



LIFE GRACE

Grasslands conservation through grazing



LIFE19 GIE/IT/000977



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LAZIO

ARSIAL
Agenzia Regionale
per lo Sviluppo
e l'Innovazione
dell'Agricoltura del Lazio



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The Project Objective

The **LIFE Grace** project aims to promote the conservation of the semi-natural grassland habitats which need grazing as a condition to avoid deterioration or loss. The project is focused on the Natura 2000 Network of the Lazio Region.

Three main habitats targets:

- **6210*** Festuco-Brometalia semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies covered by bushes on limestone substrates;
- **6220*** Pseudo-steppe with grasses and annuals Thero-Brachypodietea;
- **6230*** Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas.



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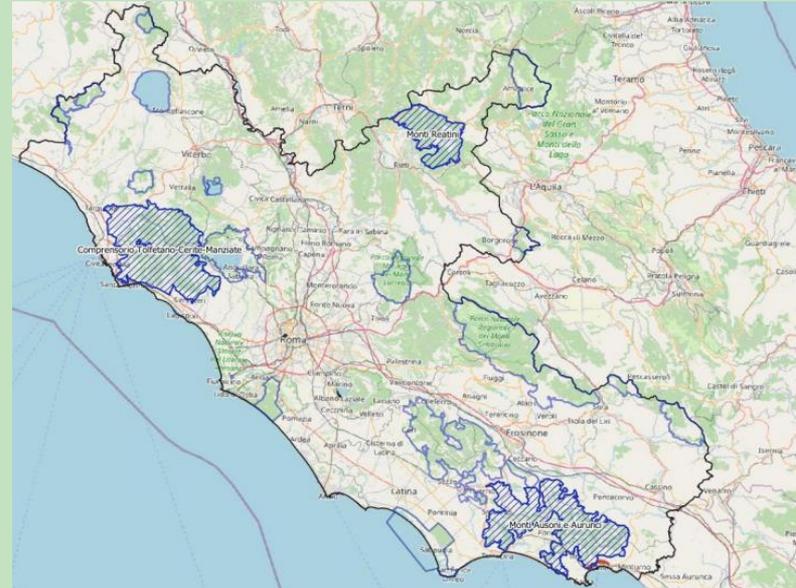




Areas of the project

The project is being implemented in three areas of the Lazio Region Natura 2000 network:

- 1- the complex of the Tolfa mountains in the west of the region (67.573 ha),
- 2- the Reatina mountain in the north of the region (23.485 ha)
- 3- Ausoni-Aurunci mountains in the south of the region (62.351 ha)



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LIFE Grace Project

The LIFE GRACE project is co-funded by the **LIFE Programme**.

- Duration of the project: **4 years** (01/09/2020 – 31/08/2024)
- Budget: 1,378,727 €
- Partners: **ARSIAL** (Agenzia Regionale per lo Sviluppo e Innovazione dell' Agricoltura del Lazio), **DEB** (Department of Environmental Biology (Sapienza University)), **FIRAB** (Fondazione Italiana di Ricerca in Agricoltura Biologica e Biodinamica), **GF** (Green Factor Srl), **CA** (Comunità Ambiente Srl).
- Web-site: <https://www.lifegrace.eu/it/>





Goals of LIFE GRACE

1. To promote knowledge of the contractual measures in Natura 2000 areas
2. Mapping of grazing habitats and development of web-apps for breeders/farmers and their involvement in grassland habitats monitoring
3. Evolutionary analysis of grazing habitats and stocking rates
4. To raise awareness among the managers of the common lands that make up the prevailing matrix of the grazing habitats
5. To strengthen the role of brands for the production of the Natura 2000 pastures and the relationship with the HORECA system
6. To implement the CAM (Minimum Environmental Criteria) in public canteen contracts for livestock products from the N2000 areas
7. Dissemination of the territorial analysis model inside and outside the region
8. To raise public awareness on the productions achieved in Natura 2000 areas



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Collaborations

During the project, various collaborations have been/will be established:

- companies in the meat supply chain and in the food service and hotel industries;
- environmental authorities to test contractual measures;
- agricultural associations and managers of collective land in the target areas;
- the consumer world;
- the municipalities of the Lazio that contract public canteen services, interested in implementing environmental sustainability in their technical specifications.



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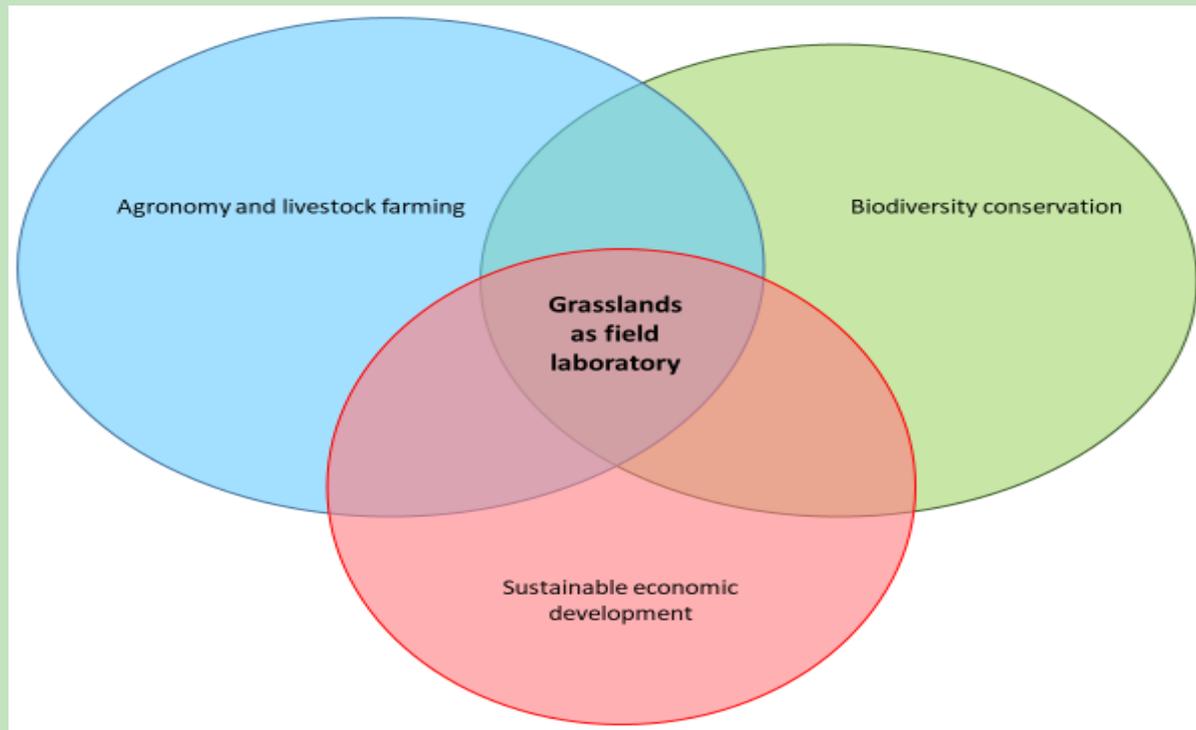


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Identification of target grazing areas

Each targeted grazing area will become a field laboratory where best practices will be tested for their efficacy through the cooperation between researchers and farmers.





Expected results

- To restore / maintain **at least 10%** of EU habitats object of grazing.
- The **reinforcement** the territory **of the role of farmers** as custodians of (through their biodiversity conservation and monitoring activities).
- The conservation of **7** target **native breeds** (Maremma cows, TPR horses, Tolfa horses, Maremma horses, Pony of Esperia, and Ciociara Grey goats and Monticellana goats).
- Raising awareness of the general public of the importance of supporting the breeders by buying the sustainable products they produce.



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Management model

When dealing with a complex environmental issue such as the conservation of semi-natural grassland habitats, the improvement of livestock health and the development of a market for locally produced meat of high quality, a novel management model is required.

The model being developed is based on two pillars:

- a systemic perspective and a quantitative approach in order to integrate all relevant management components
- a strict cooperation between technical and scientific staff and local farmers in order to define the best management and conservation practices for the semi-natural grassland habitats targeted by the LIFE GRACE project.



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Main Actions:

Preparatory Actions:

- A.1 Realization a scoping study on best practices in biodiversity conservation
- A.2 Environmental and socio-economic analyses
- A.3 Market analysis
- A.4 Involvement of stakeholders

Governance and information actions:

- B.1 Implementation of a marketing model
- B.2 Implementation of a cooperation model for biodiversity conservation
- B.3 Implementation of a cooperation model on biodiversity monitoring
- B.4 Development of a replication and transfer plan



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Monitoring actions:

- C.1 Monitoring of the impacts of the project
- C.2 KPI monitoring

Dissemination actions:

- D.1 Communication and dissemination plan
- D.2 Campaign for the public as consumers
- D.4 Campaign for farmers
- D.3 Networking and final workshop

Management actions:

- E.1 Project management and coordination
- E.2 Project monitoring
- E.3 Drafting of the after-LIFE plan



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GF
green
Factor

comunità
ambiente



Main findings

Among the main findings in the analysis being carried out is a chronic lack of aggregation between producers, particularly on the commercial strategy front.

- Moreover breeders agree that the main obstacle to their activity is excessive bureaucracy and the difficulty in positioning own (organic) products
- A relevant number of breeders in mountainous areas requiring additional economic and transaction costs and bureaucratic burdens
- For the full socio-economic study and other completed activities please visit our website <https://www.lifegrace.eu/it/>



Main challenges

- The impact of social, economic and technical transformations on the local culture i.e. breeders, consumers, public administrations.
- Passage from sheep to cow and horse raising: a considerable part of the cattle belongs to part-time breeders i.e. people who derive their main income from other activities.
- Price hikes, including those linked to COVID and the conflict in Ukraine: 75% increase in raw material prices, while the demand for meat languishes.



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Thank you!



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