Interreg ADRION ADRIATIC-IONIAN
European Regional Development Fund - Instrument for Pre-Accession II Fund

ECOVINEGOALS

# Newsletter

DECEMBER 2020

# Ecological Vineyards Governance Activities for Landscape's Strategies

## Inside this issue



## ECOVINEGOALS

### ECOlogical VINEyards GOvernance Activities for Landscape's Strategies

### Supporting Agroecological Transition in Adriatic/Ionian Viticulture

ECOVINEGOALS encourages Agroecological Transition to combat the negative effects of intensive viticulture in the Adriatic-Ionian region.

The project unites 10 partner institutions from Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece, and 9 associate partners from Belgium, Italy, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro, with the key objective being **to develop strategies, action plans, tools and capacities for the agroecological transition of viticultural areas under intensive cultivation to low input and low emission management systems, thereby reconciling the productive, social, environmental and landscape needs of the fragile wine-growing areas in the Adrion region.**

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As main outputs, the project will elaborate 3 different transnational strategies: i) to promote the use of agroecological cultivation systems in the fragile wine-growing areas of the ADRION region; ii) to reconcile viticulture with other competing land uses and with the conservation of landscapes and habitats; and iii) to apply participatory territorial governance processes to improve stakeholders' capacity.

## AGROECOLOGY: a Science, a Practice, and a Social Movement; Agroecology and Viticulture

### INTERVIEW by Prof Christos **Vasilikiotis** Agroecologist and Chair of the Agro-Environmental Systems Management Department of Perrotis College, Thessaloniki-GR

**Prof Vasilikiotis was asked to describe the relationship between Organic Agriculture, Sustainable Agriculture and Agroecology, the benefits they can confer to agriculture and the rural economy in general, and to viticulture in particular.**

"The definitions of Agroecology are as many and as varied as the practitioners. A lot of the theory on which Agroecology is based is common to Organic Agriculture (OA) and Sustainable Agriculture (SA), as it uses ecology-based practices to achieve the same goals as conventional farming (i.e. crop protection and yield maximization), while protecting the environment and enhancing the ecological stability of the system, with the aim of economic viability. However, Agroecology also incorporates a third important component not present in OA and SA – a social dimension. Social Justice is integral to Agroecology. When Social justice is coupled with environmental protection, communities gain control of their environment and increase its quality".

As such, in addition to safeguarding the environment, and the health of the farmer and the consumer, Agroecology also strengthens rural economies and preserves the wild and cultivated landscapes that are the heritage of all citizens.

"Conventional Agriculture is designed to maximize yields and profits, and so frequently concerns large scale monocultures. Agroecology aims for maximum diversity throughout the entire process – from diverse cultivation and the encouragement of biodiversity on the farms, to diverse means of production, and diverse channels to market the products that utilize short supply chains".

"Sustainability allows continual production without exhausting resources. Agroecology is inherently sustainable as it is based on minimization of inputs and the reuse of waste products".

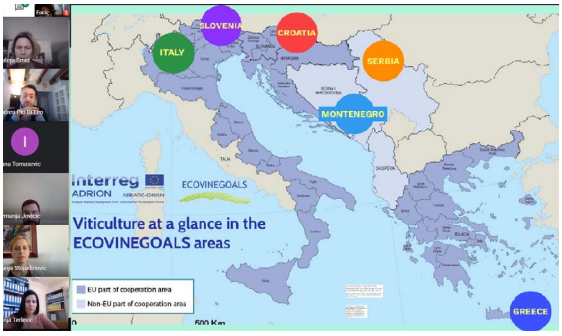
Regarding viticulture, many agroecological interventions can be readily applied to existing vineyards presently under conventional cultivation. Among the most important is the enhancement of biodiversity in the vineyard, and the use of cover crops that can improve soil health by introducing nutrients, improving soil structure, promoting water uptake and retention, and attracting beneficial insects including pollinators and predators of pests.

## Progress in the ADRION ECOVINEGOALS project

The major meetings for the project – the Pre Kick-Off Meeting held on 22/04/2020, and the 1st Steering Committee meeting held on 14/10/2020 – took place online. Regular meetings between smaller groups of partners and with stakeholders and outside experts, predominantly online, but also in person when safety protocols permitted, have occurred throughout the project. This continual communication has been key to the effective coordination of the work packages and partner actions.

Much of the initial groundwork of the project has been completed. The experimental methodology to be applied has been defined, as have a range of indicators designed to allow assessment of the agroecological health and management of each system, and also the impact of each cultivation on the environment, the landscape and its occupants. A series of Best Practices, concerning the agroecological management of different aspects of viticulture, but also social and societal practices, aspects of landscape management, and sustainable development, have been defined.

The demonstrative areas in each of the participating countries (Croatia, Italy, Greece, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia) have been finalized (see below), attempts were also made to involve pilot farms where intensive conventional cultivation methods were used and also some employing agroecological methods. Moreover, stakeholders within each area have been informed of the project aims and recruited into the study. In depth characterization of the areas, as well as the multicriteria analysis of the selected farms using detailed questionnaires, is underway.




## ECOVINEGOALS demonstrative territorial areas

The ECOVINEGOALS demonstrative areas were chosen to include maximum heterogeneity in terms of cultivars and agricultural methods. They are areas of recognized natural beauty - some are NATURA 2000 sites and one is a UNESCO World Heritage Protected Site.

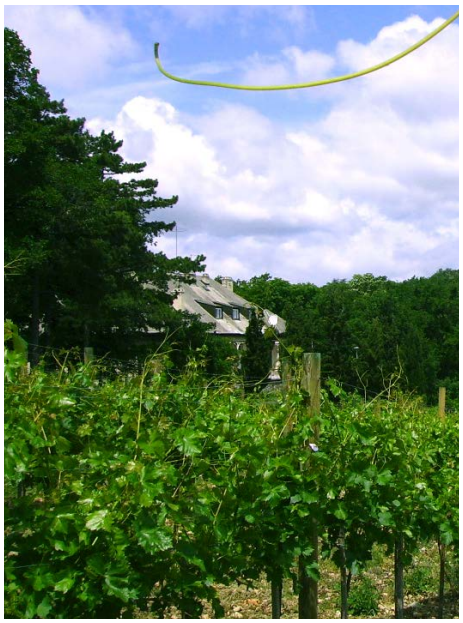
The diverse nature in these areas will provide sources of biodiversity essential for the planned agroecological interventions, while attracting tourism which, if responsibly developed, will contribute to the sustainable development of the rural areas.

### CROATIA

The Istrian peninsula forms the northernmost coast of Croatia. With beautiful beaches, picturesque rural areas, and excellent natural produce, it is increasingly developing as a site of gastronomic and wine tourism. The region produces high-quality wine that has been central to local culture for centuries. The hills and extensive coastline result in myriads of microclimates and aspects affecting the 4,000 ha of vineyards in this region that includes 10 towns and 32 municipalities. The primary cultivar is the autochthonous Malvazija Istarska, but the region also produces Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and the indigenous Teran and Refošk grapes. While Agroecology as a concept is unknown among the local viticulturalists, many of the traditional techniques employed follow agroecological principles.

## GREECE

There are two demonstrative areas selected in Greece, namely the Prefectures of Heraklion and Chania both located on the Island of Crete. Viticulture on the island occurs predominantly in the Heraklion prefecture (14,400ha) and to a lesser extent (1,600ha) in the Chania region. As the island is mountainous, the range of habitats is highly diverse, and this is reflected in diverse viticulture sites. The most commonly cultivated varieties are the local Liatiko and Kotsifali, but more than 40 indigenous cultivars are grown in the pilot areas.



## SERBIA

The two demonstrative territorial areas Sumadija and Tri Morave were selected becuase there has been significant renewal of existing vineyards and creation of new ones in this region during the last 20 years. Together, these regions offer great diversity in grape varieties, cultivation techniques, plot sizes, microclimates and terrain. The Tri Morave region covers river basins at altitudes between 200 to 350m, and has 7,500 ha of vineyards that belong to more than 18,000 households, of which 80% are used for winemaking. There is also a number of large wineries. The Sumadija region is more hilly and wooded. The 1,120 ha of vineyards produce table grapes and wine grapes in similar quantities. The main varieties cultivated are Prokupac and Tamjanika, although there are several other autochthonous varieties and also a large number of foreign cultivars.

## SLOVENIA

The demonstrative territorial area is in the “Primorska” wine growing region in southwestern Slovenia, bordering Italy and the Adriatic Sea, and specifically in the eastern part of the Vipava Valley. The area covers 70 $km^2$ and includes 23 settlements in four municipalities. It is mostly hilly, with only a small part along the rivers Vipava, Branica and Močilnik that is flat, and has a typically Mediterranean climate. Two important characteristics of vineyards in this area is that they are on slopes (60% are terraced) and are highly fragmented. The 1,800 vineyards covering 900 ha, with an average size of 1.5, ha are cultivated by more than 500 winegrowers. The area has a very diverse varietal composition, stemming from a long tradition of production. Most common are eight white grape varieties: Malvazija, Rebula, Sauvignon, Laški rizling, Chardonnay, Zelen, Beli pinot and Pinela, and three red varieties: Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Barbera. A significant amount (17%) of all vineyards is occupied by the autochthonous varieties Rebula, Zelen and Pinela, with planting increasing in recent years as they are an important feature and specialty of the area. The wines of Primorska tend to be dry and rich in minerals with moderate acids and a subtler bouquet.

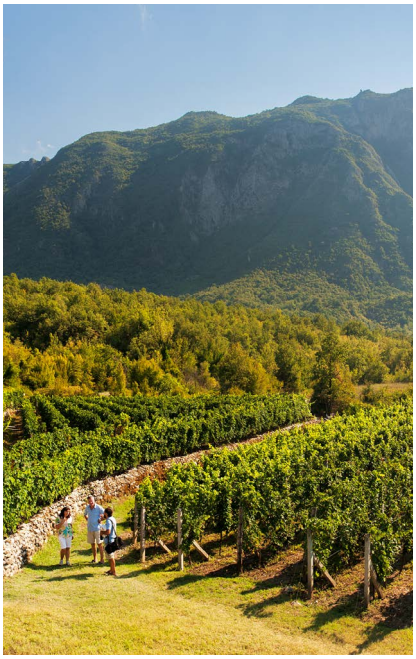
## ITALY

There are two demonstrative territorial areas in Italy. The first, linked to project partner PAT, is in the Cembra Valley in Trento and includes two villages (Cembra and Faver). The 484ha area, situated approx. 600m above sea level, is a UNESCO World Heritage Protected Site, due to its natural beauty and the presence of unique terraced vineyards. The region is facing difficulties due to competition from intensified viticulture and a dwindling farming population. The second Italian area is linked to project partner VeGAL and its is overseen by BIOVENEZIA, an association supporting organic agriculture which includes farmers and producers, citizens, tour operators, associations and public administrations that cooperate in the sustainable management of local resources. The area extends from Cavallino-Treporti to San Michele al Tagliamento, in the region of Veneto, and includes the Venice Lagoon, a highly important UNESCO Cultural Heritage Site, in addition to many Natura 2000 sites. Eastern Venice is a coastal territory of rivers, lagoons, Special Protection areas (SIC and ZPS), parks, green areas and agricultural areas that constitute an “ecological network”.

Organic farming is increasingly practiced by wineries in the Lison-Pramaggiore area, which is presently the largest Italian organic DOC production zone. The pilot area includes 30 winemakers, and four wine routes. The most important grape cultivars are Glera, used to make prosecco, Pinot grigio and Merlot nero.

## MONTENEGRO

“Crmnica is a historical region in the southern Montenegro consisting of 25 scattered villages within municipality of Bar. Situated between the shores of the Adriatic Sea and Lake Skadar, and surrounded by the mountains of Rumija and Sutorman at 350 m above sea level, Crmnica was one of the seven Montenegrin historical subdistricts and is well known for its magnificent landscapes. The richness of cultural and historical monuments and diversity of natural assets renders it an attractive tourist destination, as it is famous for its cultural heritage, traditional domestic products and dozens of family-run wineries that showcase vineyard management and the winemaking process. The name Crmnica is derived from the reddish soil colour indicating fertile properties suitable for high quality wine production. While the Lake Skadar Basin is very rich in terms of the grape cultivars, most characteristic are the autochthonous varieties such as the indigenous Vranac that has been cultivated in Montenegro since the 14th century.



**Despite differences in farming systems, resource management, training, landscape and environmental sustainability, all partner countries share a long history of viticulture and vinification, and this sector plays a significant role in their socio-economic life.**

## Upcoming actions

The next stage of the project involves the multicriteria analyses of the agroecological and economic performance of the pilot farms employing Agroecological Best Practices, as well as analyses of the landscapes and habitats of the selected demonstrative viticultural areas. The results will be used to formulate local action plans and transnational guidelines for the Agroecological Transition of farms and the conservation of landscapes and habitats in the selected areas. Continued monitoring of the farms implementing agroecological protocols in the demonstration areas will allow evaluation of the success of each intervention.

## ECOVINEGOALS in the time of Coronavirus

In common with all of society, the ADRION ECOVINEGOALS project has been affected by the Sars-2-Cov epidemic. Fortunately, the use of technology has compensated to a large degree, with most physical meetings satisfactorily replaced with virtual ones held through web platforms. The level of cooperation and cohesion achieved has been very encouraging and we thank everyone for their perseverance during this challenging period. There will inevitably, be some modifications to the project scheduled activities necessitated by the fact that the logistics for the implementation of physical meetings, and site visits are complicated by adherence to safety protocols. All involved parties are working to keep delays to a minimum, and to date, all project deliverables have been completed on schedule.

## ECOVINEGOALS @ BIOVALEE ODT Forum

ECOVINEGOALS participated in the “BIOVALLEE FORUM ODT (Origin, Diversity, Territories) Origin for Sustainability – Transforming localised food systems through sustainable consumption and production”, held on 5-9 October 2020 as a web/physical presence conference at Val de Drome, France. The Poster, authored by project partners Federico Bigaran, Mateja Smid Hribar, Eleni Stamataki, Sanja Terlevic, and Andrea Pio Di Leo, describes the aims of the ECOVINEGOALS project, and includes examples of Best Practices and Indicators of Agroecological Health.

Poster on the opposite page.

Origin Diversity Territories

Forum 2020: Origin, Diversity and Territories
Workshop: "Actors and civil society"

VAL de Drôme en Biovallée L'INTERCOMMUNALITÉ

# Insights from the ECOVINEGOALS/ADRION project: agroecological best practices, landscape enhancement and communities' participation.

Federico Bigaran (PAT - I); Mateja Šmid Hribar (ZRC SAZU - SI); Eleni Stamataki (CIHEAM-MAICh - GR); Sanja Terlević (AZRRI – HR); Andrea Pio Di Leo (VEGAL – I)

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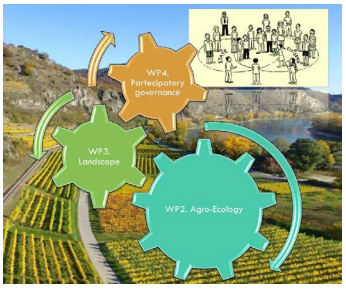
**The ECOVINEGOALS project** promotes the agroecological transition of viticulture in the Adriatic-Ionian (ADRION) region towards low input and low emissions production systems, according to the principles defined by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FAO) in 2019. In order to overcome the negative effects of intensive viticulture systems on soil, water, air quality, biodiversity and landscape and to increase the sustainability and resilience of viticulture, a set of **best agroecological practices** are defined and farmers of selected pilot areas are invited to implement them. Starting from sharing experiences on agroecology, stakeholders interact pro-actively by monitoring pilot areas and wineries that adopt these agroecological practices. Through the use of **indicators**, defined for agri-environmental, economic, social and cultural landscape issues, the assessment of the performance of the application of the best practices will be realized by involving the stakeholders themselves. From the experiences acquired in the pilot areas, the project will develop **strategies** and **action plans** to promote, support and manage the agroecological transitions and to improve stakeholders' skills and capacities for advancing a participatory, local-governance, multi-actor approach as the means to face environmental vulnerability, promote ecosystems services, prevent social conflicts in land use and mitigate climate change. A long-lasting project result is the constitution of the transnational and interdisciplinary network in the ADRION Area (AVINE) for the application of the agroecological principles and practices in viticulture.

The project has just started its activities. Here we present the best practices and selected indicators.




## Identification of Best Practices

Agroecology is based on the co-creation of knowledge, combining science with the traditional, practical and local knowledge of producers. We started from the identification of a set of best agroecological practices already used by viticulture farmers in the partners' regions, describing them by using a simple form with a short description of the practice, the aim of the practice, suggestions for implementation, expected results, improvable or critical aspects, bibliographic indications and references.

| |
|---|
| Agroforestry in vineyards |
| Vineyard canopy management |
| Bio-stimulants in viticulture |
| Soil erosion prevention and monitoring of soil fertility |
| Cover crops and viticulture |
| Mantenance of traditional elements of "winescape" - dry stone walls and wood poles |
| Green manure in vineyards |
| High Nature Value Farming (HNV) in vineyard regions |
| Mechanical inter-row weed control and "pyro-weeding" |
| Sustainable irrigation in vineyard |
| Mating disruption |
| Bird nests and shelters for bees and pollinating insects |
| DSS to reduce pesticides in viticulture |
| Resistant grape varieties |
| Organic-district/Eco-region |
| Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) |
| Certification of biodiversity in vineyards |
| The "Landscapital Board Game" |
| Social learning and knowledge generation in viticulture |
| Wine routes as promotional tools for viticulture |
| Communication strategy for Agroecological Products |
| Land use maintenance |

## Indicators

Indicators and sub-indicators are used for identifying and quantifying, at different scales of observation (field, farm, landscape unit), the actual situation of the pilot areas and future changes, after the adoption of agroecological practices. Indicators should be seen as a shared way of collecting information for further discussion on the different themes and an ongoing learning process among partners and stakeholders.

| |
|---|
| **Agri-Environment indicators** |
| Soil health |
| Water use efficiency |
| Pesticide risk and Fertilizer pollution risk |
| Diffusion of sustainable management systems |
| Biodiversity in the vineyards |
| Ecological connectivity and protected areas |
| Carbon footprint, carbon sequestrations / emissions |
| **Economic indicators** |
| Land productivity and profitability |
| Vine health |
| Value chains, externalities, effects on territory |
| **Social** |
| Fair employment |
| Land tenure and food security |
| Knowledge, learning and innovation |
| Social equity - Social capital |
| Happy neighbours |
| **Landscape Cultural Heritage** |
| Aesthetic Landscapes and Ecology |
| Architectural heritage and local production |
| Land cover type and area, landscape structure and infrastructure |

*This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the EU. The content of the poster is the sole responsibility of the partners of the ECOVINEGOALS project and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the EU and or ADRION program authorities.*

**Project partnership:**

# PARTNERS

LAG Eastern Venice, VEGAL, ITALY (Lead Partner)

Autonomous Province of Trento, PAT, ITALY

Institute of Agriculture and Forestry Nova Gorica, KGZS-Zavod GO, SLOVENIA

Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts - ZRC SAZU, SLOVENIA

Agency for Rural Development of Istria Ltd. Pazin, AZRRI, CROATIA

Association for the Promotion of Employment, Vocational Training and Education – INFORMO, CROATIA

Business Development Centre Kragujevac, BDCKG, SERBIA

Foundation Business Start-up Center, BSC Bar, MONTENEGRO

Municipality of Bar, BAR, MONTENEGRO

Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania, CIHEAM - MAICh, GREECE

## ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

Agroecology Europe, BELGIUM | General Union CISL Cultivators Venice, ITALY | Bio district of production and biological community of central-eastern Venice BIO VENICE, ITALY | IAL - Innovation Learning Work S.r.l. - Social enterprise, ITALY | AIAB-Italian Organic Agriculture Association, ITALY | Agroecologiki SP, GREECE | Municipality of Topola, SERBIA Šumadija winemakers association, SERBIA | Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, MONTENEGRO

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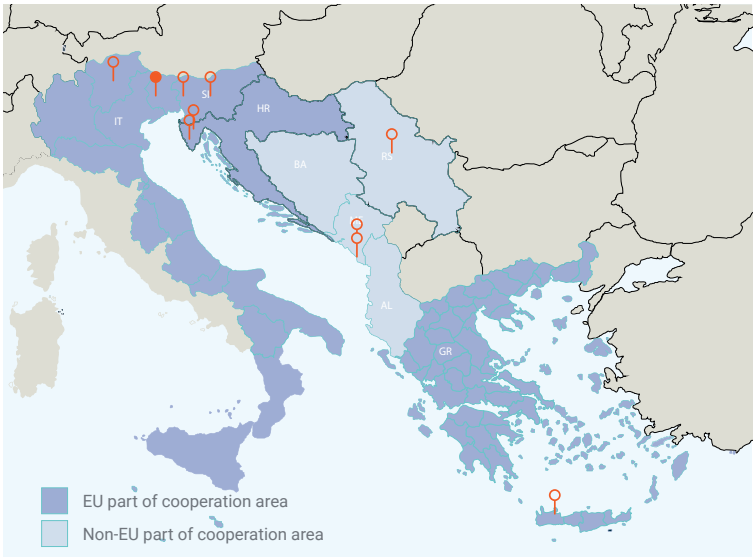


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## PROJECT DATA

**Total budget:** 1,939,505.59
**ERDF:** 1,399,759.25
**IPAII:** 248,820.5

**Duration:** 30 months
**Start Date:** 01.03.2020
**End Date:** 31.08.2022