



LIFE16 NAT/GR/000575

Newsletter
of the
Life IGIC
project



October 2018

The project

The Life IGIC project aims at developing Green Infrastructure (GI) and supporting Sustainable Farming Methods in pilot olive orchards, in Western Messara plain, south Crete, Greece. Overall biodiversity has suffered and ecological conditions of the area has been deteriorated. The main objective of the project is the development of a GI network which will play a demonstrative role in regional, national and EU level, while conserving biodiversity, enhancing agroecosystem services and providing the basis for reconnecting existing nature areas.



“Improvement of green infrastructure in agroecosystems: reconnecting natural areas by countering habitat fragmentation”

A project for the development of “Green Infrastructure” & supporting sustainable farming methods in Cretan olive orchards, with significant socio-economic, cultural, environmental & agricultural value

Life IGIC project takes place within the framework of the European Union’s Life+ programme, “Nature & Biodiversity”, with contract number LIFE16 NAT/GR/000575 and duration of 5 years, until 2022. In the present newsletter, besides presenting the framework and the objectives of the project, a review of the project’s activities taking place by the project beneficiaries, within the current and forthcoming period

The location of Life IGIC (western Messara, in the south of Heraklion, Crete, Greece), is surrounded by protected Natura 2000 sites and is characterized by significant socio-economic, cultural, environmental and agricultural value. However, changing the use of land towards intensive farming has led, in recent decades, to a decline in plant and animal species and to the loss of their habitats, with significant implications for the overall biodiversity and ecological conditions of the area. Specific objectives of the project are:

- Development of a network of GI components in Natura-surrounded sites
- Improvement & provision of habitats and enhancement the conservation status of flora & fauna targeted species.
- Provision of the basis for upscaling GI development through the development of robust approaches targeting stakeholders and decision-makers by using: a) the demonstration value of the regional and national initiatives of certification and labeling schemes, b) a sustainable tourism development approach and c) public awareness/educational activities.
- Formulation of a concrete proposal to policy makers at EU and national level with regards to specific targets of the Greek National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, promoting GI development in non-protected farming areas.
- Assessment of land use/ecosystems and habitats/conservation status of the project area, expected to generate a well-established paradigm of biodiversity’s status by providing transferable results and in relation with economic/market benefits for stakeholders.
- An assessment of land use/ecosystems/agroecosystems & habitats / conservation status of the project area.



Dissemination of Life IGIC: Web-site, leaflet and articles in local & national media

Dissemination of Life IGIC is an essential part of the beneficiaries's activities in order to gain visibility and promote the project. The web site of the project is already on-line, as a main tool of dissemination and communication of the project's objectives and results (please check it: www.lifeigic.eu).

The 1st leaflet of the project is also available in two languages (Greek and English) paper printed or available as pdf ([here](#)). It is meant to be distributed in several occasions for the initial promotion and dissemination of the project and its results

Additionally, a number of press articles on the framework and objectives have been already appeared in [local](#) and [national](#) media based on press releases by the project partners, helping to publicise the project to a broader audience at local and national level.



Kick-off and 1st consultation meeting of the project

In 30 of March 2018, the first official event of Life IGIC project took place, in Heraklion, Crete, at the premises of the Natural History Museum/University of Crete. This kick-off event was combined with a consultation meeting, with the opportunity of the participation of several stakeholders, such as academics, representatives of farmers unions, regional authorities who support the project, as the Region of Crete and the Municipality of Phaistos (project area).

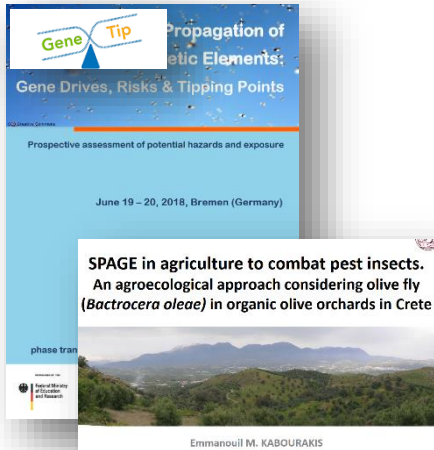
The event can be considered rather succesfull as it attracted an important number of attendants and the attention of the Media. Additionally, important feedback and consultation was provided by the stakeholders attended on important issues with regards the materialization of the project, the scle-up of its results and how to maximize its impact at local and regional scale, as it matter environmental, socio-economic and cultural benefits awaited.

Monitoring of biodiversity in the project area

The project partners have set up a monitoring scheme for the as the design, development and establishment of Green Infrastructure in the pilot fields an extended selection of species targets is used. A survey in the project area's surrounding protected Natura 2000 sites is currently being accomplished by the project beneficiaries, with partner University of Crete/Natural History Museum leading the task.

The survey, regarding biodiversity, species and habitats is necessary in order to update and confirm studies accomplished, during previous projects. Data collected will be also used for the Green Infrastructure development in the project pilot sites. Farmland birds are anticipated as a main target group to be monitored, as well as habitats, surveyed by vegetation monitoring techniques in the field and by indexes. Targeted specific assessment of anthropogenic practices & management on taxa, species and habitats occurred is also performed.





Dissemination of Life IGIC in the GeneTip conference

In 19 June 2018, an open to the public conference took place in Bremen, Germany, organised under the framework of the GeneTip project, with regards the Self-Propagation of Artificial Genetic Elements: Gene Drives, Risks & Tipping Points.

The coordinator of Life IGIC project, Dr. Emannouil Kabourakis participated to the conference and presented on issues of olive fly management in olive orchards in Crete. With this opportunity, the framework and objectives of the Life IGIC was presented to the public, achieving an international dissemination activity.



Participation and presentation of Life IGIC in the 9th Hellenic Ecological Society Congress

In 4 to 7 of October 2018, the 9th Congress of the Hellenic Ecological Society will take place in the campus of the University of Crete, in Heraklion. Hundred of participants and stakeholders are expected to participate from the academic, NGO and private sector.

Topics of the Congress include, among others, population ecology, biodiversity conservation and management, eco-morphology and ecol-physiology, while this time a special session will be held for the topic of Agroecology and Agrobiodiversity. Almost all partner institutes of Life IGIC project will be participating, while a special presentation of the project will be held. The Congress can be considered an opportunity disseminating the project's framework and objectives to the Greek community of ecologists and beyond are expected to attend

Are you interested joining? Please check the Congress's website with all details on participation and registration: <http://helecos9.nhmc.uoc.gr/>



Want to know more on Life IGIC?

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