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ECOLOGICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VALUES OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN N2000 SITES IN CRETE

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ABSTRACT

The "LIFE Natura2000ValueCrete" (LIFE13INF/GR/000188) environmental awareness project, under the LIFE+ Information Communication programme 2013, is connected to two major sectors of the islands economy and EU perspectives, namely the importance and capabilities originated from rural development and farming in semi-natural habitats such as the majority of the Mediterranean mountain landscapes, and the promotion of outdoor recreation in NATURA 2000 sites. In cases, relevant agricultural methods and infrastructure, e.g. nature-friendly farming practices, expansion of mild eco-tourism in the mountains or sustainable development plans in coastal zones will be promoted. Main project's actions are: development of printed (booklets, posters, banners, special issues of specialized journal, T-shirts, hats, stickers, calendars) and audiovisual environmental communication material (documentary, TV and radio spots), implementation of public awareness raising activities (26 workshops, 10 open events, participation in local festivals, a travelling photo exhibition), development of an Information Centre (Natura 2000 Hall), implementation of an environmental education campaign, and promotion of key messages of the environmental communication campaign through media work at local level. Moreover, training seminars will provide specific skills to professionals involved in tourism, students, local journalists and media employees, in order to support the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 network as being beneficial to local economy and society. The project's impacts will be monitored to gain representative feedback regarding the communication campaign and its messages and systematically identify the effective components of the campaign. The project aims to support the NATURA 2000 Sites in Crete and motivate the public to seize the opportunities and address the challenges identified by integrating the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity into the societal decision-making. Ultimate goal is to show the damage that biodiversity loss will cause to economies and to society in Crete, elucidate misconceptions regarding the EU's environmental policy mainly through the N2000 network and promote the link between green economy and the creation of quality employment opportunities for present and future generations.



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