



**PROJECT TITLE: LIFE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF DRY GRASSLANDS
IN EASTERN SLOVENIA**
PROJECT ACRONYM: LIFE TO GRASSLANDS

Project duration: 1st November 2015 – 31st of October 2020

The project is addressing conservation of biodiversity in agriculture landscape, targeting the conservation of extensive dry grasslands. For several decades, we have been noticing a decline of biodiversity in the agricultural landscapes. The extensive grasslands are among the most threatened habitats both on the European and national level.

The project addresses the following threats to conservation of dry grasslands:

- abandonment of land use resulting in overgrowth,
- intensive agricultural use,
- eutrophication,
- proprietary land fragmentation,
- abandonment of traditional orchards,
- soil erosion,
- tourism: human activity in the natural environment



The aim of the project is to improve the conservation status of dry grasslands and to ensure their long-term sustainable use on four project sub-areas: Haloze, Pohorje, Kum and Gorjanci-Radoha. This will also result in ensuring conservation of plant and animal species as well as biodiversity of the areas. All four sub-areas are facing similar threats. Over the course of the project, we will improve the conservation of the two priority habitat types of dry grasslands, which are in an unfavourable condition: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco- Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) (EU_6210*) and Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on silicious substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in Continental Europe) (EU_6230*). The project will contribute to the implementation of the Management programme of Natura 2000 sites (2015 - 2020).

Project also aims to revitalize farming on extensive dry grasslands and bring back "life to grasslands" by performing different activities.



Planned activities of the project:

- Analysis of past sustainable agricultural use of dry grasslands, monitoring of the state of targeted habitat types and development of Conservation guidelines for sustainable management of targeted habitats;
- Communication and networking with landowners and farmers to ensure a long term management of abandoned land;
- Purchase and lease of abandoned land (and further free lease to interested farms agreeing to sustainable long term use);
- Removal of overgrowth on dry grassland in various stages of overgrowing;
- Ensuring the appropriate long-term use of grasslands through purchase and free lease of equipment and machinery for pasture and mowing
- Restoration and replanting of traditional orchards (purchase of seedlings and protective equipment, education regarding maintenance of orchards);
- Preparation of farm management plans to improve economical perspective of farms who perform sustainable management of targeted habitats;
- Preparation of an Expert Proposal for agricultural environmental measures for conservation of HT 6210(*) and HT 6230(*) for their integration into the 2021- 2027 Rural development programme of the Republic of Slovenia;
- Activities to promote social and economic perspective of agriculture in project sub-areas through establishment of the brand and products related to the dry grasslands, orchards, grazing, mowing;
- Promotional and educational activities: preparation of programmes/ teaching aids for schools, training for farmers, communication with municipalities, decision makers in the field of agriculture and the environment at the national level.

Coordinating beneficiary of the project is **The Institute of Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation**.

Associated beneficiaries of the project are **Rural Development Centre PRJ Halo, Agriculture and Forestry Institute Ptuj, Local community Dobovec** and **Society Gorjanske košence**.

The project is being carried out with the contribution of the LIFE Nature and Biodiversity, the financial instrument of the European Commission and the Ministry of Environment and Spatial planning.

Total project budget: 3,898,582.00 €, of which the contribution of the financial mechanism of the LIFE Nature and Biodiversity in the European Commission is 2,923,936.00 €. The Ministry of Environment and Spatial planning is co-financing the project in the amount of 779,716.00 EUR (20 %).



ZAVOD REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE
ZA VARSTVO NARAVE

