**ITALY**

***Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation***

*Inter-ministerial Committee for Human Rights*

*Comitato Interministeriale per i Diritti Umani*

 **ITALY’S CONTRIBUTION**

**TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

**OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

***May 2020***

**ITALY’S REMARKS**

Italian Authorities thank the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environmentand want to provide the following information about healthy ecosystems and human rights.

1*. Please provide examples of ways in which declining biodiversity and degraded*

*ecosystems are already having adverse impacts on human rights. Adversely affected*

*rights could include, among others, the rights to life, health, water, food, culture, nondiscrimination, a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and Indigenous*

*rights.*

The interdependence between biodiversity and human well-being and prosperity has been widely and increasingly recognized. Negative trends in biodiversity and ecosystems undermine the achievement Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda related to poverty, hunger, health, water, cities, climate, oceans and land.

Significant examples have been provided in the context of the UN Convention on Biodiversity (CBD):

(for more info: [www.cbd.int/development/doc/biodiversity- 2030-agenda-policy-brief-en.pdf](http://www.cbd.int/development/doc/biodiversity-%202030-agenda-policy-brief-en.pdf))

* Globally, nearly half of the human population is directly dependent on natural resources for its livelihood. Many of the most vulnerable people depend on food gathered from natural ecosystems, such as forests, grasslands, oceans and rivers.
* A large number of deaths and disease (1 to 4) globally is attributed to environmental risk factors. Healthy ecosystems help mitigate the spread and impact of pollution by both sequestering and eliminating certain types of air, water and soil pollution.
* Agricultural biodiversity contributes to increased sustainable production, reducing the need for pesticides and other chemical inputs, resulting in benefits to health.
* A substantial proportion of the world’s population depends on traditional medicines derived from biodiversity for their health care needs.
* Biodiversity and healthy ecosystems can provide reliable and cost-effective natural infrastructure. For example, coral reefs and mangrove forests protect coasts against flooding that are expected to increase with climate change. Natural infrastructure such as vegetation in cities can reduce the run-off of pollution into water bodies.
* Loss of biodiversity and associated ecosystem services can perpetuate gender inequalities by increasing the time spent by women and children in performing certain tasks, such as collecting valuable resources, including fuel, food and water.

In accordance with these implications of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation on human development and well-being, decisions and commitments have been developed under the CBD, other Multilateral Environmental Agreements and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

On the same basis the European Union legislation (and consequently the Italian legislation) to protect environment and nature and to promote sustainable use of resources has been developed over the decades.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic exemplifies how negative human impacts on natural ecosystems can result in widespread humanitarian, social and economic consequences across the globe.

2. *To protect a wide range of human rights, what are the specific obligations of States*

*and responsibilities of businesses in terms of addressing the main direct drivers of harm*

*to biodiversity and ecosystems (e.g. land conversion, loss and degradation of habitat,*

*climate change, overexploitation, pollution, invasive species) and the indirect drivers*

*(unsustainable production and consumption, rapid human population growth, trade,*

*conflict and inequality)?*

There is a broad range of legislation, that the European Union (and consequently Italy) has put in place over the past decades to face many of the drivers that harm biodiversity and ecosystems . Various EU Directives ad Regulations have been approved, aiming at preventing and reducing air, water and soil pollution, restricting the use of toxic or hazardous substances, improving water quality, designating protected areas for nature.

Concerning specifically measures on nature and biodiversity:

* The EU Biodiversity Strategy aims to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU and help stop global biodiversity loss by 2020. It reflects the commitments taken by the EU in 2010, within the international Convention on Biological Diversity. The strategy sets out 6 targets and 20 actions. The targets are: Protect species and habitats; Maintain and restore ecosystems; Achieve more sustainable agriculture and forestry; Make fishing more sustainable and seas healthier; Combat invasive alien species; Help stop the loss of global biodiversity.

In Italy, the National Biodiversity Strategy has been adopted for the period 2011-2020, in line with the EU one.

The new EU BD Strategy (2020-2030) is under discussion and will be delivered in 2020/2021 in accordance with the new global “post 2020” strategic framework in course of being developed by CBD COP15.

* Habitat Directive and Natura 2000: On the basis of the “Birds Directive” adopted in 1979 to protect all wild bird species naturally occurring in the Union, the Habitats Directive was adopted in 1992 to help maintain biodiversity. It protects over 1000 animals and plant species and over 200 types of habitat. It also established the Natura 2000 network of protected areas. Stretching over 18% of the EU’s land area and almost 6% of its marine territory, Natura 2000 is the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world. Natura 2000 is a network of core breeding and resting sites for rare and threatened species, and some rare natural habitat types which are protected. It stretches across all 27 EU countries, both on land and at sea.

In Italy, 843 terrestrial protected areas have been established, covering an area of over 3 million hectares. 25 National Parks, 148 State Natural Reserves, 134 Regional Natural Parks, 365 Regional Natural Reserves, 171 other Protected Areas of various classifications have been established. The protected land area consists largely of national parks (46%) and regional parks (41%). Marine Areas include Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and other types of protected areas, with a total marine area exceeding 307,000 hectares. Around 11% of the entire Italian territory is protected.

It should also be remarked that Italy, in its quality of member of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), in 2004 established its National Contact Point[[1]](#footnote-1) to further the effectiveness of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. The National Contact Point, established under the Ministry of Economic Development - General Directorate for Industrial Policy, Innovation and SMEs (DG PIIPMI, Division VI), is in charge of promoting the wider adoption of the aforementioned Guidelines and has the task of promoting a responsible business conduct among companies operating in Italy and among Italian companies operating abroad, especially in high risk or weak government zones. As to the conduct expected from businesses, the respect of the human rights and the environment is crucial and should comply with according to the highest existing standards, no matter whether mandatory or not. This tasks are carried out by the National Contact Point trough promotional activities and through the management of  the "specific instance" mechanism, a non-judicial grievance mechanism aimed to settle disputes and to solve issues arising from the alleged non-observance of the Guidelines.

3. *Please provide specific examples of constitutional provisions, legislation, regulations,*

*policies, programs or other measures that employ a rights-based approach to prevent,*

*reduce, or eliminate harm to biodiversity and ecosystems or to restore and rehabilitate*

*biodiversity and ecosystems.*

Legislation and other measures to protect biodiversity and ecosystems (at all levels: international, EU, and national level) do not explicitly use human rights language and concepts.

Nevertheless, as affirmed under question 1, they are based on the assumption that the full enjoyment of human rights (including health, food and water) depend on healthy ecosystems and on successful efforts to prevent biodiversity loss.

Access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision making is ensured by law and considered in important element in the EU and in Italy, in accordance with the UNECE Aarhus convention.

Involvement of local communities in protect areas management is provided by the Italian legislation on protected areas (n. 394/1991), that foresees that public participation and consultation of local communities have to be established in protected areas environmental NGOs shall participate in decision making process and management of Pas (see question 7 for details).

An example of an overarching and multidimensional approach at the national level can be provided by the Italian Strategy on Sustainable Development (see Annex 1).

*4. If your State is one of the 156 UN Member States that recognizes the right to a safe,*

*clean, healthy and sustainable environment,4 has this right contributed to protecting,*

*conserving and restoring biodiversity and healthy ecosystems? If so, how? If not, why*

*not?*

The right to a safe and healthy environment is indirectly affirmed in the Italian legal systems. Environmental legislation, policies and measures to protect biodiversity and ecosystems include provision on public participation (see question 7) and have contribute to progresses during the years.

*5. Please provide specific examples of good practices in preventing, reducing, or*

*eliminating harm to biodiversity and ecosystems, or restoring and rehabilitating*

*biodiversity and ecosystems. These examples may occur at the international, national,*

*sub-national, or local level. Where possible, please provide evidence related to the*

*implementation, enforcement, and effectiveness of the good practices (e.g. measurable*

*outcomes such as increases in terrestrial and marine protected areas, increases in*

*Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas, declining rates of deforestation and*

*poaching, or progress in the recovery of species that were previously threatened or*

*endangered).*

Protected areas represent the priority and most effective political, regulatory and management tool for the conservation of biological diversity in Italy. Please see question 2 for specific data.

Protected areas are an institution of enormous importance that allow both to preserve and protect nature and biodiversity and to promote sustainable territorial development. They constitute a large laboratory of environmentally friendly and innovative practices that give life to an economy of local dimension, able to develop promotional activities and tourism, with employment implications and enhancement of the protected territories.

In Italy, the system of national/regional protected areas, together with the Natura 2000 network, covers an extension of more than 9 million hectares, thus reaching well above the objectives internationally agreed. The maintenance of a high quality Natural Capital is supported by the safeguarding of the cultural wealth of the places: Natural Capital is strictly influenced by the knowledge and skills developed by man over the centuries, to interact with natural resources; at the same time the Cultural Capital is permeated by suggestions, materials, inspirations, influences conditioned by the natural resources available in each specific territory.

In Italy, the companies of the protected territories are substantially represented by small and medium enterprises that deal with sustainable tourism and traditional agriculture. Good practices that give centrality to networks involving production chains, public entities, civil society, environmental associations, research, economic representatives; a model that starts from the territory but which is able to permeate and contaminate the outside, thus triggering a transformational change. In fact, protected areas are also an engine for growth of marginal territories and are able to contrast the phenomenon of depopulation and abandonment of the territories.

Therefore the effect generated by small and medium-sized enterprises inside and outside these territories is not only economic: they offer ecosystem services and cultural values with significant social benefits.

Furthermore, contact with nature represents an extraordinary tool to help people's well-being and to promote a model of life that guarantees health benefits, especially in terms of prevention.

So many opportunities arise from good practices developed in protected areas, a model that can accompany other enterprises towards a production system that focuses on the value of natural capital, ecosystems and biodiversity, with ecological, social and economic benefits.

For more information please see:

<http://www.areeprotette-economia.minambiente.it/docs/aree_protette_italiane_in_cifre_2014.pdf>

<http://www.areeprotette-economia.minambiente.it/>

<https://www.minambiente.it/pagina/capitale-naturale-e-servizi-ecosistemici>

Another important example at the national level is the annual "Report on the State of Natural Capital in Italy", whose third edition has been published in 2019. The Report is addressed to policy makers and aims at highlighting the fundamental role played by Italian Natural Capital with respect to the national socio-economic system, improving knowledge and methods of measurement of Natural Capital, including the monetary measurement of Ecosystem Services, and the impact assessment of policies on it.

The Report on the State of Natural Capital, regulated by law n. 221 /2015, is developed and approved by the National Committee for Natural Capital (CCN), chaired by the Minister of the Environment and composed of 10 sectoral Ministers, the Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), the Conference of the Italian Regions, 5 public research institutes and a group of experts appointed by the Minister for the Environment.

In this third edition, the analysis focuses on the evaluation of some specific stocks of Natural Capital in marine, agricultural and forest ecosystems, and in the quantification of the impacts of some pressures on them, such as climate change and land use,

The report represents an Italian contribution to SDG 15.9 of the 2030 Agenda: "integrate the values ​​of ecosystems and biodiversity into national planning and local and development processes ", and to Aichi Target of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

<https://www.minambiente.it/pagina/terzo-rapporto-sullo-stato-del-capitale-naturale-italia-2019>

In addition, please see Annex 2 for some specific concrete examples of good practices, mainly at the local level, in “preventing, reducing, or eliminating harm to biodiversity and ecosystems, or restoring and rehabilitating biodiversity and ecosystems”, as collected in the “Knowledge Platform” of the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea (<http://www.pdc.minambiente.it/en>).

Finally, a new bioeconomy Strategy for a sustainable Italy, BIT [[2]](#footnote-2) - contained in the attachment - aims to provide a shared vision of the economic, social and environmental opportunities and challenges associated with the creation of an Italian bioeconomy based on longer, more sustainable and locally routed value chains. Priority actions are accompanied by measures creating and guaranteeing the framework conditions required for its effective implementation. BIT will be part of the implementation processes of the National Smart Specialization Strategy and it will be implemented in synergy with the Italian National Strategy for the Sustainable Development and its principles (please see question 3 and Annex 1) for ensuring environmental sustainability and economic growth reconciliation. The bioeconomy, due to its intrinsic characteristics, has the potential to achieve a more profound integration between economic, environmental and social objectives. However, this is possible only through investment in new capacities of consensus building for public and private sectors.

*6. Please identify specific gaps, challenges and barriers that your government, business,*

*or organization has faced in attempting to employ a rights-based approach to*

*preventing, reducing, or eliminating harm to biodiversity and ecosystems.*

As stated under other questions, biodiversity loss and ecosystems degradation pose a direct threat to human life and wellbeing; therefore a right-based approach is implicit ad indirect in environmental and nature conservation policies, even if it is not the starting point.

The main negative impact on the conservation of biodiversity and habitats are mainly caused by changes in land and sea use including urban sprawl, agricultural intensification, land abandonment and intensive use of forests, as well as pollution, artificial interventions on watercourses, exploitation of natural resources, climate change and invasive alien species.

The implementation of nature protection policy shows progress in Italy, but at an unsatisfactory rate. In particular, the integration of biodiversity into other policies, e.g. in the agricultural and forestry sector, appears to be insufficient.

*7. Please specify ways in which additional protection is provided (or should be*

*provided) for populations who may be particularly vulnerable to declining biodiversity*

*and degraded ecosystems (e.g. women, children, persons living in poverty, members of*

*Indigenous peoples and local communities, older persons, persons with disabilities,*

*ethnic, racial or other minorities and displaced persons). How can these populations be*

*empowered to protect and restore declining biodiversity and degraded ecosystems?*

Access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision making is ensured by law and considered in important element in the EU and in Italy, in accordance with the UNECE Aarhus convention.

A significant example is the EIA procedure (Environmental Impact assessment): In accordance with the EU legislation (implementing the Aarhus Convention) arrangements are to be made by public authorities to enable the public affected and environmental non-governmental organizations to comment on, for example, proposals for projects affecting the environment, or plans and programs relating to the environment, these comments to be taken into due account in decision-making, and information to be provided on the final decisions and the reasons behind.

Involvement of local communities in protected areas management is provided by the Italian legislation. According to the national law on protected areas (n. 394/1991) modalities of public participation and consultation of local communities have to be established of each protected area. Furthermore environmental NGOs are highly involved in decision making process and management of PAs. They are entitled to propose the creation of a new protected areas, or the enlargement of an existing one; they participate, as full members, to the Directive Council of the PA (the main decision making body); they can be mandated of the management of a PA (by the Ministry of Environment); they participate, as full members, to the national Consultative Body on Protected Areas.

*8. How do you safeguard the rights of individuals and communities working on*

*biodiversity issues (potentially identified as environmental human rights defenders or*

*land defenders)? What efforts has your Government made to create a safe environment*

*for them to freely exercise their rights without fear of violence, intimidation, or reprisal?*

Environmental NGOs, communities and individuals are involved in participative and consultative processes, especially in protected areas: See previous question.

*9. There is substantial evidence that consumption in high-income States is adversely*

*affecting biodiversity and ecosystems in low and middle-income States. What are ways*

*in which high-income States should assist low-income States in responding to*

*biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, while simultaneously contributing to*

*sustainable development in those low-income States?*

Environment, poverty reduction and development are strictly interlinked, as affirmed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The world’s poorest are those most directly dependent on natural resources for their daily survival and therefore most vulnerable to environmental hazards and ecosystems degradation. The protection and sustainable management of natural resources should be a key priority in development cooperation and poverty reduction policies, including through support to international and regional organisations and though bilateral cooperation.

**Conclusions**

Italian Authorities take this opportunity to reiterate their firm willingness to continue cooperating with all relevant UN Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures and mechanisms.

**Annex 1**

**National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS)**

The overarching strategic framework to guide the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level is the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) adopted in December 2017 by the Council of Ministers and the Inter-ministerial Committee for Economic Planning (CIPE Resolution n. 108 of December 22, 2017).

The NSDS is a long-term strategy that translates the 2030 Agenda into action by providing a new vision towards a circular, low-emission economy, resilient to climate impacts and aimed at leaving no one behind.

The NSDS is organized in five core areas: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. Each area identifies a set of National Strategic Choices that are strongly integrated and reflect the most relevant issues emerged from a broad consultation process.

The area “People” focuses on the social dimension in order to support a dignified life for the entire population, so that everyone is enabled to fulfil his/her potential within a healthy environment. This objective is pursued through coherent and effective policies that focuses not only on income, but extend to other key dimensions of well-being, by targeting selected socio-economic groups such as low-income families, youth and women. Three national strategic choices are set in this area: i) fight poverty and social exclusion by eliminating territorial gaps; ii) guarantee the conditions for the development of human potential; iii) promote health and wellbeing.

The area "Planet" addresses crucial challenges in ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources in order to protect and strengthen the ecosystem services they provide for present and future generations. Furthermore, it supports the proper assessment of the value of Natural Capital within economic processes; the promotion of sustainability in cities and the inversion of depopulation trend in marginal areas; the sustainability and resilience of communities and territories; the protection of landscapes as well as natural cultural heritage. Three national strategic choices are set in this area: i) halt the loss of biodiversity; ii) ensure the sustainable management of natural resources; iii) create the resilience of communities and territories, protect landscapes and cultural heritage.

The area “Prosperity” aims at promoting the transition towards a new economic model, inspired by the principles of a circular economy, where the full development of human potential and a more efficient and responsible use of resources are overarching objectives. The new development paradigm contributes to the minimization of the negative impacts on the environment by closing the loop between production and consumption cycles, by rationalizing the use of resources and by enhancing human capital. Four national strategic choices are identified in this area: i) fund and promote sustainable research and innovation; ii) ensure full employment and high quality training; iii) ensure sustainable production and consumption patterns; iv) decarbonise the economy.

The area “Peace” is strictly linked with the implementation of social protection and poverty reduction policies outlined in the area “People”. It refers to the need to promote peaceful, fair and inclusive societies. The main challenges refer to global changes, particularly regarding policies aimed at the inclusion of migrants and asylum-seekers in industrialized countries, at the promotion of respect for diversity and the fight against discrimination. This goes with the implementation of measures to counter the phenomenon of organized crime, corruption and violence in all its forms. The area is organized into three strategic choices: i) promote a non-violent and inclusive society; ii) end discrimination in all its forms; iii) ensure legality and justice.

In order to guide, manage and monitor the integration of the SDGs into national policies, plans and projects, the NSDS identifies also a set of crosscutting “sustainability vectors” which include: i) Common knowledge; ii) Monitoring and evaluating policies, plans and projects; iii) Institutions, participation and partnerships; iv) Education, awareness and communication; v) Modernising public administration and restructuring public expenditure.

The implementation of the NSDS is tightly interlinked with the existing national programming documents, namely the National Reform Programme and the Economic and Financial Document, as well as with the existing binding objectives set by the European Union.

Given the importance of SDGs at local level, the government encourages local and regional authorities to be active and take part in the implementation process mainly through the State and Regions Conference, which has endorsed the NSDS, its 5 priority areas and its strategic choices.

To improve coherence and strengthen vertical coordination, the Ministry for the Environment Land and Sea activated a coordination mechanism with Regions, Autonomous Provinces and metropolitan cities aimed at exchanging experiences and comparing methodological approaches to increase coherence in the implementation of both regional and metropolitan strategies. The Ministry also signed agreements with Regions, Autonomous Provinces and metropolitan cities in order to support the elaboration of the strategies.

Following the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, civil society engagement and consultations with public and private institutions, which were central in defining the NSDS, are ensured by the National Forum for Sustainable Development, launched by the Ministry for the Environment Land and Sea in December 2018. The Forum is divided in 5 working groups (Peace, Prosperity, Planet, People, Sustainability vectors) and coordinated by a steering committee composed of representatives of civil society networks. The Forum represents a unique coordination mechanism that gives voice to stakeholders allowing for increased accountability and integration, through a strengthened participation in the NSDS implementation process.

**Annex 2**

**Examples of good practices which have brought about increases in terrestrial and marine protected areas**

[**Water SCIs**](http://www.pdc.minambiente.it/en/progetti/water-scis-improving-conservation-status-species-community-interest-upper-apennine-and) **- Improving the conservation status of Species of Community Interest in the Upper-Apennine and Prato plain area**

It allowed the extension of the Natura 2000 network in Tuscany Region through: the creation of a new Site of Community Importance, *“Appennino pratese”* (SCI IT515003); the expansion by around 574 ha of the Special Protection Area *“Stagni della Piana Fiorentina e Pratese”* (SPA IT5140011).

**Examples of good practices which have brought about declining rates of deforestation and poaching**

* [**P.A.R.C.**](http://www.pdc.minambiente.it/en/progetti/parc-petromyzon-and-river-continuity) **-Petromyzon And River Continuity**

It carried out relevant activities to tackle poaching of fish and ammocoetes (larvae) of Sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*) – a species at risk of extinction throughout Italy – in the distributional areas of the Magra and Vara rivers within the Regional Park Montemarcello-Magra (Liguria Region).

* [**EX-TRA**](http://www.pdc.minambiente.it/en/progetti/ex-tra-improving-conditions-large-carnivore-conservation-transfer-best-practices) **- Improving the conditions for large carnivore conservation - Transfer of best practices**

It allowed the sharing of experiences – among 4 EU countries (Italy, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece) – for enhancing knowledge about the best forms of conservation of the wolf (*Canis lupus*) and bear (*Ursus arctos*) species. Specific “teams” were organized to combat poaching, one of the major causes of wolf and bear mortality.

* [**GAIA**](https://www.pdc.minambiente.it/en/progetti/gaia-green-areas-inner-city-agreement-gaia) **– Green Areas Inner – city Agreement**

“Who pollutes ... must plant trees”. This could be the slogan of the basic idea behind the GAIA project which was aimed at involving the local enterprises in a public-private partnership in order to offset part of their greenhouse gas emissions through planting new trees in the municipality of Bologna. The project created knowledge, innovative tools and ways of using the urban forestation. Through the public-private partnerships, GAIA managed to create a partnership between different actors of the territory. The main project results there are: 1.321 trees planted and 3.963 tons of CO2 absorbed. 24 areas (among public urban parks, hillside parks and heritage areas) selected for planting the trees. Creation of an *online* database of the identified 24 tree species. The selection of the species to be planted was carried out by analyzing the eco-physiological characteristics of the plants such as CO2 absorption, potential capacity to capture particulates, removal of gaseous pollutants, VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) emissions and ozone forming potential. Development the carbon footprint calculation toolkit (certified by DNV - Det Norske Veritas).

* [**LIFE MAN FOR C.BD**](https://www.pdc.minambiente.it/en/progetti/life-man-cbd-managing-forests-multiple-purposes-carbon-biodiversity-and-socio-economic) **– Managing forests for multiple purposes: carbon, biodiversity and socio-economic wellbeing**

The Manfor C.BD project focused on the application and verification in the field of the effectiveness of different multi-objective forest management options (production, protection, biodiversity, etc.), providing data, addresses and indications about good forestry practices. In particular, the data relating to the main Pan-European indicators. The central element of the project philosophy was to aim at improving the multi-functionality of forests in terms of eco-systemic services (notably carbon sequestration and biodiversity) without compromising quality wood production. The ManFor C.BD project was mainly oriented towards the definition of the best practices for multi-objective forest management, which were reported in the Manual “From the experience of LIFE+ Manfor C.BD to the Manual of Best Practices in Sustainable Forest Management” (Italian Journal of Agronomy).

**Examples of good practices which have brought progress in the recovery of species that were previously threatened or endangered**

* [**ARUPA**](http://www.pdc.minambiente.it/en/progetti/arupa-urgent-protection-actions-amphibians-and-reptiles-matera-gravina) **- Urgent protection actions for amphibians and reptiles in the Matera Gravina**

In Basilicata Region, within the Site of Community Importance/ Special Protection Area “Gravine di Matera” (SPA/SCI IT9220135), it ensured the survival and increase of the populations of some amphibian and reptile species at risk of extinction; in partucular: Apennine Yellow-bellied Toad (*Bombina variegata*) and Italic Crested Newt (*Triturus carnifex*).

* + - [**DINAMO**](http://www.pdc.minambiente.it/en/progetti/dinamo-increasing-endangered-biodiversity-agricultural-and-semi-natural-areas-demonstrative) **- Increasing endangered biodiversity in agricultural and semi-natural areas: a demonstrative management model**

In the same way as ARUPA, it carried out actions (including restoring springs) to support populations of endangered amphibian such as Apennine Yellow-bellied Toad (Bombina variegata) and Italic Crested Newt (Triturus carnifex). The experimentation area of DINAMO involved 10 municipalities in the province of Campobasso (Molise Region). This territory was chosen both for the elevated number of its rural areas and for the richness of areas of high biodiversity value, as evidenced by the presence of 12 sites of the Natura 2000 network.

* [**LIFE MONTI DELLA TOLFA**](http://www.pdc.minambiente.it/en/progetti/life-monti-della-tolfa-urgent-nature-conservation-measures-spas-and-scis-area-tolfetano) **- Urgent nature conservation measures in the SPAs and SCIs of the area Tolfetano-Cerite-Manziate**

It allowed the restoration of habitats of Community interest within 5 Natura 2000 sites of the Lazio Region and the preservation of some endangered bird species (birds of prey, in particular: red kite, black kite, short-toed eagle, honey buzzard, peregrin falcon, nightjar, stone-curlew, European roller), also fostering a harmonious link between human activities and nature conservation, by favoring the traditional practices necessary to preserve the ecosystems, as well as increasing awareness on the importance of biodiversity from an economic point of view.

* [**ANTIDOTO**](http://www.pdc.minambiente.it/en/progetti/antidoto-new-strategy-against-poisoning-large-carnivores-and-necrophagous-raptors) **- A new strategy against the poisoning of large carnivores and necrophagous raptors**

In 3 European areas – the National Park of Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga (Italy), Andalusia and Aragon (Spain) – it promoted the conservation of large carnivores and necrophagous raptors through the dissemination of innovative measures to prevent and combat the illegal use of poison applied to protect the domestic livestock. Some of the affected species, both direct victims (such as large carnivores) or collateral victims (such as necrophagous raptors) of the poisoning, are very rare or endangered. These include the wolf, bear and many predatory birds such as the red kite, the bearded vulture and the Egyptian vulture. In this context, one of the key actions of ANTIDOTO was the training and employment of Antivenin Dog Units (ADU) consisting of forest operators or agents and trained dogs able to patrol the area and to identify any poisoned food or animal, suspected to be died due to poisoning.

* [**BIOAQUAE**](https://www.pdc.minambiente.it/en/progetti/bioaquae-biodiversity-improvement-aquatic-alpine-ecosystems) - **Biodiversity Improvement of Aquatic Alpine Ecosystems**

The Alpine lakes and streams are among the most remote and apparently intact environments in the Alps; conversely aquatic ecosystems located at high altitudes are sensitive to different and numerous effects of human activities, both on a global and local scale, such as climate change or long-range transport of air pollutants, but also water exploitation for energy or industrial purposes, introduction of alien species and local pollution sources from mountain pastures and shelters, all with a significant effect on the biodiversity of the sites. Within the Gran Paradiso National Park the project had as main objective the realization of concrete conservation (*Salmo marmoratus*) and eradication actions of allochthonous fish, characterized by a strong demonstrative and innovative value, aimed at increasing the biodiversity of high altitude aquatic ecosystems affecting habitats included in the SCI/SPA IT1201000. The project has foreseen 4 interventions to eradicate allochthonous fish from as many alpine lakes, aimed at restoring the natural functioning of ecosystems and restoring natural biodiversity, but also at experimenting and acquiring non-invasive eradication techniques on deep alpine lakes. Important quantitative achivements of the project: removal of approximately 20.270 Brook trouts from 4 Alpine lakes and production of about 15.800 fry marble trout in the hatchery realized within the project.

1. It has been established by Law 273 12 December 2002, Art. 39 and constituted by Ministerial Decree establishing the NCP published in the Official Journal of the Italian Republic, general series, N. 191 of 16 August 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Started in 2016 and approved in 2017, the Strategy was agreed with the EU Commission and prepared by the Referents of the Ministries of the Environment (MATTM), Agriculture (MiPAFF), Education (MIUR) and Economic Development (MiSE), by the Conference of the Regions and of the Aautonomous Provinces, the Agency for Territorial Cohesion and some national technological clusters. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)