



LIFE XERO-GRAZING

Duration and budget: 01/07/2013 – 30/06/2019; € 1.001.034 (€ 497.821 funded by EU)

Partners: Ente di Gestione delle Aree Protette delle Alpi Cozie; DISAFA (Unito); DBIOS (Unito); Comune di Bussoleno; Comune di Mompantero; D.R.E.Am Italia

Demonstration areas/case study areas: SAC IT1110030 'Xerothermal oasis of the Susa Valley – Orrido di Chianocco' (Susa Valley, Piedmont, Italy)



Main Goals:

- Conservation and restoration through pastoral management (grazing sheep) of the priority habitats (HD 92/43/EEC) 6210^(*) 'Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrublands facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (*important orchid sites)' and 6240* 'Sub-Pannonic steppic grasslands' threatened by land abandonment



Main Actions:

- **Preparatory Actions:**
 - Mapping of 6210^(*) and 6240* habitats and inventory of the flora
 - Definition of the vegetation carrying capacity, grazing days, and setting of pastoral infrastructures (4.4 km of water pipelines, drinking troughs, pastoral trails, electrified night fences, guard dogs)
- **Concrete Actions:**
 - Implementation of the grazing system with a flock of 250 sheep on 120 ha in the SAC
 - Cutting of trees and shrubs on 20 ha in the SAC
- **Monitoring:** vegetation surveys on two permanent networks (40 plots for orchids and rare species + 114 vegetation transects)

Main results:

- Sheep grazing proved to be effective for the conservation of the grasslands: no detrimental effects on vegetation and orchid species; some rare plants were favoured by grazing
- A long-term management of the area became possible thanks to the availability of pastoral infrastructures and the service flock owned by the management authority (Alpi Cozie Park)
- The dissemination of the project to the local community increased the interest for the valorisation and protection of these habitats



Policy implications:

- Specific guidelines for the conservation and restoration of habitats 6210* and 6240 are now available for nature conservationists and policy makers
- Site-specific Natura 2000 conservation measures were approved taking the knowledge achieved with the project into account (DGR 27/2/2017 n. 7-4703)
 - SAC management plan integrates grazing management plan
- The service flock owned by the management authority (Alpi Cozie Park) is an innovative approach to support the management of Natura 2000 sites
- The project favored the establishment of a Land Consolidation Association (Regional Law 21/2016) named 'Paradiso' in the SAC (Mompantero municipality) to manage abandoned lands, increase their economic value and productivity, and decrease natural risks, such as wildfires. This experience can help implement a national law