



## LandLife Workshop Report



Date: 10-11 May 2013  
Location: Giussago, Italy  
Hosted by: Legambiente



LIFE 10/INF/ES/540

## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The workshop was organised within LandLife, a project funded by the European Commission under the LIFE+ programme (LANDLIFE\_LIFE 10/INF/ES/450). The aim of LandLife is to communicate the value of land stewardship as an effective and successful tool for the conservation of nature and biodiversity in the Western Mediterranean Arch and throughout Europe.

The project will run during the period 2011-2014.



Supported by:



The project includes a wide variety of activities, including the publication of a European manual for land stewardship, the celebration of the European Land Stewardship Week in the Autumn of 2012, the building of an online platform for land stewardship and the creation of an online course, the realisation of regional seminars and workshops, and finally a European Congress to be held in Catalonia in 2014.

This workshop was the second in a series of three regional land stewardship workshops held in Europe. Through these workshops the LandLife partnership will be able to draw upon and share the best practices being developed and applied across Europe, to increase knowledge of land stewardship and of existing legal and policy frameworks (e.g. Natura 2000), and to facilitate contacts and synergies between entities to define opportunities and promote cooperation on land stewardship initiatives.

The results of all three LandLife workshops will feed directly into the European Land Stewardship Congress to be held in Barcelona in November 2014.

## PARTICIPANTS – NUMBERS & FIGURES

81 people took part in the Italian LandLife regional workshop.



The majority of participants were Italian (from all over the country), but there were also delegates from the Netherlands, Spain, Germany and Canada.

The workshop involved a wide range of actors interested in nature and biodiversity conservation, including:

- Landowners (including farmers) keen to learn about what land stewardship could mean for them, what the benefits of land stewardship are and how they can apply land stewardship;
- Site managers working on nature conservation within and outside Natura 2000 sites;
- Staff working in outreach / public information functions;
- Staff working directly to support the implementation of Natura 2000 and other protected areas;
- Volunteers working to preserve nature on a local and/or regional level;
- Stakeholders in local communities;
- Local and national authorities;
- Biodiversity conservation experts;
- Land stewardship organisations (non-profit);
- Experts in communication tools.

Among these participants, there were representatives of 11 organisations.

## MEDIA IMPACT

Thanks to the combined use of social networks, websites and newsletter, the workshop had a wide visibility. The news about it was published in more than 10 online press headlines, and the national TV channel (RAI 3) gave coverage to the event. The televised report was broadcast on the regional news on the evening of May, 14, and repeated on the national news on May, 15 at noon. The report lasted 1.30 minutes, with an estimated viewership share of between 7% and 8%.

## WORKSHOP PURPOSE

The main objective of the Italian workshop was to share information and build practical know-how to apply land stewardship agreements and improve their management, and more specifically:

- To communicate land stewardship as an effective tool for nature and biodiversity conservation;
- To exchange experiences and best practices;
- To increase knowledge of land stewardship and existing legal and policy frameworks;
- To facilitate contacts and synergies between entities to define opportunities and cooperation in the framework of the Landlife project and on land stewardship initiatives;
- To explore how Natura 2000 policy can be an instrument for encouraging the application of land stewardship approaches.

The participation process stimulated the engagement of civil society and public institutions in the co-creation of an action plan to successfully develop land stewardship in Italy and other EU countries.

## WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Legambiente Lombardia hosted the Italian workshop, which was the second of three workshops organised by the regional partners (CEN-LR: 22-23 April, Montpellier, France; Legambiente: 10-11 May, Giussago, Italy; XCT: 29-31 May, Tavertet, Spain). Most of the workshop was carried out in Italian, with a few presentations in English.

The programme of the workshop included two days of activities: the workshop took place from Friday 10th May to Saturday 11th May.

The key topic of the **first day** was land stewardship as an innovative tool to halt soil consumption and biodiversity loss. In addition, legal frameworks and policy instruments that somehow are, or can be, supportive to land stewardship were presented. The speakers presented on a range of subjects related to land stewardship at different levels. All speakers, from NGOs as well as GOs, were involved in land conservation, at a local, national and/or European level. The order of presentations was as follows:

- **Marzio Marzorati** (Legambiente Lombardia) - "*Land stewardship as a new conservation strategy - European collaboration in LandLife*";
- **Tiziano Cattaneo** (Legambiente Lombardia), **Ilaria Bruni** (University of Milano Bicocca), **Alessandro Rapella**

- **Merijn Biemans** (Eurosit) - "*Natura 2000 Policy: the European framework for the conservation of nature and biodiversity*"
- **Marie Karlein** (DVL - German Association for land care) - "*The German legal framework and the opportunities for land stewardship*"
- **Antonella Grazzini** (Oasi Dynamo ONLUS) - "*Oasi Dynamo WWF: synergies between rural management and the conservation of nature in the Apennines*"
- **Paolo Lassini**, Province of Milan - "*The rural district as an opportunity for the conservation and valorisation of landscapes*"
- **Alberto Massa Saluzzo**, agronomist - "*La Darsena, a land stewardship best practice example for the successful conservation of biodiversity*"

Legambiente Lombardia opened the proceedings on the first day by introducing Land Stewardship principles and the LandLife project. After this general introduction, different speakers presented a wide range of examples of how Land Stewardship can be applied in different contexts (at a local, national and European level) and which kind of effects this approach can potentially have on territories and landscapes and, more specifically, its use for the effective conservation of biodiversity. Each speaker focused on a different methodology of land management, with the common aim to make the concept of land stewardship more visible as a potential tool for biodiversity conservation. The different perspectives on land stewardship proved to be of great value to the workshop and instigated lively debates between participants.

In the **second part** of the first day, all the participants were invited to co-create an action plan to improve and disseminate land stewardship practices in Italy and other EU countries. Key messages were jointly defined and collected during different round table discussions by the participants and displayed on posters hung on the walls throughout the day.

On the morning of the second day, more than 40 participants were present for an exclusive bird watching tour in a typical area managed under a land stewardship agreement. The tour provided not only great views, but also proved to be an excellent opportunity for participants to exchange ideas and continue the debates of the previous day in an informal atmosphere. During the excursion participants saw common terns, little egrets and many black-winged stilts. Afterwards, they continued with a guided tour through the multi-functional farm "La Darsena" of Giussago, which joined the Land Stewardship network by joining together several wetland areas totalling 15 hectares, created under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) agri-environmental regulation.

In the afternoon the Italian land stewards came together, representing the very first official meeting of land stewards in Italy. This unique gathering provided an excellent opportunity for land stewards to get to know each other and to start to share experiences and think of common proposals to improve the dissemination of the land stewardship approach. Together they composed the "Giussago Manifesto", which contains a list of conditions that should be met for a land stewardship knowledge exchange network to exist. The manifesto will be presented to public institutions in Italy. This very first meeting of land stewards proved to be of great value to land stewardship: the exchange of ideas and knowledge translated into a great motivation to act, developing proposals and practical events, all arising from the shared aim to protect the lands that surround us.

## THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

A participatory process, organised and facilitated by Agenzia InnovA21 staff, was employed to stimulate thoughts and ideas and engage participants in the co-creation of an Action Plan to successfully develop land stewardship in Italy and other EU countries.

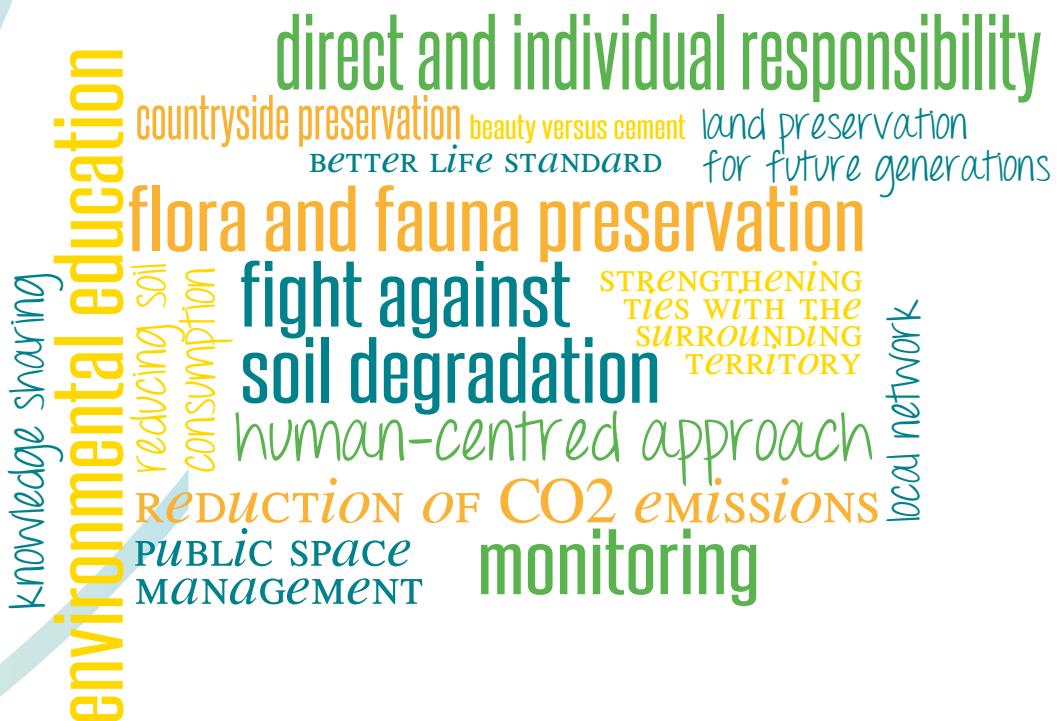
The participatory process was developed around two focus questions:

- Why be a land steward? What are the advantages of adopting a Land Stewardship approach?
- What should be done to move Land Stewardship to a higher level?

A few days before the workshop, participants were provided with a document containing a general explanation of

Land Stewardship principles, the aim of the participation process and the two questions above. The participants shared their answers to the first question "**Why be a land steward?**" by sticking post-its on the wall during coffee and lunch breaks.

Some of the key words that emerged were:



The participatory process included a "World Café" session.

The World Café methodology is a simple and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue. World Café can be modified according to the needs of organisers, but there are five key components comprising the basic model:

- 1) *Setting*: Create a "special" environment, most often modelled after a café (some tables with four or more chairs around them, butcher block paper, colored pens)
- 2) *Welcome and Introduction*: The host begins with a warm welcome and an introduction to the World Café process.
- 3) *Small Group Rounds*: The process foresees short rounds of conversation for the small group seated around a table. At the end of each round (generally fifteen-twenty minutes), each member of the group moves to a different new table. Each table has a "table host", a person who welcomes the next group and briefly fills them in on what happened in the previous round.
- 4) *Questions*: Each table has a specific question designed for the specific purpose of the session. The small group will be asked to sit around all the tables and discuss all the questions.
- 5) *Harvest*: After the small groups individuals are invited to share the results of their conversations with the rest of the large group.

Further information on: [www.theworldcafe.com](http://www.theworldcafe.com)

This methodology was used to answer the second question "**What has to be done to move Land Stewardship to a higher level?**"

Participants were divided into four mixed groups, each containing a good balance of all stakeholder groups. Four tables had been prepared with pens and a worksheet. Each worksheet had a different question to discuss:

- What can **I (as an individual)** do to move Land Stewardship to a higher level and how?
- What can **WE (as a stakeholder group)** do to move Land Stewardship to a higher level and how?
- What can **THEY (as the government/regional/public administrations)** do to move Land Stewardship to a higher level and how?

- What can the **EUROPEAN UNION** do to move Land Stewardship to a higher level and how?

Each group sat around the tables and discussed each table question for 15 minutes. They added their answers (in key words) to the worksheet. This way, all groups discussed all questions, while building upon the messages that emerged from the previous group discussions: the result of this activity was a series of key words, messages and actions to feed into the European Land Stewardship Congress in 2014.

A summary of the key messages resulting from the participatory process is presented below:

### **“WHAT CAN I DO TO MOVE LAND STEWARDSHIP (LS) TO A HIGHER LEVEL AND HOW?”**

WHAT	HOW
<b>I can promote LS in local communities</b>	<p><u>By making available/accessible easy to apply LS marketing tools, for instance:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lapel pins to distribute in local fairs and markets, placards and posters at the entrance to land stewardship properties;</li> <li>• Guerrilla marketing (low-cost unconventional marketing like green graffiti, sticker bombing, flash mobs);</li> <li>• Communication: social networks and presence in local press</li> </ul> <p><u>By spreading LS principles and the LandLife project in municipalities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Land Stewardship information desks with volunteer hotlines, open events, brochures to distribute to clients and advertisements for agritourism initiatives managed by land stewards, etc...</li> </ul> <p><u>By raising awareness in schools, organisations and businesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help and encourage becoming (city) garden stewards</li> </ul>
<b>I can introduce LS to public administrations/bodies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By asking local administrations to help spread LS through their media</li> <li>• By inviting local parks and volunteers to become part of the network</li> <li>• By introducing LandLife to Farming Confederations/Associations</li> </ul>
<b>I can spread and improve the LS approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By sharing the best practices of land stewards</li> </ul>

## WHAT CAN WE (STAKEHOLDERS) DO TO MOVE LS TO A HIGHER LEVEL AND HOW?

WHAT	HOW
<b>We can increase visibility and create relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By better utilization of media (newspapers, social networks, and online platforms such as “critical city” <a href="http://criticalcity.org/">http://criticalcity.org/</a>);</li> <li>• By organising public events, erecting information stands, having an active presence in squares and marketplaces;</li> <li>• By strengthening local networking, involving local associations, organic farmers, solidarity based purchasing groups, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>We can overcome the reluctance related to the “loss of private property”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By organising local events to promote LS;</li> <li>• By presenting first hand testimonials from famous environmentalists, to help spread information on LS and its benefits</li> <li>• By creating Land Purchasing Groups (GAT – Gruppo Acquisto Terreni)</li> </ul>
<b>We can strengthen relationships between LS organisations, universities and schools to disseminate scientific content related to LS and biodiversity preservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By creating connections between LS studies within all the related disciplines (natural resource management, urban planning, agronomy, social sciences, etc.);</li> <li>• By organising field visits for students and professors and facilitating knowledge flow between theory and practice;</li> <li>• By creating a student association dedicated to development and innovation in LS approaches;</li> <li>• By organising workshops in schools and practical activities like landscape management and urban gardening to stimulate the sense of direct responsibility towards the environment</li> </ul>

## "WHAT CAN THEY (AS GOVERNMENT/REGION/PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS) DO TO MOVE LS TO A HIGHER LEVEL AND HOW?"

WHAT	HOW
<b>They can improve coordination between different institutional levels (both horizontally: municipality-municipality, province-province; and vertically: region-province-municipality);</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By organising round table sessions to improve political decision making, both internally within institutions and open to local stakeholders (citizens, organizations, associations, committees, ...);</li><li>• By building capacity through training courses targeted at politicians and technicians/practitioners</li></ul>
<b>They can raise awareness and promote LS among citizens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By dedicating municipal budget to LS activities;</li><li>• By including LS education programmes in school curricula (from primary school to university);</li><li>• By creating possibilities for students to write dissertations and theses on LS or to choose a certified LS minor</li><li>• By creating (financial) incentives for private land owners to voluntarily sign land stewardship agreements</li></ul>
<b>They can reduce the economic advantages of easily acquirable construction permits (increase costs for urbanization, reduce costs for reuse or renovation)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By introducing an instrument to properly calculate the economy-ecology balance of land use and soil consumption;</li><li>• By raising municipal taxes to compensate for the loss of open, green spaces for urbanization</li></ul>

## “WHAT CAN THE EUROPEAN UNION DO TO MOVE LS TO A HIGHER LEVEL AND HOW? ”

WHAT	HOW
<b>The EU can define Land Stewardship at a European level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By establishing some common standards/ key principles for Land Stewardship, to be included in a “European Landscape Policy” or encouraged through “Land Stewardship Guidelines (for Natura 2000 sites)”;</li> <li>• By taking into account the agricultural and rural heritage and the role of LS in contrasting the hydro-geological instability;</li> <li>• By creating a transnational (EU) label for all sites managed under LS agreements;</li> <li>• By legalising rules and policy guidelines to ensure commitment to LS principles by those voluntarily signing LS agreements;</li> <li>• By underlining the positive value of LS for collective reasons: it respects PRIVATE PROPERTY, but considers land as a COMMUNITY RESOURCE</li> </ul>
<b>The EU can stimulate educational and professional sectors to work for land stewardship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By designating Land Stewardship ambassadors and certified advisors;</li> <li>• By encouraging and facilitating the introduction of LS in educational programmes; promoting the constitution of a Masters degree in LS and/ or compile a minor course programme;</li> <li>• By creating an online platform open to citizens;</li> <li>• By linking LS with other programmes such as mobility/learning exchange programmes (Leonardo, Erasmus, etc)</li> </ul>
<b>The EU can carry out a communication and networking campaign</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By developing a European LS logo;</li> <li>• By introducing an official certification/brand;</li> <li>• By promoting and supporting places and territories where LS is applied;</li> <li>• By facilitating knowledge flow through mapping of all LS sites in Europe and publishing them on an EU website</li> </ul>

## The EU can create funding mechanisms

- By including LS in Green Economy policies;
- By introducing funds for agricultural practices in line with LS (e.g. integrating LS in the CAP);
- By supporting volunteering programs on LS;
- By inserting LS territories within sustainable tourism circuits;
- By promoting partnerships between public and private entities, at a local, national and European level;
- By supporting and promoting agricultural products produced under LS agreements

## KEY MESSAGES

- To boost application of LS practices at a local and international level first-person commitment is required
- Every sector of society should somehow be involved in the promotion of LS: governmental institutions, the academic world, citizens, media, non-profit organisations, business enterprises etc. Developing an effective communication strategy for land stewardship remains a priority.
- There is a clear need to build knowledge and capacity for on-site management (coordination) processes and practices involved in implementing land stewardship
- It is crucial to encourage dialogue and debate between different stakeholders and sectors, building on a common interest in preserving land and biodiversity
- The visibility of Land Stewardship organisations and networks should increase at both the local and international level: networking enables us to learn from each other
- LS should be legally recognized and supported
- Institutions should increase support by, for instance, creating funding opportunities and providing economic support for those who commit themselves to practicing/promoting/working for LS, especially as LS contributes to the delivery of (inter)national conservation objectives (such as Natura 2000, greening the CAP etc.)

## OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

The fact that so many people participated in this workshop, proves that land stewardship is an approach that is increasingly gaining positive attention. Politicians, farmers, NGOs and citizens were involved and confirmed that, these days, solutions are to be sought in cross-sectoral collaborations wherein self-interest cannot prevail over common interests.

In the Italian context, land stewardship can help to preserve landscapes and conserve biodiversity, as well as contributing to the responsible management of the environment, whose current alarming rates of soil consumption should soon become a thing of the past. From the workshop it emerged that there is a bigger movement for preserving land and biodiversity which goes beyond national borders: it is encouraging that at the European level knowledge flows and best practices are shared, particularly in the context of good management of Natura 2000 sites.

The workshop also provided a platform for the first Italian meeting of land stewards and land stewardship

organisations from across the country. Land stewards had the unique opportunity to share experiences and voice their views on the future management of territories.

A end-of-session questionnaire was distributed between the participants to collect immediate feedback about the workshop. The questionnaire was compiled by 44 people, representatives from all the stakeholders involved (10 NGO's volunteers, 17 students, 4 landowners, 2 NGO's, 1 private enterprise, 2 independent consultants, 1 cultural organisation, 2 local administrations, 5 other). From the questionnaires analysis emerged a very positive evaluation of the speeches, the facilitation process and the participation activities.

Here are some of the questions relevant for the evaluation of the project.

Before receiving information of the LandLife project did you know what land stewardship was?  
No: 44% Yes: 37% Had only a vague idea: 19%

Do you consider land stewardship a useful tool to manage land and preserve biodiversity?  
Yes: 98% Do not know: 2% No: 0%

The workshop has contributed to improve my knowledge on land stewardship?  
Yes: 100% No: 0%

Overall it was clear that the workshop was a worthwhile event. It helped to broaden scopes, establish connections and build capacity, at the individual as well as the collective level. The need for networking opportunities like these clearly exists and we should respond to those needs at different levels by organising actions ourselves and by gaining backup support from NGOs and governmental institutions (local, national and European).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are very grateful for the time and expert contributions from participants to the workshop, Legambiente staff and all the speakers.

In addition we would like to thank the European Commission, without whose support (through the LIFE+ programme) this valuable, successful workshop would not have been possible.

Copies of all presentations and associated materials can be downloaded from: [www.landstewardship.eu](http://www.landstewardship.eu)

## PHOTO GALLERY:

