

Unione Comuni Garfagnana (IT)

The Region

The CIL Unione Comuni Garfagnana is located in a valley closed in between two mountain ranges, characterized by a geographical isolation. Due to the morphology of the same, this allows a natural conservation and richness of biodiversity and a strong cultural identity. In 2008 the initiative “Custodian Farmers” started to support farmers in cultivating local/regional plant and animal varieties to conserve the biodiversity of agricultural and food interest, guarantee the durable use of the locally adapted genetic resources and maintain the cultural identity of the territory.



Objective

In general, the objectives of CIL are to identify promising contracts to maintain and improve biodiversity, cultural heritage and consequently soil, water and air quality. To date, the main biodiversity-related contracts are based on a results-based approach. We aim to activate a participatory process with new farmers and other institutional subjects to guarantee a generational change without losing knowledge of the traditional agriculture. We want to search for new contractual solutions to enable the valorisation through the cultivation of diverse agricultural products while ensuring economic and ecological sustainability to the farms that produce them. To do so we need to strengthen and innovate the tools and spaces for knowledge dissemination and sharing in the area.

Methods & Results

For developing the dream contracts several online meetings were organised in which we opened up a dialogue involving also custodian farmers from all over the Tuscan region, worked in synergy with Tuscany Region, universities, research centres and associations committed to protecting biodiversity (Food Community Association, Cascio local association and National Association of Chestnut Cities).

Contact CIL Unione Comuni Garfagnana

- Unione Comuni Garfagnana
Cinzia Lenzarini ✉ cinzia.lenzarini@ucgarfagnana.lu.it
Carlina Gragnani ✉ carolina.gragnanii@ucgarfagnana.lu.it



Unione Comuni Garfagnana (IT)

Potential Contract Solution (“Dream Contract”)

Custodian Farmers of Biodiversity

Objective

The dream contract aims to strengthen the protection of biodiversity in agricultural production based on results, introducing proposals for knowledge enhancement and dissemination. Increasing contractual requirements related to environmental issues (conservation of soil fertility, biodiversity, sustainable use of water resources, conservation of habitats) potentially improves the lives of local inhabitants in terms of well-being and makes the area more attractive for sustainable tourism, but would mean a higher cost for farmers. There is interest in exploring the potential to remunerate the farmers by promoting the transition from conservation to enhancement and through a value chain approach to supplement public funding and make the necessary practice more profitable for farms.

Measures

- Production of seeds of endangered varieties with low environmental impact techniques;
- Conservation of local breeds at risk of extinction;

Contract Type

- PES / Agri-environment- & climate measures
- (Value Chain)



Contract Features

- Results-based Payments

Targeted Public Goods

Biodiversity
Cultural Heritage
Landscape & Scenery



Actors & Structure

- custodian farmers and breeders: the enhancement process must involve structured farms, for conservation only it is important to facilitate access to the contract to individual hobbyists (local people could facilitate access to land as landowners).
- -Local Germplasm Bank Section, managed by this public body, serves for seed conservation and redistribution in the territory.
- Voluntary associations (for example, Community of Food and Agrobiodiversity of Garfagnana and the association of the cow Garfagnana) could play an essential role in networking tourism and agriculture.
- The tourism sector (restaurants, stores, travel agencies): by valorizing the productions so strongly identified in their territory, they can become a tourist destination. It is necessary to identify one or more entities that can form a network to propose itineraries to discover farms that produce agro-biodiversity, visits to the Germplasm Bank and to harvest fields. The tourism sector could also commit to supporting production through advertising.

Contract Duration

Ideal Contract length: Minimum 5 years, renewable depending on results

Payments

- Direct public and indirect private funding (consumers trained by buying the products; private companies, involved in the agri-food sector, support small-scale biodiversity production and gain visibility)
- Currently result-based, but in the future aiming for the combination of actions and results
- Individual payments, no collective of farmers will be involved.

Controls & Checks

- In the current condition the control carried out by the technicians appointed by the region can be maintained. If the professionalism of custodian farmers and breeders increases, controls should be carried out directly by the farmer on his primary production.
- A form of participatory self-control should be devised for custodian farmers and breeders.

Expected Benefits

Social/Ecological Advantages

- Well-kept and lively area for inhabitant's and visiting tourists
- Production of healthy food
- The whole tourism sector (restaurants, shops, travel agencies): enhancing productions so strongly identified in their territory, can become a tourist destination.

Advantages for Farmer

- financial support: through public funding & private financial contribution (from consumers through value chain)
- Non-financial contribution through the improvement of the image of the area and of the self-esteem of the individual company.