

Colli Dolci Colli - A Path in Nature

Creating the “Biovia” nature trail to enhance nature appreciation, while diversifying the tourist offer and creating job opportunities.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Municipality of Campochiaro, Italy

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P2 - Competitiveness

Focus Area: Farm performance, restructuring & modernisation

Measures: M04 - Investments in physical assets
M06 - Farm & business development

Funding: M04

RDP contribution: 39 900 (EUR)

EAFRD: 19 152 (EUR)

National/Regional: 20 748 (EUR)

M06

Total budget: 139 917 (EUR)

EAFRD: 40 296 (EUR)

National/Regional: 43 654 (EUR)

Private/own: 55 967 (EUR)

Timeframe: 29/11/2017 - 29/12/2021

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The completed nature path is accessible on foot and by bicycle. It extends across the farmland, crossing orchards, fields and forests on its route. The design, management, and maintenance of the path follows the principles and good practices of organic agriculture.

The trail is enriched by clear, informative signage, providing information about flora and fauna. In addition, drystone walls, walkways and terraces have been built to support biodiversity and add further points of interest to the path. A website and a digital app with audio guide inform visitors about the nature trail.

Summary

This extra-agricultural activity, implemented by the “Colli Dolci Colli” agritourism business in Molise, Italy, was aimed at strengthening and diversifying the tourist offer through the creation of an on-farm nature trail, called “Biovia”. In addition to enhancing nature appreciation, the objective was to attract more visitors and create jobs, while supporting the conservation of biodiversity of the area.

Project results

- The project created an increased and more diverse offer in agritourism, with positive effects on the economic development of the company and the local community.
- Job creation for maintenance and management of facilities relating to the trail, including the assistance and guidance of visitors.
- Enhanced awareness and protection of the environment through the application of green management practices.



Key lessons and recommendations

- Collaboration with stakeholders is essential, as it can lead to more innovative solutions and the optimisation of available resources.
- A nature trail can be an opportunity to raise awareness and educate visitors.
- A nature trail requires responsible management and regular maintenance whilst adopting sustainable practices to preserve the trail and its ecosystem.

Context

The holiday farm Colli Dolci Colli, in the countryside of the municipality of Campochiaro in Italy, is surrounded by beech and oak woodland. Its hilly position, at an altitude of about 600 m, allows the visitor to enjoy an uncontaminated natural landscape, rich in vegetation, with valleys and forests overlooked by the chain of the Matese mountains. However, this rural area is little known, and suffers from depopulation.

When considering the natural beauty of the area and the need for jobs to keep residents from moving away, Annamaria Coloccia, the owner of the farm, had an idea for a new socio-economic impulse that would build on the environmental assets of the territory and increase the tourist offer of the area, and, through this, job opportunities.

The idea developed into a project focusing on creating a nature trail that would provide access to the attractive wooded area of the farm's land and help contribute to the protection of the ecosystem.

Objectives

The main objective of the project was to improve economic sustainability by expanding and diversifying the recreational and tourism offer, thereby bringing about positive employment effects for the rural population in Molise.

In addition, the project also sought to contribute to conserving the biodiversity and protection of habitats through environmental works and care given to the woodland on the farm that would not only promote the regeneration of degraded ecosystems, but also encourage and foster the survival of local species.

A further aim was to foster environmental education by creating the nature trail on the farm to raise awareness about the importance of nature conservation, and to give people an authentic experience of the surrounding environment.

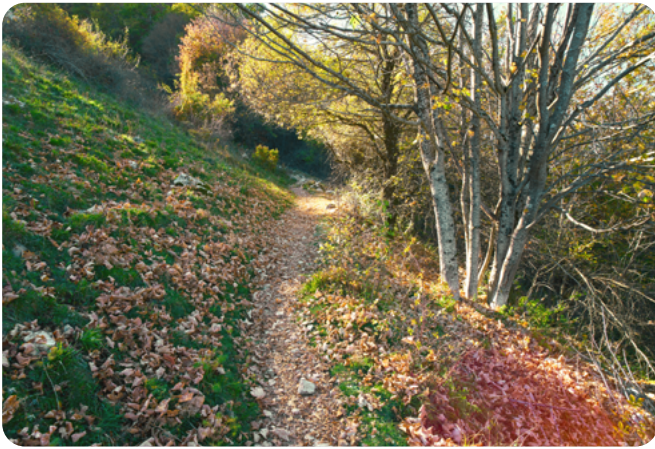


Activities

Project activities included:

- Planning and constructing the “Biovia” nature trail across farmland, including forests and arable land. The design of the “Biovia” trail focused on creating a positive visitor experience, while at the same time impacting positively on the environment.
- Constructing roads and outdoor spaces to improve access and use of the hospitality area of the accommodation facility.
- Building small infrastructural works, including drystone walls and terraces to foster biodiversity and add points of interest along the trail.
- Designing and erecting clear and visible signage. Information and interpretation panels to raise awareness about interesting aspects of the surroundings were installed along the entire route. This not only helps visitors find their way around, but also avoids damage to the surrounding habitat.
- Collaboration with schools and associations operating in the area was undertaken to inform the development and expansion of the agritourism offer with recreational and cultural activities.
- Creating a website and an app for Apple and Android devices with audio guide for visitors of the nature trail. The app was developed to stimulate curiosity, and, with the audio guide, accompanies farm guests along the way.
- The project collaborated with a number of key stakeholders, including environmental associations, the Local Action Group (LAG) “Molise towards 2000”, schools, cultural and sports associations, and public administration.





Main results

- › Increased number of visitors to the area. The nature trail allows visitors to explore and discover local ecosystems, enjoying an authentic and stimulating experience.
- › An increased and more diverse offer in agrotourism activity, with positive effects on the economic development of the company and the local community.
- › Job creation for maintenance and management of facilities relating to the trail (currently, the business employs five people), including the assistance and guidance of visitors. The farm seeks to be socially inclusive, employing young as well as older people.
- › Enhanced awareness and protection of the environment through the application of green management practices that favour the healthy growth of trees, natural regeneration and the diversity of the undergrowth.
- › Positive impacts on biodiversity. The construction of small infrastructural works, such as drystone walls and terraces, facilitates the reproduction of native species and minor wildlife, thereby contributing to enriching the biodiversity of the ecosystems.
- › Contribution to environmental education. The provision of information posters, trail signage, and the digital app with audio guide enable visitors to learn about the local flora and fauna and to become more aware of the need to respect nature.

Key lessons and recommendations

- › When constructing a nature trail, it is crucial to carefully consider all planning aspects, such as soil analysis, route design, resource management, stakeholder engagement, visitor safety, and environmental impact.
- › Collaboration with stakeholders is essential, as it can lead to more innovative solutions and the optimisation of available resources.
- › A nature trail can be an opportunity to raise awareness and educate visitors about environmental conservation and sustainability through guided tours, information points, etc.
- › A nature trail requires responsible management and regular maintenance whilst adopting sustainable practices concerning access control, waste management, biodiversity conservation and a responsible use of water and energy. This helps to preserve the trail and its ecosystem and ensures the safety of visitors.
- › Make sure the trail is well signposted, with clear and visible signs. Visitor safety is paramount.
- › Consider introducing entrance tickets or a voluntary contribution fee to finance the maintenance and improvement of the trail.

Additional information:

www.collidolcicolli.it

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