



Report on the influence of the 'Farming in Sicily's Land of Biosphere' project on the actions of the Sicilian Regional Strategic Plan (PSR Sicily) in the 2014-2022 programming period

The 'Farming in Sicily's Land of Biosphere' project aimed, among other things, to draw inspiration from the good agricultural practices of the surveyed area and transform them, through the policy document containing recommendations for the Sicilian Region, into measures suited to the needs of local farmers. In particular, the aim was to promote the environmental actions of virtuous farmers, in a logic of encouraging the protection of traditional crops, biodiversity and naturalistic uniqueness of the Biosphere Lands.

In this sense, there were two new measures in the RDP Sicily 2014-2022 and published in June 2022, inspired by the document signed by GV and MHS sent on 25.03.2022:

- *Call for proposals Submeasure 3.1 "Support for new membership of quality schemes".*
Approved with DDG n.2516 of 20.06.2022;
In particular, the objectives of the implementation of the sub-measure are:
 - (a) to improve the economic performance of farms in order to increase their added value;*
 - b) to strengthen and develop quality agri-food productions*
 - (c) to provide consumers with greater guarantees on products and production methods;*
 - d) improving the competitiveness of primary producers within the agri-food chain.*Farmers who for the first time switch to an organic production system specifically have specific tax exemptions, which are intended to encourage the abandonment of conventional agriculture in favour of production methods that respect the environment and biodiversity, with particular attention to typical and traditional PDO and PGI productions of Sicilian micro-areas.
- *Call for proposals Sub-measure 7.1.2 - 'Support for the updating of protection and management plans for Natura 2000 sites and other areas of high nature value'.*
Approved with ANNEX A to DDG no. 2380 of 13/06/2022.
The Operation, destined for Entities (Municipalities, Region, Regional Departments), is aimed primarily at the pursuit of the safeguarding, restoration and improvement of biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas and areas subject to natural constraints or other specific constraints, in high nature value agriculture, as well as of the landscape and provides a response to the need to safeguard and enhance biodiversity and germplasm of agricultural and forestry interest. The operation also contributes to the transversal objective "environment" by guaranteeing the protection of natural areas and agricultural areas of high natural value and their preservation and thus their natural function as a barrier to climate change affecting the entire region, through the updating of the management tools of the Parks, and through the drafting of the Fauna-Venatorio Plan as a rational planning and management tool for wild or reintroduced fauna in the agro-sylvo-pastoral territory.

In addition, the 2019 Call for Proposals approved by DDG. no. 690 of 19.04.2019, Operation 4.4C "Support for non-productive investments related to the fulfilment of agro-climatic-environmental objectives - Non-productive investments in farms for biodiversity conservation, land enhancement and public benefit" has also been officially confirmed for the 2023-2027 RDP programming. The 100 per cent subsidy for farmers includes enhancing and preserving biodiversity in general (dry stone walls, planting trees for wildlife, preserving isolated, centuries-old trees, placing artificial nests, etc.).

These published measures therefore make the 'Farming in Sicily's Land of Biosphere' project and its related actions significant, both in terms of the action of collecting data in the field, through farmers' and citizens' interviews, and in terms of the drafting of policy documents sent to regional and national institutions.

Written by Andrea Aidala
Giacche Verdi Bronte staff,
18.12.2022