

Short presentation ^[1]

Overview

EMERITUS - Eco-ManagemEnt for agRI-Tourism in moUntain areaS – aims at creating an Environmental Management System (EMS) for marginal mountain regions to enhance the connections between agriculture and tourism, i.e. the two main productive sectors of local operators in less favored areas.

The relationships among local actors will be strengthened by **integrating tourism and agriculture supply chains** (including animal productions) and improving their **management efficiency**. The need of implementing an EMS at territorial scale is based on the assumption that the economic activities in mountain marginal areas are characterized by fragmentation, small business size and lack of communication among tourism and food chain actors, local administrators and other stakeholders. This situation limits the competitiveness of both agricultural and tourism holdings, being the former unable to promote their high-quality products and find an appropriate placement on markets, and being the latter unable to propose an offer tightly tied to territories.

Consequently, local administrations (e.g. Municipalities), communities and operators may benefit of a systemic approach deriving from the implementation of an environmental management model that enhances the competitiveness of agricultural and tourism mountain holdings on the market by: i) **promoting quality productions** based on a sustainable use of natural resources, ii) promoting economic activities deriving by the **natural and cultural heritage** of mountain valleys and iii) **diversifying both the food and touristic offer through their integration**. The project, thanks to an integrated vision of the supply chains, will encourage **social innovation**, support the mountain region economy in retaining **active human capital** in the mountains, and enhance the **efficiency of processes** along the supply chains themselves, which will result in an improvement of the quality of products and services.

The area of investigation

Municipality of Valprato Soana, Piedmont Region, North-West of the Italian Alps, at about 1.100 m a.s.l.

Project Methodology

The project is organized in six WPs. WPs1-3 concern in field analysis on the agricultural and the tourism sectors of the Soana Valley; their deliverables are expected to be inputs for designing the EMS (WP4). WP5 and WP6 are devoted to Dissemination and networking and Project management. To achieve the objective of integrating and boosting mountain agricultural activities, livestock breeding, and tourism, under the umbrella of an EMS, the project will follow the stages hereafter:

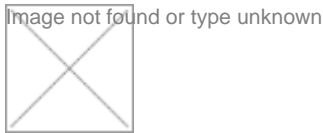
- A. Analysis of mountain agricultural supply chains

- B. Food chains improvement
- C. Analysis of current and the new emerging markets
- D. Evaluation of the tourism sector
- E. Design of the EMS

For reaching the main goals, the project will have **six** interconnected **Work Packages** and more specifically:

1. Analysis of mountain agricultural supply chains and food chain improvement (WP1).
2. Analysis of current and emerging market, with a special focus on the evaluation of the certification tools for food products (WP2).
3. Evaluation of the tourism sector (WP3).
4. Design of Environmental Management System (WP4).
5. Dissemination and networking also to develop future project proposal (WP5).
6. Project Management (WP6).

Figure 2 contains the interconnections among WPs.



EMERITUS Team

Principal investigator

Stefano Duglio (M, 42) is Associate professor at the Dept. of Management and member of the Board of NatRisk, Research Centre on Natural Risks in Mountain and Hilly Environments (University of Torino). His main research field concerns the environmental sustainability of economic activities, focusing on the design and implementation of environmental management models at regional scale, especially in mountain areas. He participated at several projects, including “*PROactive management of GEOlogical heritage in the PIEMONTE region: innovative methods and functional guidelines for promoting geodiversity knowledge and supporting geoconservation activities (PROGEOPIemonte)*”, supported by Compagnia di San Paolo, “*V.E.T.T.A. – Valorisation of Experiences and Transfrontier Tourism products at medium and high Altitude*”, within Italy-Switzerland Transfrontier cooperation project IT-CH 2007-2013 and “*Designing and registration of a Landscape and Environmental Management System for the Union of the Municipalities of Langa and Barolo Hills*” funded by Regione Piemonte.

Research Team

Research Group 1, Agriculture: **Giampiero Lombardi**, PhD (Responsible of RG1, M, 50), is Associate professor at the Dep. Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences (DISAFA) with expertise in the design of sustainable agro-pastoral systems and development of enhanced-added value food chains in mountain areas; **Laura Zavattaro**, PhD (F, 47), is a technician at DISAFA with broad experience in sustainable environmental assessment and good management practices of agricultural systems.

Research Group 2, Market and food products: **Giovanni Peira** (Responsible of RG2, M, 50) and **Alessandro Bonadonna**, PhD, (M, 41) are Assistant professors at the Dep. Management. Peira's interests are related to food sector with a focus on market analysis; Bonadonna's studies have been oriented to analyze tools for the protection and enhancement of quality of food products.

Stakeholders Involvement

The project partnership structure and the role of the public and private entities and institutions that support the proposal are summarized in the next Figure. A **participatory and multi-actor approach** will be used for all the stages listed in the methodology. The approach will be implemented mainly through the establishment of two bodies, a Stakeholder **Advisory Board** and a **Forum** group.

The former will involve local administrative and economic actors. It will include the Municipality of Valprato Soana that will supervise board activities, Coldiretti Torino and the Metropolitan City of Torino (*see letters of commitment*). It will support the project in all its phases and direct its actions to meet the real needs of the local community. The Forum group will be set to enhance the **exchange of knowledge between different actors** of the food and tourist chains. It will include at least one representative of local farmers and one representative of the local tourist operators. The Forum will be involved in the discussion of the main project phases: data gathering, in-field analysis, questionnaire design, definition of operative proposals on food chain and tourist management.

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