

## Crops for better soil: final conference

**18-19 May 2016, Madrid, Spain**



The LIFE project Crops for better soil (**LIFE10 ENV/ES/000471**), which highlights profitable organic farming techniques to combat soil degradation in the Mediterranean, is holding its final conference on 18-19 May 2016 at the Spanish ministry for agriculture, food and the environment in Madrid.

The **programme for the two-day conference** features presentations on the results and communications strategy of the LIFE project alongside presentations on similar agriculture-related LIFE projects. It will include a panel discussion on sustainable production. The second day comprises a trip to a field trial in Illana, Guadalajara.

The LIFE project was set up to demonstrate that applying specific organic farming techniques for rain-fed croplands can improve soil fertility and increase yields, on a significant scale. Such techniques are particularly relevant for semi-arid land, such as that found at the project site. The project is showing how such land is suitable for the profitable cultivation of crops.

The aim is to demonstrate that organic farming is a viable alternative to current erosive farming practices and to the abandonment of areas with vulnerable dry soil types. The project has also been demonstrating innovative measurement methods.

To join the event, please complete the **registration form**. Simultaneous English and Spanish translation will be available.

For more information about Crops for better soil, visit the **project website**.

## LIFE Nature Platform Meeting on wildlife poisoning

**19-20 May 2016, Athens, Greece**



WWF Greece will host a LIFE Nature Platform Meeting on wildlife poisoning in Athens on 19-20 May 2016. The aim of the platform meeting is to review the impact of the LIFE programme on the problem of illegal poisoning, as well as to broaden expert networks and determine future coordinated actions.

Intentional poisoning represents a major direct threat to the sustainable management of ecosystems across Europe, especially southeast Europe, where the conservation efforts of many LIFE projects are at risk of being undermined. The meeting will thus focus on exchanging best practice and capacity building in the areas of awareness raising, prevention, case definition, evidence collection and legal enforcement among LIFE beneficiaries, competent authorities and stakeholders.

The meeting is being held in the context of the European Union policy framework on the illegal killing of wildlife. Results and recommendations will be made available on **the Natura 2000 Communication Platform** and LIFE website. The working language of the meeting will be English.

The meeting will include a field trip to Parnitha National Park located north-northwest of the Athens metropolitan area. Designated in 1961, it is the oldest national park in Greece and the closest to Athens, just 30 km from the city centre. It is also a Natura 2000 area, a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA), and it is covered by endemic fir and pine forests, and inhabited by an indigenous population of red deer (*Cervus elaphus*). One third of the mountain was damaged by fire in 2007 but the ecosystem is recovering.

Two to three years ago, wolves returned to the park after an absence of more than 50 years. This return is expected to restore balance to the expanding deer population and reduce its impact on forest regeneration. However, the return of the wolf (*Canis lupus*) has caused disputes and human-predator conflicts. The risk of use of poison baits in the area is high, and a few incidents affecting wolves and stray dogs have already been reported.

The LIFE Nature Platform Meeting is being organised by the European Commission LIFE-Nature Unit with the support of the NEEMO EEIG External Monitoring Team and WWF Greece. Participation in the meeting is free of charge. Part of the catering during the meeting and the field trip costs (i.e. the bus travel) will be covered by WWF Greece. However, participants have to cover their own travel, accommodation and meal costs. For all open LIFE projects, these costs will be considered eligible under the travel costs category.

Those wishing to make a presentation at the meeting need to email:

**Anastasia.Koutsolioutsou@neemo.eu** by no later than 20 April 2016. For closed projects it may be possible for the European Commission to cover travel costs. Please ask about this possibility when you confirm your interest in attending.

Download the programme **here**.

For further information, please contact Anastasia Koutsolioutsou or Stoyan Yotov c/o NEEMO EEIG (LIFE