



LIFE TO GRASSLANDS - Conservation and Management of Dry Grasslands in Eastern Slovenia



The key environmental challenges addressed by the project are the conservation of biodiversity in the agricultural environment. The extensive grasslands are one of the most threatened habitats. The problem of biodiversity in the agricultural land has been fought for decades. Slovenia has a particularly important role and responsibility in its preservation.

The purpose of the project »Conservation and Management of Dry Grasslands in Eastern Slovenia« is to improve to unfavourable status and ensure long-term conservation of dry grasslands as well as plant and animal species connected to them in the following areas: Haloze, Pohorje, Kum and Gorjanci-Radoha. All four areas face problems of overgrowth and abandonment of agricultural use on one hand and the problem of unsuitable (intensive) agricultural use of land on the other.

In the course of the project we intend to improve the status of two priority Natura 2000 habitat types: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (*) important orchid sites and Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in Continental Europe).



The habitat type, which the experts refer to as semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*), can be found in Haloze, Kum, and Gorjanci. These meadows are also rich with wild orchids. Such meadows can also be found in Goričko, Kozjansko, Bela Krajina...



The habitat type, which the experts refer to as the species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas, covers the vast plains of Pohorje. The meadows of Pohorje are enriched by colourful endangered plants, such as arnica and Hungarian gentian. Such meadows can also be found in Karavanke, Smrekovec Mountains, Banjšice, Porezen...

LIFE TO GRASSLANDS project will contribute towards the implementation of Natura 2000 Management programme (2015–2020). The project aims to improve the unfavourable conservation status of some of the most endangered grasslands habitat types in Slovenia. One of the challenges is to find opportunities for the recultivation of abandoned agricultural land, and thus »give life to grasslands«. We want to show that the production of quality agricultural products and protection of nature can be carried out hand in hand.

Planned activities:

- Determination of overgrowing areas, a review of past agricultural use and an initial inventory of the status of targeted habitat types;
- Communication and networking of landowners and farmers, thereby ensuring the management of abandoned lands;
- Rental and purchase of abandoned grasslands (and further rental of the land to be used in accordance with the agreement) to ensure sustainable management;
- Removal of excessive overgrowth on agricultural land;
- Assurance of sustainable management of grasslands by providing grazing equipment and free rental of lawnmowers, on the basis of concluded agreements with owners and tenants;
- Restoration and establishment of traditional orchards (purchase of traditional tall fruit tree seedlings and protective equipment, rejuvenation pruning and training in the field of orchard maintenance);
- Preparation of farm management plans for selected farms;
- Preparation of background for an agri-environmental programme in the field of sustainable management of grasslands;
- Activities and plans for establishing brands and products related to the dry grasslands, orchards, grazing, mowing (workshops, marketing, promotion);
- Promotional and educational activities – cooperation and programs/teaching materials for schools, farmer and landowner education. Communication with decision-makers in the field of agriculture and environment at the national and local level. Equipment of info points, additions to the content of existing interpretive trails and preparation of publications.



Do you want to join the project?

More information about the concrete actions and possibilities of involvement in the project is available on www.lifetograsslands.si or www.travisca.si.

The project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS (LIFE14 NAT/SI/000005) runs from 1st of November 2015 to 31st of October 2020. The leading partner of the project is The Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation. Project partners are Haloze Rural Development Centre, Agriculture and Forestry Institute Ptuj, Local Community Dobovec and Society Gorjanske košence. The project is being carried out with the contribution of LIFE Nature and Biodiversity, the financial instrument of the European Union. The project is co-financed by the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia.

POHORJE

GORJANCI

HALOZE

KUM

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