

THE ECOPLANTMED PROJECT: “ECOLOGICAL USE OF NATIVE PLANTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION”

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ECOPLANTMED is a joint Mediterranean initiative based on the collaboration among seed banks, research institutes and institutions dealing with native plant conservation and management. The project aims to contribute to halting the loss of biodiversity and to promote a sustainable development model in the Mediterranean region by enhancing the conservation of native plants and promoting their use in habitat restoration and the plant production sector.

The Mediterranean Basin is one of the most bio-diverse regions and the third most plant diversity hotspot worldwide with 25,000 plant species, over half of which are found nowhere else in the world. A mere 5% of the original extent of the hotspot remains with intact vegetation and this is mainly due to human activities.

Using native plants for habitat restoration can contribute to long-term protection and enhancement of our natural and cultural heritage as well as landscape protection, management and planning. Furthermore, using native plants can increase ecosystem resilience to climate change.

The project addresses public authorities and development agencies, plant production sectors, landscape architects, garden designers, researchers, environmental organizations and educators, local communities and the wide public. The main outputs of the project are:

- Ex situ conservation of native plant species after seed collection
- Protocols for the propagation of native plant species
- Guide of best restoration practices for Mediterranean habitats
- Management plans for the restoration of Mediterranean habitats using native plants
- Local workshops and dissemination events involving target groups and beneficiaries.

The targeted native trees and shrubs to be used in the restoration pilot action in Kfardebian



Cedrus libani



Juniperus excelsa



Daphne oleoides



Cotoneaster nummularia



Rhamnus cathartica



Prunus prostrata



Crataegus monogyna

The project ECOPLANTMED total budget is 1.050 million Euro and it is financed, for an amount of 0.945 million Euro (90%), by the European Union (ENPI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme) through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument . **Website: www.ecoplantmed.eu**

The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

The 2007-2013 ENPI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme is a multilateral Cross-Border Cooperation initiative funded by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). The Programme objective is to promote the sustainable and harmonious cooperation process at the Mediterranean Basin level by dealing with the common challenges and enhancing its endogenous potential. It finances cooperation projects as a contribution to the economic, social, environmental and cultural development of the Mediterranean region. The following 14 countries participate in the Programme: Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Palestine, Portugal, Spain, Syria (participation currently suspended), Tunisia. The Joint Managing Authority (JMA) is the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (Italy). Official Programme languages are Arabic, English and French (www.enpicbcmmed.eu).

Disclaimer: This poster has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union under the ENPI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme. The contents of this poster are the sole responsibility of the University of Cagliari, Department of Life and Environmental Sciences, Centre for the Conservation of Biodiversity and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union or of the Programme's management structures.



Delimitation of the pilot site in Kfardebian



Grazing is the main threat to forest restoration in Kfardebian. Only spiny plants survive and dominate.



Seed collection of native plants



Seed storage and germination in Jouzour Loubnan Seed germination and conservation laboratory in USJ

The Restoration pilot action in Lebanon will be conducted in the high mountains (around 2000 m altitude) of **Kfardebian on a fenced 6 ha degraded area** protected from grazing. The **causes of degradation** are past Wood cuttings of juniper and cedar trees, excessive grazing by domestic sheep and goat coupled with a low natural regeneration. **The goal** is the restoration of the original ecosystem typical of this site that is on the limit between the cedar forest and the juniper high altitude steppic forest. **Native trees and shrubs species** that are adapted to high mountain environmental conditions will be used as seedlings or seeds. **A test will be conducted** to choose the best practice for restoration : **With or without irrigation ? In open space or under nurse plants? On western or eastern slope?**