

ITALY

Biodiversity's restoration, preservation & enhancement

Location

Marche region

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P4 - Ecosystems
Management

Measure

M15 – Forest-
environmental-climate

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 209 528.04
EAFRD 90 348.49
National/Region. 119 179.55

Project duration

2016 – 2019

Project promoter

ASSAM - Regional agency for
services to the agro-food
sector

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www.assam.marche.it/progetti7/biodiversita-forestale/biodiversita-forestale

Measure 15 played a key role in the protection and spreading the use of local forestry genetic resources in the Italian region of Marche.

Summary

Implementing regional laws for the protection of forestry biodiversity can often be complicated. The Italian region of Marche had proactively set laws for protecting forestry genetic resources, however, there were many complications in properly implementing them and making stakeholders aware of their value.

Measure 15 played a key role in supporting a public agency to undertake the genetic research and mapping and specific nursery work required. It also assisted when disseminating information among local municipalities and schools, thus providing the basis for further cooperation between stakeholders.



Results

There were 18 forestry sites and individual ancient trees identified, mapped and used as a source for valuable genetic material; some of which dated from the 17th century.

A total of 12 municipalities in the Marche region have used the plant material so far. The distribution started in late 2019, just a few months prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specific plots were created in the three public nurseries to conserve and reproduce this genetic material that includes more than 50 different plant species and a regional archive of seed forests was set up.

Scientific knowledge about genetic 'hotspots' has greatly improved and this will help with further actions to conserve forestry biodiversity in the region.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The use of local genetic material can be scaled up by making local professionals and experts more aware of its value.
- ❑ Raising awareness and cultivating greater involvement of local municipalities can aid in upscaling the Measure's implementation.

Context

The Marche region has established its key objectives and tools for protecting and managing forests under the law n.6/2005. These objectives included identifying and conserving valuable genetic resources. Research was carried out in the 1990s by universities and the national Forestry Body (CFS), particularly on cherry and walnut species used in re-forestation. Strong attention had been paid to some local varieties and forestry habitats, however, limited practical action had been taken place since that work. As a consequence, the pool of local genetic resources had not yet been utilised for the benefit of local stakeholders.

Objectives

The main objectives of this project included:

- A comprehensive identification of local genetic forestry resources;
- Conservation of the identified genetic pool;
- Reproduction of valuable genetic material in nurseries and open fields;
- Free distribution of the plants to local municipalities and schools; and
- Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping of the most valuable forestry sites.

Activities

The project started by sampling, identifying and mapping ancient forest sites and individual trees of high genetic value. This enabled mapping of 18 genetic 'hotspots' in public areas in the region.

Seeds and other genetic materials from these sites and trees were collected and transferred to three main public nurseries (Amandola, Senigallia and Pollenza) for conservation and reproduction.

The final step included offering plant material to public authorities, such as municipalities and schools, for landscaping and creating new green areas in and around villages and towns. Similarly, the plants were made available to private nurseries and garden centres.

A significant number of scientific publications in Italian and English were produced, mainly by the Università Politecnico delle Marche-Forestry department, Ancona.

Main results

There were 18 forestry sites and individual ancient trees identified, mapped and used as a source for valuable genetic material; some of which dated from the 17th century.

So far, 12 municipalities in Marche region have used the material. The distribution started in late 2019, just a few months prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Three conferences and meetings were organised at regional and provincial scale.

Specific plots were created in the three public nurseries to conserve and reproduce this genetic material from more than 50 different plant species, and a regional archive of seed forests was set-up.

Scientific knowledge about the genetic 'hotspots' greatly improved, and it will help with further actions to conserve the forestry biodiversity in the region.

Key lessons

The Measure represented a true innovation in the way forestry resources are managed in the region. There are two aspects which should be noted as to improve the efficiency and impact of projects:

- The use of these genetic resources can be improved by raising awareness of their value among local professionals and experts.
- A similar improvement concerns the greater involvement of Local Authorities in the Measure's implementation. For instance, Local Authorities could plan their future landscaping activities in towns and villages, knowing that such green materials could play a key role for improving the quality of the surrounding environment. The Pesaro municipality is currently considering whether to use these resources on around 100 000 m² of green space.



Additional sources of information

www.assam.marche.it/progetti7/biodiversita-forestale/mappa-delle-formazioni-proposte-ai-fini-dell-iscrizione