contenda had more than 200 participants. The bird was named Chaparrito and has a transmitter, so that the public can see its movements, the result of a partnership initiative between the Contenda Estate, and the

environmental NGOs the Nature Protection League and the Vulture Conservation Foundation.

Two projects in the area of environmental and hunting visits and enjoyment are being carried out at present:

- ▶ Contenda Nature project, an Integrated Plan for Tourist Development in the Contenda Estate (in process) for the qualification of the territory as a differentiated tourist destination, preserving and giving value to natural resources, and dynamics to the economics of local tourism, preserving authenticity and compatibility with tourist activities, and promotion as a factor for social cohesion;
- ▶ Contenda Hunting Management is designed to improve the management of the National Hunting Area and to diversify the offer within nature tourism.

Website:

- ▶ [www.herdadedacontenda.pt](http://www.herdadedacontenda.pt)



# The Gardens Park

Timișoara City, Timiș County, Romania

Representative of the Ministry

**Ms Alina Huzui-Stoiculescu**

*Counsellor, Directorate General for Regional Development and Infrastructure,  
Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration, Romania*

Representative of the Project

**Ms Oana-Janina Iacobescu**

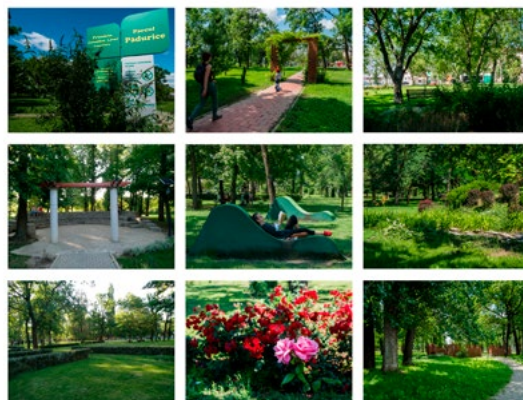
*General Technical Project Co-ordinator,  
Environmental Directorate of the Timișoara City, Romania*

## Summary of the Project

The Gardens Park is a heterogeneous landscape composition, which proposes a classic-to-modern tour of European gardens. In order to highlight the touristic and cultural potential of the area, as well as to create a unique and attractive leisure area for the citizens of the municipality, the following thematic landscaped gardens have been created:

- ▶ The English Mediaeval Garden has a Celtic knot inside a labyrinth.
- ▶ The Biblical Garden has a round flower bed, divided by a green hedge cross.
- ▶ The Italian Garden has Tuscan influences of red brick masonry, along an avenue.
- ▶ The Modern Garden is an outdoor office with sun and air beds on the surrounding lawn.
- ▶ The Spanish Garden is a classical, monastic garden.
- ▶ The Greek Garden has a mini-amphitheatre as its centre.
- ▶ The Romantic Garden is composed of an extended rose collection, a water lily lake and an ornamental rockery.

The Gardens Park  
- known as Padurice Giroc Park, and Lidia Park -  
Timișoara, Romania



<https://thegardensparktm.wixsite.com/pmtro>  
An Urban Landscape From 2016

*Photographer: Daliana Iacobescu  
Poster Image Creator: Sebastian Puraci*

## Short history

In 1910, the area on which the park is located was far outside Timișoara. In 1929, a small nursery in Timișoara moved from Vasile Pârvan Boulevard to the area in question and a 42 sq. m greenhouse, house and stable were built. During the war, the trees matured, the land became forested and could no longer be used for cultivation. After 1950, part of the nursery was cleared of wild vegetation and the dendrological nursery was redeveloped.

Production increased from 1,000 trees in 1950 to 27,500 in 1965. The production of conifers increased from 500 in 1950 to 8,000 in 1965. It also increased the range of valuable, special ornamental species. Most of the old trees in the parks and streets of Timișoara were propagated here.

Activity continued until 1973 when the nursery moved to Ciarda Roșie, where it still operates today. The former nursery was thus abandoned, and the dendrological material that remained here continued to grow until the whole area was forested, and so the area was then called "Little Forest Giroc Park". Once the districts of Calea Girocului and Zona Soarelui were built, this patch became a recreation refuge for the dwellers, a much-appreciated green oasis among the concrete blocks. Then the Giroc Forest became very popular due to its proximity to these two high-density districts and was renamed "Lidia Park".

The first changes were made after 1990, when the wilderness of the area was reduced by massive deforestation of the coppicing woodland. The general style of the resulting composition was mixed, given the vegetation that had developed naturally, in combination with rectangular paths and trimmed hedges.

In 1999, a network of paths was created on a small portion on the southern boundary, based on landscape criteria. In the area with rarer vegetation, resinous species were introduced, thus increasing the ornamental value of the area. During the same period, the entire surface was levelled, turf was laid and benches added. When this arrangement was initially made it did not address a unified landscape concept. From a practical point of view, the outdoor furniture addition was sketchy.



*The site before the intervention – 2015*

In 2010, the space was identified as a good candidate for functional and landscape modernisation. In general, the green area had a character of a "forest massif", sparse in places. Generally, the verdure was the result of the abandoned vegetation in the disused nursery, a suitable background for landscape modernisation. The main functions served by this area at this time were recreation, through-route and a children's playground.

The concept pursued in the redevelopment of this park was based on a "theme in theme" stylistic composition, spontaneously inspired by the words of a future visitor who, when asked, "What kind of park would you like in this place?" replied, "I grew up in this place and I've always wanted it to be a garden." Given the generous area, this response led to the idea, "Why just one garden and not more?", inspiring the conceptual name of the arrangement – a Park with Gardens, The Gardens Park – which has a heterogeneous landscape composition and offers a tour of European gardens, from classic to modern. The various elements introduced have a unity in their diversity.

The project to revitalise this area started in 2010, and was developed and executed by a multidisciplinary engineering and architectural team which brought together expertise in landscape architecture, the environment, civil architecture, construction engineering and urban development. The intention for these themed gardens is to be enjoyable and useful, both to the large number of current inhabitants of the area and to tourists who have the opportunity to find a corner of a garden of their native country here.

## The landscape concept

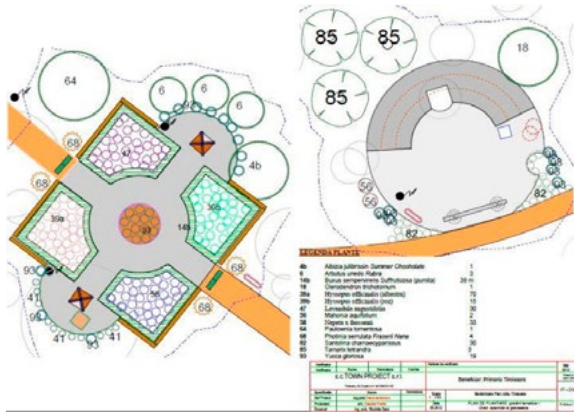
In order to highlight the tourist and cultural potential of the area, and to create a unique and attractive recreational area for the citizens of the municipality, the thematic gardens were created and are succinctly described to visitors by explanatory panels.



*The English Garden*

### The English Garden

The English Garden has as its compositional centre a Celt-inspired parterre in the form of a four-leafed clover. It is framed by a schematic maze of medium-height hedges that create natural booths typical of the medieval era. The green lawn is the traditional background of this garden.



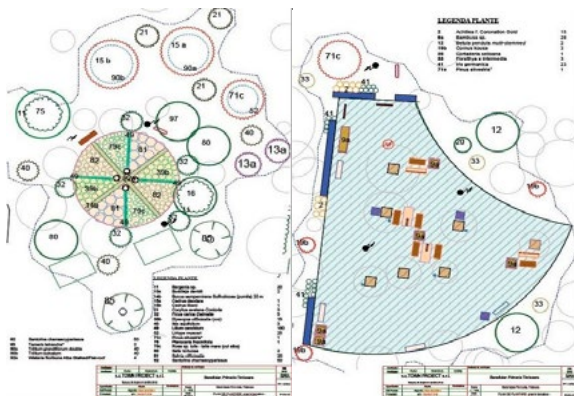
The Spanish and Greek Gardens

### Left: Spanish Garden

The Spanish Garden is designed according to monastic intervention. The path is in the shape of a cross, accessible via arcade portals. This garden is located near an existing church, thus framing the arrangement.

### Right: Greek Garden

The Greek Garden is decorated with evergreen plants. The characteristic elements of the Greek Mediterranean style are a mini-amphitheatre with seating and access through a portal of Greek columns, brought together by a pergola.



The Biblical and Modern Gardens

### Left: Biblical Garden

The Biblical Garden is a collection of plants and trees mentioned in the Christian Scriptures. This garden consists of a circle, divided by a hedge. The biblical garden is located near a public source of drinking water, a traditional feature. This garden is a place of rest and contemplation.

### Right: Modern Garden

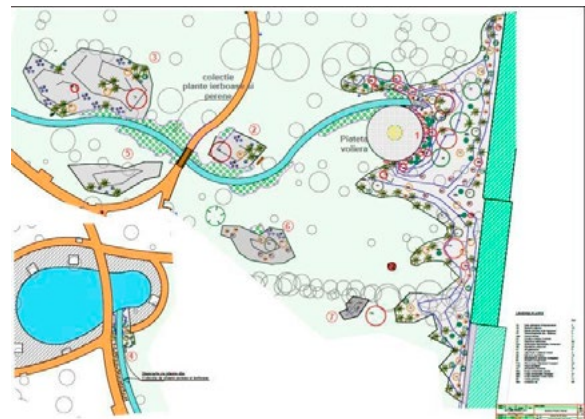
The Modern Garden is defined by a heterogeneous composition of natural stone, concrete, metal construction and living plants. The outdoor office furniture has an industrial design with ergonomics suitable for study, in an area serviced with wireless internet. Modern relaxation spots, chromatically integrated into the green of the lawn, are located on the perimeter of the study area.



The Italian Garden

### The Italian Garden

The Italian Garden is highlighted by geometrical shapes, unified with lavender flower beds. The masonry element which defines this composition is the red brick. The Italian Garden is an arrangement along a path, accessible through a brick-pillared portal and connected by a pergola.



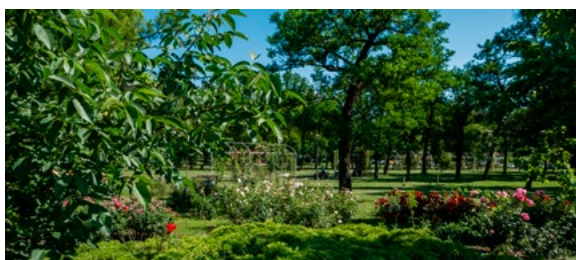
The Romantic Rockery Garden

### The Romantic Rockery Garden

The Romantic Garden occupies about one third of the entire surface of this theme-in-theme landscape called "The Park with Gardens", which suggests a journey through European Gardens. The Romantic Garden has a water lily lake, a birdhouse, a decorative assembly of rocks and an extensive collection of roses. The Romantic Garden can be accessed from the paths of all the other gardens and it is partially shaded by climbing rose arbours.



*Romantic Rockery Garden*



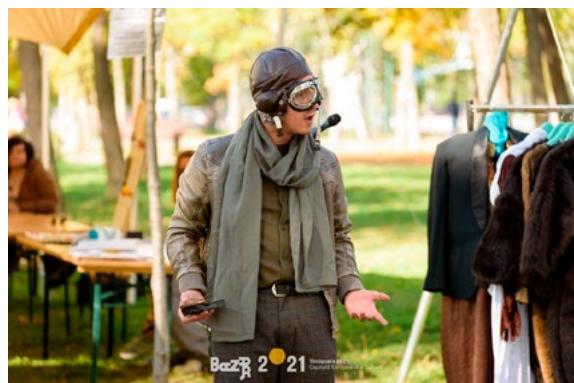
*The Rose Garden*

*The Rose Garden*

The city's Rose Collection has been enriched with new species. The existing rose area has been doubled several times, even after the conclusion of the modernisation of this project, using stock from different parks in Timișoara and other rose collections. More varieties of climbing roses have been introduced, trained on the 11 pergolas of the wide path that crosses this garden.

The park also includes a playground measuring 7,000 sq. m, equipped with 45 playground items for school and pre-school children, for both able-bodied and children with disabilities, and a football field. There is a Dirt BMX Bike Path, a large parking lot and a dedicated dog kennel of 574 sq. m, equipped with play items for dogs.

In addition, a Cultural Bazaar is organised annually by the Association Timișoara 2021 – European Capital of Culture and the Artistic Tribe Association known as Trib'Art, which includes theatre performances, jazz, pop and rock music concerts, activities for children of all ages and craft fairs.



*Summer events*

Another summer event for all ages is "as Falt art" which includes music, dance classes, painting exhibitions, even tai chi and many other activities for children and teenagers of all ages.

Every summer, the dance brings together amateurs and professionals to the rhythms of Kizomba, in the square of the Greek mini-amphitheatre.



General Landscape Architecture of the Gardens Park

Websites:

- ▶ <https://thegardensparktm.wixsite.com>
- ▶ <http://dmmt.ro>

Film:

- ▶ <https://vimeo.com/565592760>



# Val Bregaglia, une culture du paysage pour répondre aux enjeux du futur

## Commune de Bregaglia, Suisse

Représentant du Ministère

**M. Gilles Rudaz**

*Collaborateur scientifique, Office fédéral de l'environnement,  
Division Biodiversité et Paysage, Suisse*

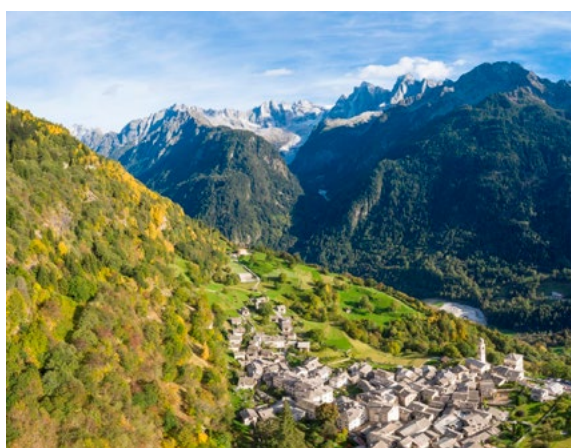
Représentant du Projet

**M. Fernando Giovanoli**

*Maire, Commune de Bregaglia, Suisse*

### Résumé du Project

Le Val Bregaglia a une culture du paysage, c'est-à-dire une conscience et une volonté d'intervenir avec soin dans le paysage, établie depuis longtemps. Cette sensibilité paysagère est très ancrée dans la population et est également portée par les autorités communales. Lors de la fusion des cinq communes de cette vallée alpine en 2010, le paysage et le patrimoine bâti sont rapidement apparus comme des éléments centraux de la stratégie globale formulée pour la vallée. Fruit de cet engagement, la commune recevait en 2015 le prestigieux Prix Wakker attribué par l'association « Patrimoine suisse » et qui distingue des communes pouvant se prévaloir d'un développement urbanistique de qualité. En août 2017, la vallée était frappée par un éboulement meurtrier accompagné de laves torrentielles engendrant d'importants dégâts sur les secteurs de Bondo et de Promontogno. La culture du paysage qui prévaut à Bregaglia a conduit la commune à veiller à une intégration dans le paysage des infrastructures à reconstruire ainsi que des nouvelles infrastructures de protection contre les dangers naturels à ériger. Un concours a été lancé en 2019 pour répondre à ce défi. Le projet retenu, « Strata », propose un programme ambitieux d'intégration paysagère et prévoit notamment de mettre en valeur le paysage par la création d'un réseau de murs en pierre sèche et par l'utilisation des pierres apportées dans la vallée par l'éboulement. Cet exemple d'une commune de montagne suisse démontre comment une culture établie du paysage permet de penser son développement de façon raisonnée et de faire face aux défis du futur.



Vue aérienne du village de Soglio, Val Bregaglia. © Roberto Moiola

## Principaux objectifs du Projet

- ▶ Préserver les qualités paysagères et la culture du bâti de la vallée. Si ce choix a des implications touristiques, c'est bien la question de la qualité de vie des résidents qui est au cœur du projet.
- ▶ Ancrer une culture du paysage dans la société et les autorités communales.
- ▶ Identifier le paysage et la culture du bâti comme des atouts et penser le développement de la vallée à partir de ces atouts.
- ▶ Sécuriser les villages de Bondo, Spino, Sottoponte et Promontogno, y compris toutes les routes de liaison à circulation rapide et lente, dont notamment les ponts.
- ▶ Redéfinition et réaménagement des espaces détruits par les laves torrentielles de 2017 en tenant compte de la sécurité et de l'intégration harmonieuse dans le paysage.



© Roberto Moiola

## Résultats obtenus

Le Val Bregaglia a su maintenir un paysage ainsi qu'un patrimoine bâti de qualité. Cet engagement concourt au maintien d'une vallée d'exception.

Une véritable culture du paysage y est établie, solidement ancrée au sein de la population et portée par les autorités locales. Avant même la fusion des communes de la vallée (2010), les zones à bâtir avaient été planifiées de manière compacte pour éviter la consommation d'espace et les atteintes au paysage.

Un inventaire exhaustif des monuments a été réalisé et des zones de protection ont été définies afin de préserver le patrimoine bâti. Ces documents ne se focalisent pas uniquement sur les objets

exceptionnels mais également sur des éléments plus modestes, comme les jardins potagers et d'agrément avec leurs murs, qui caractérisent le site. La qualité des jardins a été reconnue par l'attribution en 2009 du « Prix Schulthess des jardins », distinction attribuée par l'association Patrimoine suisse.

Confronté à la problématique des dangers naturels, la commune a développé des réflexions paysagères sur la façon d'une part d'intégrer les dégâts engendrés par l'éboulement et laves torrentielles et d'autre part à l'intégration des nouvelles infrastructures de façon harmonieuse dans le paysage. Le concours lancé en 2019 mettait clairement l'accent sur cette dimension d'intégration paysagère et la sélection des candidats, et notamment du lauréat « Strata », a montré clairement qu'il s'agissait d'un critère déterminant. Porté par une équipe pluridisciplinaire composée d'ingénieurs, d'architectes et d'architectes du paysage, ce projet révèle son ambition d'intégration paysagère en son nom (strates/couches en français) : il entend reproduire dans les nouvelles constructions et infrastructures les vires et les murs en pierres sèches qui caractérisent le paysage du Val Bregaglia. De plus, il n'a pas été décidé de gommer les dégâts engendrés mais de les intégrer dans une réflexion paysagère. Le projet prévoit également de mettre en valeur le paysage par l'insertion de belvédères en des points stratégiques, par la création d'un réseau de murs en pierre sèche et par l'utilisation de la pierre apportée dans la vallée par l'éboulement et les laves torrentielles.



© Roberto Moiola

## Développement territorial durable

Lors de la remise du Prix Wakker en 2015 à la commune de Bregaglia, le Secrétaire général de Patrimoine suisse, Adrian Schmid notait : « La commune de Bregaglia montre de manière exemplaire comment une commune de montagne parvient à concilier la préservation de la culture architecturale locale et son aspiration au développement ». L'engagement de la commune pour la préservation des qualités paysagères et de son



patrimoine bâti s'explique par la volonté d'offrir un cadre de vie agréable à ses résidents.

Cet engagement pour un paysage de qualité est révélateur de la façon dont une collectivité pense son développement. Patrimoine suisse a relevé: «En décernant le Prix Wakker 2015 à la commune de Bregaglia, Patrimoine suisse distingue une vallée périphérique de la Suisse qui puise sa force dans son héritage architectural afin de mener un développement original. La volonté de préserver une identité propre conduit à des approches inédites et innovantes face aux défis que sont la construction de résidences secondaires, l'exode ou le dépeuplement des centres des villages».

### Exemplarité

L'action engagée de cette commune des Alpes suisses montre comment une culture du paysage établie permet de faire face aux défis contemporains et ceux du futur, en première ligne desquels figure le changement climatique. En effet, la façon dont la gestion des risques naturels a été intégrée dans une réflexion paysagère illustre cette culture du paysage qui prévaut dans le Val Bregaglia et montre une approche qui trouve toute sa pertinence dans le contexte du réchauffement climatique et démontre ainsi son exemplarité face à un phénomène qui touche toute la planète.

En sus, l'ensemble des mesures prises par Bregaglia montre, avec le cas d'une commune de montagne, que la préservation du paysage et du patrimoine bâti peut aller de pair avec le développement socio-économique d'une région périphérique et même se renforcer mutuellement.

### Participation du public

La culture du paysage établie à Bregaglia est ancienne et s'est élaborée sur la concertation. Les récents développements ont poursuivi dans cette voie de la participation. La culture du paysage est indéniablement ancrée dans la population. Un paysage de qualité et une haute culture du bâti sont considérés comme des éléments centraux de la qualité de vie des résidents. Patrimoine suisse, lors de la remise du Prix Wakker, relevait cette dimension participative qui caractérise le Val Bregaglia: «La haute estime portée au patrimoine bâti repose sur la volonté affirmée des citoyens de travailler dans le contexte existant et de s'y référer pour construire l'avenir. Grâce aux outils modernes de planification, à une culture vivante de la discussion, à l'organisation de concours et à des mesures efficaces pour garantir la qualité, la commune contribue au maintien et au développement du patrimoine bâti».



© Roberto Moiola

Cette dimension participative perdure également dans le récent projet de gestion des dangers naturels et de réparation des infrastructures faisant suite à l'éboulement de 2017. Le projet «Strata» fait l'objet de présentations publiques et les crédits nécessaires à la réalisation du projet sont soumis à votation.

### Sensibilisation

Le Val Bregaglia peut véritablement se prévaloir d'avoir une culture du paysage, c'est-à-dire une conscience et une volonté d'intervenir avec soin dans le paysage. Celle-ci est ancrée tant au sein de la population que des autorités politiques, voire même encore des touristes. Ainsi, cette sensibilité se retrouve même dans la conception des infrastructures. Ainsi, pour le cas spécifique de Bregaglia, plus que de sensibilisation, on peut parler de véritable consolidation d'une culture du paysage.

Par ailleurs, l'excellence de Bregaglia permet de sensibiliser le reste de la population suisse à l'importance d'intégrer le paysage dans la façon de concevoir son développement.

### Vidéos:

- ▶ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-u146OutFg&feature=emb\\_logo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-u146OutFg&feature=emb_logo)
- ▶ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKXTWqqmaJI&feature=emb\\_logo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKXTWqqmaJI&feature=emb_logo)
- ▶ [www.comunedibregaglia.ch/home/video](http://www.comunedibregaglia.ch/home/video)

### Sites internet:

- ▶ [www.bafu.admin.ch/prix-paysage-bregaglia](http://www.bafu.admin.ch/prix-paysage-bregaglia) (français)
- ▶ [www.bafu.admin.ch/landscape-award-bregaglia](http://www.bafu.admin.ch/landscape-award-bregaglia) (English)
- ▶ [www.bafu.admin.ch/landschaftspreis-bergell](http://www.bafu.admin.ch/landschaftspreis-bergell) (Deutsch)
- ▶ [www.bafu.admin.ch/premio-paesaggio-bregaglia](http://www.bafu.admin.ch/premio-paesaggio-bregaglia) (Italiano)
- ▶ [www.comunedibregaglia.ch](http://www.comunedibregaglia.ch)
- ▶ [www.patrimoinesuisse.ch/details-actuels/prix-wakker-2015-a-la-commune-de-bregaglia-gr](http://www.patrimoinesuisse.ch/details-actuels/prix-wakker-2015-a-la-commune-de-bregaglia-gr)



# Dokuma Park, a culture, nature and art park for society

## Antalya Kepez Municipality, Turkey

Representatives of the Ministry

**Mr İsmail Üzmez**

*Director General of Nature Conservation and National Parks,  
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## Summary of the Project

The foundation of Antalya Spinning and Cotton Weaving Mill was laid during the 1950s, and it became the first industrial facility of Antalya, covering an area of 250,000 sq. m. It was active 24 hours a day and, until it entirely closed down in 2003, it was a shelter for the stories of its working individuals, their families and friends. In 2005, the weaving factory owners handed over all the property rights to the governing administration of the time which passed usage of the land to a foreign company to build a shopping mall.

The governing administration that took over Kepez Municipality in 2009 recognised the importance of this place for the collective memory of the city and has spent years restoring legal rights to the land, in order to hand it over to the citizens, the rightful owners. The most important aspect of this project was to reclaim this land that was destined to be lost to a shopping mall, thus erasing the natural and cultural landscape of the area.

The city council agreed to assemble a working group of representatives of the local governing political parties, professional chambers and local civic organisations, academics and experts, with a focus on the common interest and collaboration to uphold the values of the common interests. A report resulting from collaboration and research of this diverse working group was considered by the city council and resulted in collaboration to create Dokumapark, thus protecting the interest of all society involved, and it can now be used as a blueprint.



Kapak Kopya. © Ali Kemal Birinci & Kansu Alkan

A platform was established to engage local citizens as active participants and owners of this park, located in the centre of the city, and action has been taken to raise awareness of this cause. Public engagement is recognised as an essential element to guarantee a sustainable future, in terms of maintaining the qualities of the park's ecosystem and socio-cultural characteristics.

### Central aims of the Project

This special project sustains the natural environment and cultural characteristics of its surroundings, located in the centre of Antalya, with the purpose of upholding the values for the city and its citizens. During the development of Dokumapark, it was a priority to recognise and maintain the characteristics of the landscape, carrying it into the future city as cultural heritage that deserves recognition and protection. By this achievement, the project also serves as an example of the importance of protecting collective memory and protecting nature.

The project outcome of diverse management participation resulted in commons that serves not only the interest of Antalya, but the entire region. Awareness was successfully raised amongst the citizens of the richness in this landscape with the remains of the Antalya Spinning and Cotton Weaving Mill as a landmark within Dokumapark.



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The project aimed to contribute to sustainable environmental development, with the unique traits of the landscape, and promoting the benefit of ecological sustainability while recognising the demands of a growing city. The project would engrave the story of the facilities on the collective memory by giving them use again, for artistic and cultural activities and as a centre for ongoing research, execution and the exhibition of works related to the local memory.

By highlighting the design, the cultural and natural richness of the Dokumapark area, neglected for so many years, the intention was also to restore the charm and attraction of this abandoned space to the city, and to uplift the reputation of the area and country.

Dokumapark carries the status of cultural heritage because of the important structures it hosts in its 250,000 sq. m area. An important goal of this project was to preserve the diverse flora and the environmental structures for future generations. A sustainable climate has been assured by creating a botanic park and improving the landscape conditions of the area. Museums, artistic practice spaces and arts and cultural events have also been developed in the park, to uphold and spread awareness of its natural resources.



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### Outcome

As a whole, the area has been preserved with all its original landscape values. All work ensured that the functionality and restoration was performed with the close collaboration of the diverse working group. The space has witnessed an era transforming it into an important part of the local heritage, while preserving the memory of its structure.

The plan that was prepared by the working group has been the blueprint for working methods, ethics and strategy. The vision was prepared on 1/5000 and 1/1000 scale plans and presented to the city council and the local cultural heritage protection committee, resulting in the plan's approval.

An interactive governance platform gave voice to contributions from the citizens which were taken into account while preparing and executing the project. The platform also contributed to education and welfare concerning the protection of the qualities specific to the landscape, the preservation of the historic interest, the protection of cultural heritage, awareness of environmental civic values and general awareness on sustainability. The diverse working group which maintained a common interest has contributed to local involvement and the project's positive reputation.

The historical significance of Dokumapark has been promoted, with its social and cultural activities which have improved the presence and awareness of the social, cultural, artistic, natural values and characteristics of this monumental park in the local

community. The park has developed a charm and character that has contributed to economic mobility and attracts alternative tourism.



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The Anatolian toy museum, the city museum, the science centre and the modern art gallery that are located in this space have not only contributed to culture-art but also provide a crucial contribution to education. There is space provided for children, young adults and adults to spend time working on their own projects whilst there are also social spaces for interaction.

Antalya is known as the capital of tourism and this park provides a welcome touristic attraction. For the first time there has been a space providing diverse facilities, making it a one-of-a-kind arts and cultural centre for Turkey. The museums provide alternative educational spaces for children. A versatile complex has been created for the local history and culture of Antalya. The previous lack of facilities meeting the needs of versatile art activities has been addressed by providing multiple art galleries.



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### Sustainable territorial development

Dokumapark is the centre-piece representing the principle of sustainable development in Kepez Municipality. The benefits of the new landscape of Dokumapark are already apparent in the surrounding social, economic, cultural and aesthetic improvements. A plan has been established based

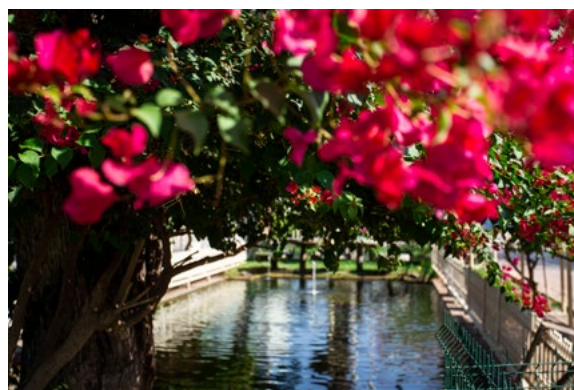
on the nature of the landscape and the organic tie it creates with the museum, gallery and social spaces.

The benefits have been magnified with the addition of an orange tree garden and arboretum and the restoration of the old weaving factories, including improvement of the surrounding flora. It had become an unruly forest that was neglected and inaccessible to citizens. The project rehabilitated and transformed the forest, and improved accessibility. Damage caused by abuse and neglect has been repaired, together with the collective memory in cultural heritage of the space, thanks to the conservation plan provided by the working group, in collaboration with the local community.

### Exemplary value

The project is exemplary because it is the first in Turkey that provides a home to cultural and natural heritage and where the protection and preservation of the area in its totality are monitored. The fruits of this project were already tangible in its first two years. The museums, art galleries, libraries, natural park and arboretums and the availability of multiple social and sports parks complement one another, and this is a unique example of such a landscape arrangement.

A number of academics and representatives of cultural heritage preservation institutions have noted that Dokumapark serves as an exemplary model in its successful function of sustainability and accessibility. The record number of visitors and prizes received also reinforce this success. The space, previously left to decay through neglect, has been reanimated to meet the needs and elevate the quality of its surrounding, thanks to the collaborations of the diverse parties involved.



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The Anatolian toy museum, city museum, modern art gallery, arboretum, sports tracks and other facilities have introduced to the original landscape arrangements a coffee festival, a model vehicle festival, an antiques market and children's festivals, demonstrating the socially successful functionality of the space.

## Public participation

The Dokumapark Project is the result of the quality of collaboration between the citizens and governance. The Kepez Municipality Council decided that a working group consisting of citizens, representatives of all political parties, civic organisations and academics of the university should collaborate and decide on the preservation and the decision of how the completed project would function.



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The research and work performed by this group on the protection and the future function of this space was presented in a report to Kepez Municipality. This report was evaluated and accepted by the Kepez Municipality Council, ensuring their participation in the decision-making process of the space. During this period, surveys were carried out through the official website of Dokumapark where the visitors could express their views and give suggestions. The results serve as an exemplary model for the original and strong element of public participation in establishing the approach to a project.

This project is in line with national, regional and local policies. Central and local policies prioritise the services to the citizens, the creation of new touristic attractions, the protection of natural, cultural and historical heritage and a balance between these policies. The Dokumapark project's essence is an exact template of these policies. The success of this project has also ensured the likelihood of the realisation of further, similar projects.



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## Awareness-raising

The project has been successful in raising awareness and improving participation concerning the health and well-being of society, thus strengthening the consolidation of the European identity in terms of individual and societal welfare and raising awareness of the importance of landscape in the eyes of the public. The process of deciding the defining features of this project was completed in collaboration with public voting.

This landscape and the original soul of Dokumapark provide natural and cultural aspects that are in unity in a landscape which is accessible to the public, and they are able to immerse themselves by their senses of sight, smell and touch, raising awareness of the significance of landscape in relation to people, and thus individual well-being.

The project educates by "show" not "tell", and the overall response has demonstrated that this kind of experience has been most effective in conveying the importance of landscape for human well-being.

The Dokumapark space has demonstrated the indispensability of the presence of a well-designed landscape to serve the needs of the public, with a balance between aesthetics and function as fundamental essentials for daily life. It has become a magnificent oasis of art, culture and nature. Dokumapark answers the needs and wishes of all ages and has become a destination for local and foreign visitors, the organisation of art and cultural activities and events, a fun space for socialising and learning while sustaining the cultural and natural structure.

The project raises awareness of the importance of the locality to society, and encourages the development of more projects resembling Dokumapark. The project has also been realised respecting the responsibilities defined by the European Landscape Convention Articles 5 (a), (b), (c) and article 6 (A) and (D).



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## Visitors

Since opening in 2017, Dokumapark has welcomed 3.5 million visitors. Besides regular visitors, Dokumapark has also hosted thousands of guests for special events, such as the annual coffee and orange festivals. The daily visitors using the green areas and running tracks for exercise are not included in the total numbers of visitors.

Film:

▶ <https://vimeo.com/499174870>





**List of participants**  
**Liste des participants**

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La biodiversité dans la ville : Bergame et la vallée  
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Latvian Fund for Nature, Latvia

Les paysages parlent,  
Fonds letton pour la nature, Lettonie

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Living Landscape: the Fjord Coast Regional- and  
Geopark,  
Municipalities of Solund, Fjaler, Askvoll and  
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Un paysage vivant: la Région de la côte des fjords-  
et Géoparc,  
Municipalités de Solund, Fjaler, Askvoll et  
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Protection of the valuable non-forest habitats  
and landscapes characteristic for the area of Orle  
Gniazda Landscape Park,  
Complex of Landscape Parks of the Silesian  
Voivodeship, Poland

La protection des précieux habitats non forestiers  
et des caractéristiques paysagères de la région  
du Parc paysager de l'Orle Gniazda,  
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Herdade da Contenda, a tale of resilience for nature,  
Municipality of Moura, Alentejo, Portugal

Herdade da Contenda, un conte de résilience  
pour la nature,  
Municipalité de Moura, Alentejo, Portugal

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Le développement de la destination touristique  
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Val Bregaglia, a landscape culture to meet the challenges of the future,  
Municipality of Bregaglia, Switzerland

Val Bregaglia, une culture du paysage pour répondre aux enjeux du futur,  
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Dokuma Park, a culture, nature and art park for society,  
Antalya Kepez Municipality, Turkey

Le Parc Dokuma, un parc de la culture, de la nature et de l'art pour la société,  
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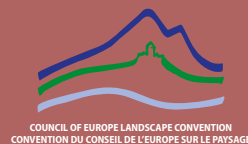
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Adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 19 July 2000 in Strasbourg and opened for signature by the member States in Florence on 20 October of the same year, the European Landscape Convention aims to promote landscape protection, management and planning, and to organise international co-operation on these issues. Its signatory States declare their desire to achieve sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment. Landscape is recognised as an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity. The Convention concerns outstanding landscapes as well as everyday or degraded territories.

### [www.coe.int/EuropeanLandscapeConvention](http://www.coe.int/EuropeanLandscapeConvention)

Adoptée par le Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe à Strasbourg le 19 juillet 2000 et ouverte à la signature des Etats membres à Florence le 20 octobre de la même année, la Convention européenne du paysage a pour objet de promouvoir la protection, la gestion et l'aménagement des paysages, et d'organiser la coopération internationale dans ce domaine. Ses Etats signataires se déclarent soucieux de parvenir à un développement durable fondé sur un équilibre harmonieux entre les besoins sociaux, l'économie et l'environnement. Le paysage est reconnu comme composante essentielle du cadre de vie des populations, expression de la diversité de leur patrimoine commun culturel et naturel, et fondement de leur identité. La Convention concerne tant les paysages remarquables que les paysages du quotidien et les territoires dégradés.

### [www.coe.int/Conventioneuropennedupaysage](http://www.coe.int/Conventioneuropennedupaysage)



[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

Le Conseil de l'Europe est la principale organisation de défense des droits de l'homme du continent. Il comprend 47 États membres, dont l'ensemble des membres de l'Union européenne. Tous les États membres du Conseil de l'Europe ont signé la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme, un traité visant à protéger les droits de l'homme, la démocratie et l'État de droit. La Cour européenne des droits de l'homme contrôle la mise en œuvre de la Convention dans les États membres.