



LIFE ARCPROM



ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ
ΥΣΟΜΟ
HUMAN

ΑΡΚΟΥΔΑ
ORSO
BEAR

1/4

LIFE18 NAT/GR/000768

Improving human-bear coexistence in 4 National Parks of South Europe

Action C 10. Final Report of Scheme



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SUMMARY

Action C10 of the LIFE ARCPROM project was conceived with the aim of designing and implementing a labelling mechanism to identify products and services that contribute to bear conservation, thereby promoting the coexistence between humans and bears in regions characterized by frequent interactions and conflict. The action was executed in both Greece and Italy, targeting the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) and the endemic Apennine brown bear (*Ursus arctos marsicanus*), respectively. While parallel in scope, the two national approaches were tailored to reflect the socio-economic particularities and ecological realities of each implementation area. Through a combination of interdisciplinary collaboration, producer engagement, capacity-building initiatives, and the strategic use of digital tools, two complementary labelling schemes were established: the “RESPECT” label in Greece and the “Bear-Friendly” label in Italy.

In Greece, Action C10 was deployed across all three National Parks participating in the LIFE ARCPROM project. During the preparatory phase, it became evident that the label—being a novel initiative within the Greek context—should reflect the overarching imperative of protecting wildlife and biodiversity as a whole, rather than focusing exclusively on the brown bear. Consequently, the designation “RESPECT – Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label” was adopted. This term was selected for its clarity, cross-cultural accessibility, and communicative resonance, both among producers and consumers. The strategic rebranding aimed to enhance public recognition of the label, circumvent restrictive interpretations, and facilitate its broader diffusion across the national territory.

The RESPECT label is underpinned by six core pillars of environmental sustainability: efficient use of natural resources, waste reduction, protection of natural habitats, reduction of harmful chemical inputs, minimization of human disturbance to wildlife, and promotion of environmental awareness among consumers.

The certification process is managed through the official digital platform www.respect-label.gr, which serves as an interactive hub for information dissemination and application processing. The platform features a comprehensive presentation of the label’s rationale, eligibility criteria, technical guidelines, user manual, beneficiary registry, and a step-by-step application system incorporating both self-assessment and automated pre-screening functionalities. Evaluation entails submission of supporting documentation, on-site audits, and the issuance of a Certificate of Compliance, valid for a period of three years. Certified entities are formally registered as RESPECT Label beneficiaries.

Implementation was further supported by a series of targeted training seminars, producer consultations, and thematic outreach events held within the three National Parks. Particular emphasis was placed on sectors with demonstrated relevance to bear conservation, such as apiculture, organic farming, and agrotourism. The promotional campaign included participation in national and international exhibitions—most notably the Thessaloniki International Fair—the production of communication materials, press releases, management of a dedicated Facebook page, scientific presentations, and the publication of a peer-reviewed article. By the conclusion of the action, a total of 23 enterprises had been certified: 14 in Northern Pindos National Park, 5 in the Rhodope Mountain Range National Park, and 4 in Prespa National Park.

In Italy, Action C10 was implemented within the Maiella National Park (MNP) through the establishment of the “Bear-Friendly” label. The initiative was informed by the outcomes of Action A3, which examined the socio-economic dynamics and human–bear conflicts specific to the region. The analysis identified beekeepers and farmers as key stakeholders, due to their dual role in both mitigating conflict and supporting ecosystem integrity.

The design of the Bear-Friendly label was grounded in a participatory methodology, involving collaboration between MNP staff and WWF Italy, alongside stakeholder consultations and public workshops.

The visual identity of the label was developed to ensure semantic clarity and aesthetic appeal, while maintaining a strong link to the LIFE ARCPROM brand and to the territorial identity of the Park. A six-colour palette was created and incorporated into promotional materials and branded merchandise distributed to participating producers.

To facilitate the implementation of the label, MNP and WWF launched a dedicated training program covering key themes such as Apennine bear biology, damage prevention measures, local agricultural practices, organic farming, and the management of the native *Apis mellifera ligustica* bee species. Four thematic seminars were held, culminating in the certification of 27 producers by the end of 2023.

The dissemination of the Bear-Friendly label was structured around a twelve-point promotional plan, co-developed with producers during a participatory workshop. By the end of the project, eight of the twelve actions had been successfully implemented, including participation in high-profile events, the creation of brochures and educational materials, and the distribution of promotional items.

Action C10 was successfully completed in both countries, having achieved its stated objectives, delivered all planned activities, and secured substantial engagement from local communities. In Greece, the adoption of the name “RESPECT” proved decisive in strengthening the label’s communicative efficacy and enabling its projection as a tool of national relevance. In Italy, the localized integration of the Bear-Friendly scheme and the active involvement of producers ensured the label’s functionality and social legitimacy.

The increased level of interest demonstrated by producers and consumers alike in both countries underscores the fact that the label is not merely a tool for marketing visibility, but a sustainable certification platform rooted in ecological responsibility, stakeholder participation, and human–wildlife coexistence. The outcomes of Action suggest strong potential for long-term continuity and upscaling of both labels beyond the duration of the LIFE ARCPROM project.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η Δράση C10 του έργου LIFE ARCPROM σχεδιάστηκε με σκοπό την ανάπτυξη και εφαρμογή ενός σήματος σήμανσης προϊόντων και υπηρεσιών φιλικών προς την αρκούδα, στοχεύοντας στην ενίσχυση της συνύπαρξης ανθρώπου και αρκούδας, ιδιαίτερα σε περιοχές όπου καταγράφονται συχνές αλληλεπιδράσεις και συγκρούσεις σε Ελλάδα και Ιταλία (*Ursus arctos* & *Ursus arctos marsicanus* αντίστοιχα). Η δράση υλοποιήθηκε και στις δύο χώρες, με παράλληλες αλλά ελαφρά διαφοροποιημένες προσεγγίσεις, προσαρμοσμένες στο κοινωνικοοικονομικό πλαίσιο και τις ανάγκες κάθε περιοχής. Μέσα από τη συνεργασία επιστημονικών και διαχειριστικών φορέων, την ενεργή συμμετοχή παραγωγών και την αξιοποίηση ψηφιακών εργαλείων και εκπαιδευτικών δράσεων, επιτεύχθηκε η δημιουργία δύο δυναμικών σημάτων: του σήματος “RESPECT” στην Ελλάδα και του σήματος “Bear-Friendly” στην Ιταλία.

Στην Ελλάδα, η Δράση υλοποιήθηκε και στα 3 Εθνικά Πάρκα που συμμετείχαν στο έργο. Κατά τη διάρκεια των προπαρασκευαστικών ενεργειών διαπιστώθηκε ότι το Σήμα, ως καινοτομία για την ελληνική επικράτεια θα έπρεπε να αντανakλά την ανάγκης προστασίας της άγριας ζωής το σύνολό της. Ως εκ τούτου, λήφθηκε η απόφαση να υιοθετηθεί το όνομα “RESPECT – Σήμα Προστασία Άγριας Ζωής και Βιοποικιλότητας”, το οποίο επιλέχθηκε επειδή είναι διεθνώς κατανοητό και εύκολο στην επικοινωνία τόσο προς τους καταναλωτές όσο και προς τους παραγωγούς. Η αλλαγή αυτή είχε στόχο να ενισχύσει την απευθείας αναγνωσιμότητα του σήματος, να αποφευχθούν ερμηνευτικοί περιορισμοί και να διευκολυνθεί η διάχυση και αποδοχή του σε πανελλήνια έκταση. Το “RESPECT” βασίζεται σε έξι περιβαλλοντικούς άξονες αξιολόγησης, ήτοι την αποδοτική χρήση φυσικών πόρων, τη διαχείριση αποβλήτων, τη διατήρηση των φυσικών ενδιατημάτων της άγριας πανίδας, τη μείωση επιβλαβών χημικών, αποφυγή όχλησης προς την άγρια ζωή και την περιβαλλοντική ευαισθητοποίηση καταναλωτών.

Η διαδικασία πιστοποίησης υλοποιήθηκε μέσω της διαδραστικής ιστοσελίδας (www.respect-label.gr), που λειτουργεί ως ψηφιακή πύλη πληροφόρησης και διαχείρισης αιτήσεων. Περιλαμβάνει αναλυτική παρουσίαση του σήματος, τα κριτήρια απονομής, εγχειρίδιο χρήσης, κανονισμό, μητρώο δικαιούχων, δυνατότητα ηλεκτρονικής αίτησης και αυτόματη προεπιλογή. Η διαδικασία περιλαμβάνει αυτοαξιολόγηση, υποβολή τεκμηρίων, επιτόπια επιθεώρηση και τελική απόφαση απονομής. Οι πιστοποιημένοι φορείς λαμβάνουν Πιστοποιητικό Συμμόρφωσης διάρκειας τριών ετών και εντάσσονται στους Δικαιούχους του Σήματος.

Η εφαρμογή του Σήματος ενισχύθηκε με εκπαιδευτικά σεμινάρια, διαβουλεύσεις με παραγωγούς και θεματικές εκδηλώσεις, που πραγματοποιήθηκαν εντός των τριών Εθνικών Πάρκων, με ιδιαίτερη έμφαση στη μελισσοκομία, τη βιολογική γεωργία και τις μορφές οικότουρισμού. Η εκστρατεία προβολής του σήματος περιλάμβανε συμμετοχή σε εθνικές και διεθνείς εκθέσεις (όπως η Διεθνής Έκθεση Θεσσαλονίκης), δημιουργία ενημερωτικού και προωθητικού υλικού, έκδοση δελτίων Τύπου, διαχείριση σελίδας στο Facebook, παρουσία σε θεματικές ημερίδες και επιστημονική δημοσίευση σε έγκριτο περιοδικό. Μέχρι την ολοκλήρωση της δράσης, 23 επιχειρήσεις είχαν πιστοποιηθεί: 14 στον Εθνικό Δρυμό Πίνδου, 5 στο Πάρκο Ροδόπης και 4 στο Πάρκο Πρεσπών.

Στην Ιταλία, η Δράση C10 υλοποιήθηκε στο Maiella National Park (MNP) με την ανάπτυξη του σήματος “Bear-Friendly”, βασισμένου στα δεδομένα της Δράσης A3, που ανέλυσε τις τοπικές κοινωνικοοικονομικές συνθήκες και τις συγκρούσεις μεταξύ ανθρώπου και αρκούδας. Από την ανάλυση προέκυψε ότι οι μελισσοκόμοι και γεωργοί αποτελούν τους βασικούς στόχους της δράσης, λόγω της ενεργού εμπλοκής τους τόσο στη διαχείριση συγκρούσεων όσο και στη διατήρηση του οικοσυστήματος. Η δημιουργία του κανονισμού του σήματος πραγματοποιήθηκε με συμμετοχικό τρόπο, με τη συνεργασία του MNP και της WWF Ιταλίας, μέσω δημόσιων σεμιναρίων και ανοικτής διαβούλευσης.

Δημιουργήθηκε το λογότυπο “Bear-Friendly”, το οποίο είχε στόχο να αντικατοπτρίζει τέσσερα βασικά

χαρακτηριστικά: ισχυρή σύνδεση με το λογότυπο LIFE ARCPROM, σύνδεση με το MNP και οπτική απήχηση. Επίσης, δημιουργήθηκε μια πολύχρωμη παλέτα με έξι χρώματα και παραδόθηκε στους παραγωγούς καθώς και χρησιμοποιήθηκε για την παραγωγή gadgets.

Για την αποτελεσματική εφαρμογή του σήματος “Bear-Friendly”, το MNP και η WWF οργάνωσαν ένα εκπαιδευτικό πρόγραμμα για να ενημερώσουν τους παραγωγούς για τη βιολογία της αρκούδας, τη συνύπαρξη και τις καλύτερες πρακτικές για την πρόληψη των συγκρούσεων και τη διατήρηση των ενδιαιτημάτων της αρκούδας. Το πρόγραμμα περιλάμβανε 4 σεμινάρια με θέματα όπως η βιολογία της αρκούδας των Απεννίνων, μέτρα πρόληψης ζημιών, τοπικές καλλιέργειες, οργανική καλλιέργεια και μελισσοκομία, εκτροφή της μέλισσας *Apis mellifera ligustica* και προώθηση του σήματος “Bear-Friendly”. Συνολικά, 27 παραγωγοί πιστοποιήθηκαν μέχρι το τέλος του 2023.

Η προώθηση του σήματος “Bear-Friendly” βασίστηκε σε ένα σχέδιο 12 δράσεων, το οποίο καταρτίστηκε με άμεση συμμετοχή των παραγωγών μέσα από βιωματικό εργαστήριο. Μέχρι την ολοκλήρωση της δράσης, είχαν ήδη υλοποιηθεί 8 από τα 12 σημεία, περιλαμβανομένων παρουσιάσεων σε εθνικές και περιφερειακές εκδηλώσεις, δημιουργία φυλλαδίων και έντυπου υλικού, καθώς και διανομή προωθητικών αντικειμένων.

Η Δράση C10 ολοκληρώθηκε με πλήρη επιτυχία τόσο στην Ελλάδα όσο και στην Ιταλία, καθώς επιτεύχθηκαν όλοι οι στόχοι, υλοποιήθηκαν όλες οι προβλεπόμενες ενέργειες και εξασφαλίστηκε ουσιαστική εμπλοκή και αποδοχή από τις τοπικές κοινωνίες. Στην Ελλάδα, η επιλογή της ονομασίας “RESPECT” συνέβαλε καθοριστικά στην επικοινωνιακή ισχύ και στην προοπτική εθνικής εμβέλειας του σήματος. Στην Ιταλία, η τοπική ενσωμάτωση και η ενεργός συμμετοχή των παραγωγών κατέστησαν το “Bear-Friendly” σήμα ένα πλήρως λειτουργικό και αποδεκτό εργαλείο προστασίας της άγριας ζωής.

Το έντονο ενδιαφέρον τόσο των παραγωγών όσο και των καταναλωτών και στις δύο χώρες καταδεικνύει ότι το σήμα δεν είναι απλώς ένα εργαλείο προβολής, αλλά μια βιώσιμη πλατφόρμα συνύπαρξης, πιστοποίησης και οικολογικής ευθύνης με δυνατότητα επέκτασης και εδραίωσης και μετά το πέρας του έργου.

RIASSUNTO

L'Azione C10 del progetto LIFE ARCPROM è stata concepita con l'obiettivo di sviluppare e implementare un sistema di etichettatura per prodotti e servizi che contribuiscono alla conservazione dell'orso, promuovendo così la coesistenza tra uomo e orso in aree caratterizzate da frequenti interazioni e conflitti. L'azione è stata attuata sia in Grecia che in Italia, rispettivamente con riferimento all'orso bruno (*Ursus arctos*) e all'orso bruno marsicano (*Ursus arctos marsicanus*). Sebbene parallele per ambito e finalità, le due strategie nazionali sono state adattate alle specificità socio-economiche e ambientali di ciascun contesto. Attraverso la collaborazione tra enti scientifici e gestionali, il coinvolgimento attivo dei produttori, attività formative e l'utilizzo strategico di strumenti digitali, sono state create due etichette distinte ma complementari: "RESPECT" in Grecia e "Bear-Friendly" in Italia.

In Grecia, l'Azione C10 è stata implementata nei tre Parchi Nazionali partecipanti al progetto. Nella fase preparatoria, è emersa l'esigenza che l'etichetta—essendo una novità nel contesto greco—riflettesse l'obiettivo più ampio della tutela della fauna selvatica e della biodiversità nel suo complesso. Di conseguenza, è stata adottata la denominazione "RESPECT – Etichetta per la Protezione della Fauna Selvatica e della Biodiversità", scelta per la sua chiarezza, comprensibilità internazionale e facilità di comunicazione sia con i consumatori che con i produttori. Questa strategia di branding ha mirato a potenziare la riconoscibilità immediata del marchio, evitare interpretazioni limitative e favorirne la diffusione su scala nazionale.

L'etichetta RESPECT si basa su sei pilastri fondamentali di sostenibilità ambientale: uso efficiente delle risorse naturali, riduzione dei rifiuti, conservazione degli habitat, limitazione dell'uso di sostanze chimiche nocive, prevenzione del disturbo alla fauna selvatica e sensibilizzazione ambientale dei consumatori.

Il processo di certificazione è gestito attraverso la piattaforma digitale www.respect-label.gr, che funge da portale informativo e sistema interattivo per la presentazione e gestione delle domande. Il sito include una descrizione dettagliata dell'etichetta, criteri di assegnazione, manuale d'uso, regolamento, registro dei beneficiari, modulo di domanda online e un sistema di preselezione automatica. La valutazione prevede un'autovalutazione iniziale, la presentazione della documentazione richiesta, una visita in loco e la decisione finale di assegnazione. I soggetti certificati ricevono un Certificato di Conformità valido per tre anni e vengono registrati come beneficiari ufficiali dell'etichetta.

L'implementazione è stata accompagnata da seminari formativi, consultazioni con i produttori e iniziative tematiche organizzate nei tre Parchi Nazionali, con particolare attenzione ai settori dell'apicoltura, dell'agricoltura biologica e dell'agriturismo locale. La campagna di promozione ha incluso la partecipazione a fiere nazionali e internazionali (tra cui la Fiera Internazionale di Salonico), la produzione di materiali informativi e promozionali, comunicati stampa, la gestione di una pagina Facebook dedicata, presentazioni scientifiche e la pubblicazione di un articolo su una rivista peer-reviewed. Alla conclusione dell'azione, erano state certificate 23 imprese: 14 nel Parco Nazionale del Pindo, 5 nel Parco della Catena dei Rodopi e 4 nel Parco delle Prespe.

In Italia, l'Azione C10 è stata implementata nel Parco Nazionale della Maiella (MNP) attraverso lo sviluppo dell'etichetta "Bear-Friendly", ispirata ai risultati dell'Azione A3, che ha analizzato le dinamiche socio-economiche e i conflitti tra uomo e orso a livello locale. L'analisi ha identificato apicoltori e agricoltori come gruppi target prioritari, per il loro duplice ruolo nella mitigazione dei conflitti e nella tutela dell'ecosistema.

Il regolamento dell'etichetta è stato elaborato mediante una metodologia partecipativa, con il coinvolgimento diretto del personale del MNP, di WWF Italia e dei portatori di interesse, attraverso seminari pubblici e consultazioni aperte. L'identità visiva dell'etichetta è stata progettata per garantire chiarezza semantica e attrattiva visiva, mantenendo al contempo un forte legame con il brand LIFE ARCPROM e l'identità territoriale del Parco. È stata sviluppata una palette cromatica a sei colori, utilizzata per la produzione di materiali promozionali e gadget destinati ai produttori partecipanti.

Per garantire un'applicazione efficace, il MNP e WWF hanno promosso un programma formativo dedicato a temi quali la biologia dell'orso marsicano, misure di prevenzione dei danni, pratiche agricole locali, agricoltura biologica e gestione dell'ape autoctona *Apis mellifera ligustica*. Sono stati realizzati quattro seminari tematici e, entro la fine del 2023, sono stati certificati 27 produttori.

La strategia di promozione dell'etichetta Bear-Friendly si è articolata in un piano d'azione in dodici punti, co-progettato con i produttori durante un laboratorio partecipativo. Alla chiusura del progetto, otto delle dodici azioni previste erano già state attuate, incluse la partecipazione a eventi di rilievo, la produzione di brochure e materiali informativi, e la distribuzione di gadget promozionali.

L'Azione C10 si è conclusa con pieno successo in entrambe le nazioni, avendo raggiunto tutti gli obiettivi prefissati, realizzato tutte le attività previste e ottenuto un alto livello di partecipazione e consenso da parte delle comunità locali. In Grecia, la scelta del nome "RESPECT" si è rivelata fondamentale nel rafforzare la potenza comunicativa dell'etichetta e la sua proiezione a livello nazionale. In Italia, l'integrazione territoriale e il coinvolgimento diretto dei produttori hanno reso il marchio "Bear-Friendly" uno strumento pienamente operativo e socialmente legittimato.

Il forte interesse dimostrato da produttori e consumatori in entrambi i paesi evidenzia come l'etichetta non costituisca soltanto uno strumento promozionale, ma rappresenti una piattaforma sostenibile di coesistenza, certificazione e responsabilità ecologica, con concrete prospettive di continuità e ampliamento anche oltre la durata del progetto LIFE ARCPROM.

Introduction

The main objective of Action C10 is to promote human-bear coexistence through the development of a tool that highlights and valorises specific products and/or services, acknowledging their contribution to bear conservation and awarding them the distinctive and appealing “Bear-Friendly” label. The implementation of such an action required a thorough understanding of the socio-economic context, the potential causes of human-bear conflict, and the perception of bears by local communities. These aspects were explored during the implementation of Action A3, both in Greece by the University of Thessaly team, and in Italy by WWF staff, in collaboration with personnel from Majella National Park (MNP).

Additionally, within the framework of Action A3, a comprehensive review was conducted on the implementation of similar labelling schemes in other regions where brown bears are present, with the aim of identifying good practices that could be replicated, including examples from other LIFE projects. This investigation led to two key findings: firstly, that no “Bear-Friendly” certification scheme had been successfully implemented to date in Central Italy; and secondly, that in Greece, a similar initiative was already under development as part of the LIFE AMYBEAR project.

Moreover, the stakeholder analysis carried out during Action A3 in both countries identified beekeepers as the primary target group, as they are among those most economically impacted by bear-related damages. In Italy, in contrast to Greece, livestock farmers experience fewer damages from bears and are traditionally more closely associated with wolf depredation. Consequently, they were not considered a priority target group for Action C10.

The analysis of the bear’s value—particularly its role as a flagship species and indicator of ecosystem health—led the project teams from the University of Thessaly, MNP, and WWF to adopt an innovative approach for the Bear-Friendly label. It was therefore decided that the label should be awarded not only to stakeholders contributing to bear conservation through conflict mitigation, but also to those supporting conservation through the preservation of bear habitats. This ecosystem-based approach resulted in the identification of farmers as a second key target group for Action C10. In Greece, the label’s scope was further expanded to include hospitality providers and ecotourism businesses.

The following sections describe the pathway that led to the establishment and implementation of the Bear-Friendly label, the key characteristics of the scheme, and future perspectives for its development and expansion.

Greece

The establishment of the "RESPECT" Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection label

An initial and significant finding concerning the establishment and implementation of the Bear-Friendly label in Greece was the notable interest demonstrated by local producers and communities in joining the scheme, motivated by the potential to derive added value from their coexistence with the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*). This observation informed a critical strategic decision that substantially shaped the subsequent design and deployment of the initiative. The University of Thessaly, in collaboration with the environmental NGO Callisto and the staff of the Management Authorities of the three National Parks participating in the project, opted to extend implementation across all three Parks. This inclusive approach aimed to mitigate potential perceptions of preferential treatment or local tensions that could arise from restricting the intervention to a single protected area.

A second salient observation concerned the lack of a nationally recognized label in Greece specifically dedicated to the protection of wildlife and biodiversity—particularly one that could be affixed to certified products and services as an endorsement of environmentally responsible practices. Consultations with the national certification authority for agricultural and animal products confirmed that existing Greek regulatory frameworks focus predominantly on product safety and quality, without accounting for the environmental externalities associated with production. In response to this regulatory gap, the Bear-Friendly label was conceptually expanded to reach a broader audience and exert greater influence on the national market. This led to the development of the "RESPECT" label, formally titled Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label. The overarching rationale for this shift was to stimulate policy discourse and institutional engagement, thereby facilitating the gradual integration of such a label into the broader national certification architecture.

Moreover, ensuring the long-term viability of the label at the national level—particularly in the post-LIFE programme context—was identified as a fundamental requirement from the outset. Drawing on lessons learned from similar interventions, notably within the context of previous LIFE-funded projects (e.g., LIFE AMYBEAR), it was concluded that the design of the label must ensure applicability and scalability across all regions in Greece where brown bear populations are extant. This consideration also guided the extension of project activities to encompass virtually all areas of the country where suitable bear habitats are confirmed, as well as regions characterized by recurrent human–large carnivore conflicts, including both brown bears and grey wolves.

The conceptual and visual design of the RESPECT label was guided by the need for semantic clarity and immediate recognizability by the end consumer. Accordingly, the Brown Bear—widely regarded as a flagship species for biodiversity conservation—was retained as the central symbol within the label's graphic identity. The label was intended to be applied: (a) on product packaging for goods meeting the established certification standards; and (b) in printed or digital promotional materials, or signage displayed within business premises, as a formal attestation of environmental compliance.

The development process further entailed the formulation of a "*Label Use Manual*," which systematically outlines all procedural and technical requirements for appropriate label deployment. This document serves as a critical reference tool for interested enterprises. In addition, a comprehensive "*Label Use Regulation*" was drafted, delineating the governance structure and operational conditions for the management and application of the Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label. This regulation specifies the terms under which the label may be displayed on packaging, promotional materials, and advertising for awarded products and services. It also provides detailed guidance on the obligations of the Awarding Body, as well as the responsibilities of certified enterprises in relation to the correct use and communication of the label.



Figure 1. The Bear-Friendly "RESPECT" Label Logo

The Bear-Friendly "RESPECT" Informative and Submission Requests Website

The implementation of the Bear-Friendly "RESPECT" Label across the three National Parks involved in the programme in Greece revealed the need for a permanent, structured channel of communication with local producers and entrepreneurs operating within the intervention zones. These stakeholders frequently sought clarifications regarding the rationale, scope, and procedural requirements of the Label, and in several cases expressed confusion or scepticism concerning its eligibility conditions and overall purpose.

During preparatory stakeholder consultations conducted within the framework of Action A3, multiple participants raised concerns related to potential bias and a lack of transparency in the awarding process. Specific emphasis was placed on the importance of publishing, in an accessible and accountable manner, both the eligibility criteria and the procedural framework governing the allocation of the Label. The aim was to ensure equal access, clarity of expectations, and procedural integrity for all potential beneficiaries.

In response to these findings, the project team at the UTH developed a dedicated online platform designed to serve as the official information and coordination hub for the RESPECT Label (<http://respect-label.gr/>). This platform was conceived not only as a repository of institutional documentation but also as an interactive tool to support transparency, facilitate stakeholder participation, and enhance procedural efficiency. The website includes the following core components:

1. A detailed presentation of the Bear-Friendly "RESPECT" Label's objectives, as well as a clear definition of the eligible producer and business categories to which the Label may be awarded.
2. An official registry of certified stakeholders that have been formally granted the Label and are authorized to legally display it on their product labels and promotional materials.
3. A comprehensive outline of the certification criteria, as stipulated in the Specification Manual issued by the UTH, which serves as the technical and regulatory foundation of the awarding process.
4. A step-by-step overview of the awarding procedure, comprising:
 - (i) Registration of the enterprise within the custom Information System developed for the programme;

- (ii) Submission of an application form, completion of the specification-compliance questionnaire, and upload of all supporting documentation required for technical evaluation;
 - (iii) Desk-based review of the submitted materials by the University of Thessaly, including a structured scoring of compliance with each criterion;
 - (iv) On-site verification through a scheduled audit visit to the business premises;
 - (v) Issuance of a formal awarding decision, including an official Certificate (Figure XX) authorizing the use of the Label on certified products and services;
 - (vi) Execution of a Consent Statement by the applicant, confirming their agreement to undergo periodic compliance monitoring by the University of Thessaly.
5. A digital repository of all official documentation, including the authorized use of the Label and its accompanying indication across certified products and services.
 6. A dynamic news and updates section, providing timely information on outreach events, public awareness activities, and promotional efforts related to the Label and its certified users.
 7. An integrated communication interface, enabling prospective applicants and other interested stakeholders to contact the project implementation team directly for support, clarification, or additional information.

Furthermore, the platform offers the capability for direct application submission, whereby interested parties may complete the required forms and upload relevant evidence in digital format, thus initiating the formal evaluation process. This feature is intended to streamline procedures and ensure equal, efficient access to the certification mechanism for all eligible stakeholders.

Eligibility Requirements and Award Criteria for the Bear-Friendly “RESPECT” Label

The award criteria for the RESPECT Label were structured around six core domains of environmental sustainability: resource efficiency, waste minimization, habitat conservation, reduced use of harmful chemicals, avoidance of disruptive interventions in wildlife, and consumer environmental awareness.

More specifically, the sustainable use of materials and energy was identified as a foundational strategy for reducing the ecological footprint of human activities. Emphasis was placed on improving energy and material efficiency and fostering the transition to renewable energy sources. Simultaneously, waste reduction and sound waste management—through recycling and the adoption of circular economy principles—were considered crucial for the efficient use of natural resources and for minimizing environmental degradation.

Habitat protection emerged as a critical criterion, recognizing that the preservation of natural ecosystems is indispensable for ensuring the survival and well-being of wildlife and for maintaining biodiversity. Similarly, limiting or eliminating the use of environmentally harmful chemicals was deemed essential to avoid pollution of soil, air, and water resources. The avoidance of invasive or harmful interventions in wildlife populations was also defined as a prerequisite for maintaining ecological balance and preventing ecosystem decline.

Lastly, the implementation of public outreach and education activities aimed at raising awareness regarding the environmental implications of consumption choices was considered a significant factor in enhancing environmental literacy and promoting sustainable consumer behaviour.

Assessment Process and Evaluation Mechanism

Through the dedicated digital platform, each interested producer or business operator is invited to complete a structured self-assessment questionnaire, which focuses on the enterprise’s operational practices in relation to wildlife and ecological impact. The design of the questionnaire reflects the extensive scientific expertise of the UTH

in the field of wildlife and biodiversity conservation, as well as insights gained through consultations with local producers and entrepreneurs from the three participating National Parks.

The award requirements are broadly divided into two distinct categories:

Binary-response questions (Yes/No): These establish the fundamental preconditions for eligibility and determine whether the application will proceed to an on-site inspection. Negative or insufficiently justified responses in this section result in automatic disqualification.

Scored-response questions: These relate to the specific measures adopted by the enterprise to protect wildlife and reduce its environmental footprint. Each selected answer corresponds to a numerical value, which contributes to the final cumulative score used in the overall evaluation.

Upon submission of the questionnaire and supporting documentation, applicants receive an automated preliminary notification indicating whether their application has been initially accepted or deemed non-compliant with one or more critical requirements.

On-site Verification and Awarding

Beyond the digital submission, the process includes an on-site audit scheduled in consultation with the applicant. During this visit, the project team from the University of Thessaly verifies the information submitted in the application and conducts a brief interview with the producer or business operator. This interaction also serves to assess the applicant's willingness to provide data that may be used for evaluating the economic impact of the initiative through performance indicators.

Enterprises found to be in full compliance with the Label's specification receive a digital Certificate of Compliance, valid for a period of three years, and are formally registered in the RESPECT scheme.

Key Specification Criteria – “RESPECT” Label
Implementation of environmental protection measures and prohibition of practices that degrade, pollute, or contaminate the natural ecosystem, e.g. waste recycling, use of alternative energy sources, establishment of vegetative buffer zones, conservation of biodiversity in surrounding areas
Application of sustainable soil management or restoration practices
Prohibition of the use of Genetically Modified Organisms, including genetically engineered plant varieties or hybrids
Prohibition of the use of highly toxic or synthetic pesticides
Restrictions on hunting or intentional killing of wild animals
Implementation of sustainable water management practices
Requirements to avoid interference with wildlife feeding, reproduction, mating, or general disturbance (e.g. installation of wildlife-proof waste bins)
Maintenance or restoration of wildlife corridors
Measures to prevent disturbance to wild fauna (e.g. avoidance of road construction in critical wintering habitats)
Installation of alert systems and preventive measures in the event of wildlife encounters



Επιβεβαιώνεται το γνήσιο
Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας

ΒΕΒΑΙΩΣΗ ΑΠΟΝΟΜΗΣ ΣΗΜΑΤΟΣ



Κωδικός Αριθμός ΔΗ-0924-0001/1

Με το παρόν ο Φορέας Απονομής «Εργαστήριο Μικροβιολογίας και Παρασιτολογίας, Τμήμα Κτηνιατρικής, Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας» βεβαιώνει ότι :

η επιχείρηση

ΔΗΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ ΠΡΟΙΟΝΤΑ ΠΡΕΣΠΩΝ Ο Ε

συμμορφώνεται με τις απαιτήσεις της

**«Προδιαγραφής για την απονομή σήματος προστασίας άγριας
ζωής και βιοποικιλότητας»**
(1η Έκδοση)

όσον αφορά στην:

ΠΑΡΑΓΩΓΗ ΠΡΟΪΟΝΤΩΝ: Φασόλια γίγαντας ελέφαντες, Φασόλια πλακέ
μεγαλόσπερμα, Φασόλια μπαμπούνια, Φασόλια μαυρομάτικα, Φασόλια ψιλά, Φακές,
Ρεβίθια, Πιπεριές ψητές, Μαρμελάδα Πιπεριάς, Άλειμμα Πιπεριάς, Καβουρδιστή
πιπεριά

Ημερομηνία έναρξης: **05/09/2024**

Ημερομηνία λήξης: **05/09/2027**

Αριθμός Έκδοσης: **1**



Figure 2. Official Certificate Granting the Right to Use the “RESPECT” Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label

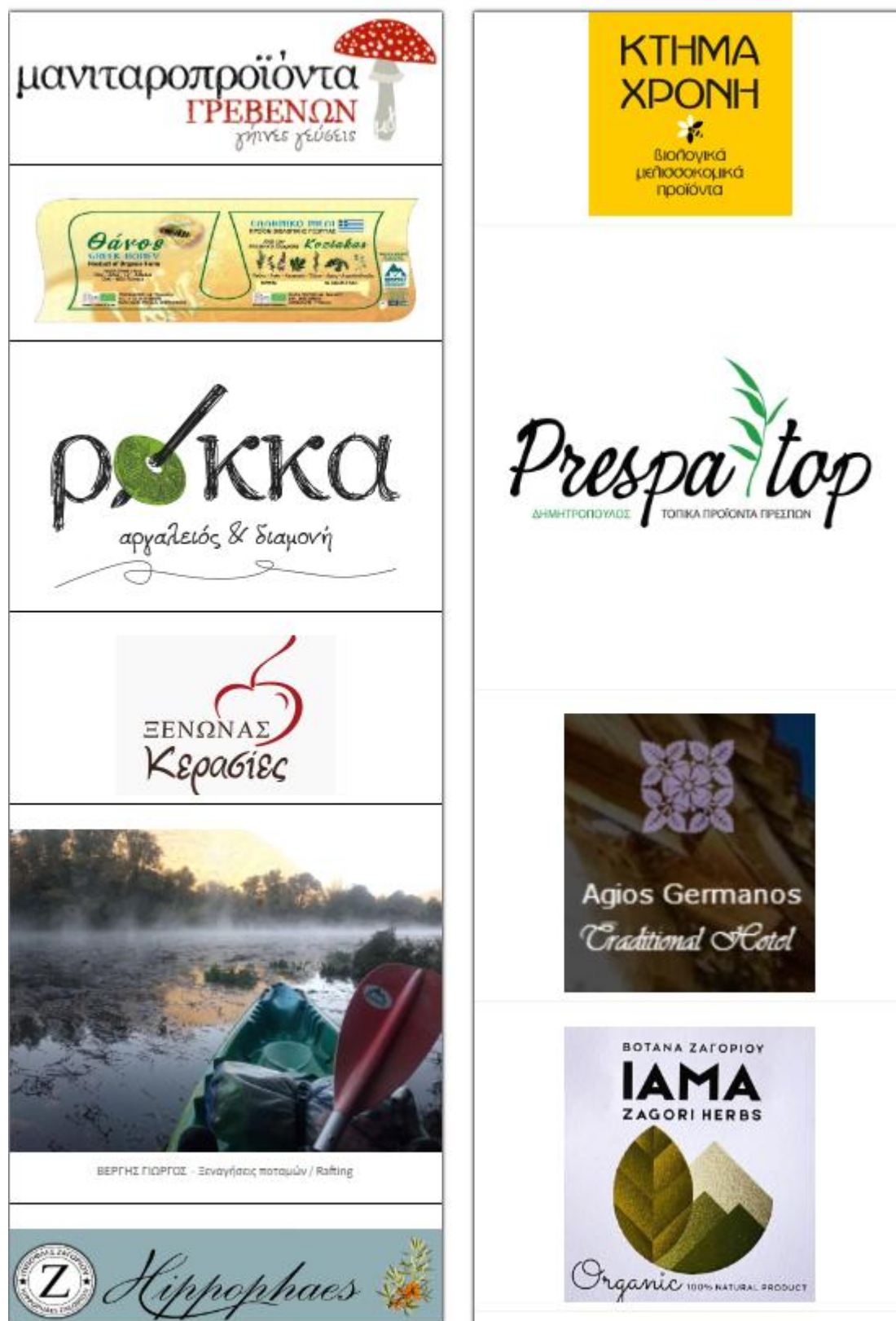


Figure 3. Section of the RESPECT Label website where all officially certified businesses are publicly listed

Training of the Bear-Friendly “RESPECT” Label Beneficiaries

Due to travel restrictions imposed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the initial engagement with producers and business owners was conducted remotely, primarily through phone calls and video conferencing. Public information meetings became possible at a later stage, once the RESPECT Label had entered its implementation phase and the online application platform had been developed and activated. These meetings served to present the application process, explain the scoring system and verification procedures, and clarify how the Label could be used by producers and enterprises operating within the three National Parks. During these workshops, participants were also invited to submit suggestions for improvements to the Label Specification, such as the addition, removal, or modification of specific requirements. These proposals were reviewed and, where appropriate, incorporated by the University of Thessaly.

In addition to presenting the RESPECT Label, each session included an educational lecture. These were delivered by specialists such as veterinarians with expertise in beekeeping or agronomists experienced in organic product certification and control, providing practical knowledge to support sustainable practices. Further information regarding the topics and presentations of the workshops has already been provided in the relevant action’s deliverable (C10. *Minutes of at least 2 Seminars and 2 Workshops per participant*)

Table 1. Training and Awareness-Raising Seminars for Producers and Business Operators within the 3 National Parks

WHEN AND WHERE	PARTICIPANTS	TOPICS	OUTCOME
<p>Saturday, September 30 2023</p> <p>“Ano Pedina Conference Center”</p> <p>Municipality of Zagori N. Pindos National Park</p>	7	<p>Brief presentation of the core objectives of the LIFE ARCPROM project, with emphasis on human–wildlife coexistence and biodiversity protection.</p> <p>Detailed explanation of the RESPECT Label framework, including its rationale, minimum eligibility criteria, and the application, evaluation, and certification process, as managed through the dedicated online platform developed by the UTH.</p> <p>Specialized lecture on common apicultural diseases and guidelines for the sustainable management of beehives and apiaries, aligned with principles of wildlife conservation and environmental responsibility.</p>	<p>Candidate stakeholders initiated the application process for inclusion under the RESPECT Label."</p>

<p>Wednesady, April 10, 2024</p> <p>village of Monodendri local coffee shop</p> <p>Municipality of Zagori N. Pindos National Park</p>	11	<p>Discussion of operational issues encountered with the RESPECT digital platform, along with stakeholder-driven proposals for expanding the label's applicability to a broader range of primary producers beyond beekeepers.</p>	<p>Organic product producers were recognized as eligible beneficiaries under the RESPECT Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label."</p>
<p>Monday, July 20, 2023,</p> <p>"Hall of Kato Tholos" Municipality of Paranesti Rhodope National Park</p>	12	<p>Brief presentation of the core objectives of the LIFE ARCPROM project, with emphasis on human-wildlife coexistence and biodiversity protection.</p> <p>Detailed explanation of the RESPECT Label framework, including its rationale, minimum eligibility criteria, and the application, evaluation, and certification process, as managed through the dedicated online platform developed by the UTH.</p> <p>Specialized lecture on common apicultural diseases and guidelines for the sustainable management of beehives and apiaries, aligned with principles of wildlife conservation and environmental responsibility.</p>	<p>Candidate stakeholders initiated the application process for inclusion under the RESPECT Label."</p>
<p>Thursday, April 4, 2024,</p> <p>"Nessos Hotel" (Respect Label beneficiary)</p> <p>Municipality of Paranesti Rhodope National Park</p>	22	<p>Discussion of operational issues encountered with the RESPECT digital platform, along with stakeholder-driven proposals for expanding the label's applicability to a broader range of primary producers beyond beekeepers.</p>	<p>Organic product producers were recognized as eligible beneficiaries under the RESPECT Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label."</p>
<p>Thursday, April 11, 2024</p> <p>village of Lefkonas local coffee shop</p> <p>Municipality of Prespa Prespa National Park</p>	25	<p>Discussion of operational issues encountered with the RESPECT digital platform, along with stakeholder-driven proposals for expanding the label's applicability to a broader range of primary producers beyond beekeepers.</p>	<p>Bean producers were identified as particularly vulnerable to bear-related damages and were subsequently enrolled under the RESPECT Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label."</p>



Picture 1. Public presentation of the Bear-Friendly "RESPECT" Label held at the village of Kato Tholos, Rhodope Mountain Range NP

An additional capacity-building seminar was conducted within the framework of the project, taking place during the final conference, held in Larissa from 26 to 28 February 2025. The seminar was specifically designed for both Greek and Italian beneficiaries of the Bear-Friendly Label and was titled "Marketing and Communication Strategies for Promoting Wildlife-Friendly Products and Services."

The session was facilitated by two faculty members from the University of Patras, who delivered structured presentations on marketing strategy development and consumer behaviour, with particular emphasis on visitor attitudes toward products and services originating from ecologically sensitive regions.

Following the seminar, a series of bilateral consultations were held with individual producers. These one-on-one sessions focused on tailored guidance regarding the packaging and branding of their products, in alignment with the principles of wildlife-friendly certification.

The “RESPECT” Label Promotion Campaign

The establishment of the RESPECT Label and its dissemination to a wider public audience necessarily required the implementation of a coordinated outreach and communication strategy.

In this context, the UTH undertook a series of targeted dissemination and promotional actions, including:

1. Public presentations of the RESPECT Label during open-access events aimed at engaging local communities, stakeholders and potential beneficiaries.
2. Publication of press releases, which were disseminated through national and regional online news outlets to raise awareness among the broader public.
3. Presentation of the RESPECT Label at an international thematic conference, highlighting its contribution to coexistence with wildlife and sustainable development.
4. Authorship and publication of a peer-reviewed article discussing the design, rationale, and impact of the RESPECT Label in a relevant scientific journal.
5. Production of a short informational and promotional video, introducing the RESPECT Label’s objectives and key features in a format accessible to the general public.
6. Design and distribution of an informational brochure, shared at various events related to wildlife and environmental conservation.
7. Creation and ongoing maintenance of an official Facebook page, serving as the primary digital communication channel for updates, announcements, and public engagement concerning the Label.
8. Organization of a two-day exhibition showcasing all certified products bearing the RESPECT Label, held during the project’s Final Conference.
9. Production and distribution of promotional materials, including branded T-shirts, placemats (*sous-plat*), roll-up banners, display signs featuring the RESPECT Label’s logo, and other visibility tools.

The **first** public event at which the RESPECT Label was formally presented as an innovation developed under the LIFE ARCPROM project was the two-day exhibition “INNOVENT 2024,” which took place in Larissa on 9–10 February 2024. This annual event is hosted by the UTH and serves as a platform for the dissemination of research outcomes, technological advancements, and applied innovations developed across its academic departments. The initiative aims to foster knowledge transfer and engagement between the university and local stakeholders, including representatives of the private sector, public authorities, and civil society.

Within this framework, the RESPECT Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label was introduced as a novel certification tool that promotes environmentally responsible practices among producers operating in areas of high ecological value. The presentation emphasized the label's objectives, core eligibility criteria, and its relevance within the broader context of human–wildlife coexistence, particularly in regions hosting large carnivore populations such as the brown bear.

A key moment during the event was the unveiling of two certified honey products—the first to officially carry the RESPECT Label. These products were developed by beekeepers operating within the administrative boundaries of two of Greece’s most ecologically significant protected areas: the Northern Pindos National Park and the Prespa National Park. Their participation in the scheme served as a tangible example of how traditional rural production can align with biodiversity conservation goals.

In parallel, the first official press release related to the RESPECT Label was published and distributed to local and national media outlets.



Picture 2. Members of the UTH project team showcasing the first two “RESPECT”-labelled honey products at the public innovation event “INNOVENT 2024” in Larissa.

The **second** event during which the RESPECT Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label was publicly presented took place in the form of an open-air gathering centered on mushroom identification and responsible foraging practices. The event was held on 14 April 2024 in the village of Neochori, situated near Lake Plastiras, in a semi-mountainous region of Central Greece that is officially recognized as suitable habitat for the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*). This thematic event attracted a diverse audience, including local residents, nature enthusiasts, producers, and representatives of environmental organizations. While the primary focus was on environmental education and sustainable interaction with forest ecosystems, the project team used the opportunity to introduce the RESPECT Label to a broader audience beyond the immediate scope of the LIFE ARCPROM implementation areas.



Picture 3. Discussion with local producers and community representatives during the Mushroom Festival.

As part of the informal stakeholder engagement activities that followed the main program, several producers from areas not included in the original geographical scope of the project expressed interest in joining the RESPECT certification scheme. These inquiries marked the first documented expression of interest in expanding the applicability of the Label beyond the three designated National Parks (Northern Pindos, Rhodope Mountain Range, and Prespa). However, after internal consultation and strategic consideration by the project's coordination team, it was decided that the expansion of the Label would not proceed at that stage. Priority was given to ensuring robust implementation, follow-up, and visibility within the original project areas, where human–wildlife coexistence challenges are both ecologically significant and politically sensitive. The decision underscored the project's commitment to fulfilling its contractual obligations under the LIFE framework and maintaining focus on the areas where brown bear populations and related conservation pressures are most concentrated. Nevertheless, the discussions initiated during this event provided valuable insights into the growing interest among producers outside the core project areas and demonstrated the potential for future scalability and national-level implementation of the RESPECT Label, should the institutional framework and supporting mechanisms allow for such an expansion in the post-project phase.

The **third** high-profile public event during which the RESPECT Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label was promoted was the Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF), held from 7 to 15 September 2024. As one of Greece's most emblematic national exhibitions, TIF serves as a central hub for the presentation of innovative products, services, and research-driven initiatives, drawing participation from both domestic and international stakeholders. With tens of thousands of visitors annually—including representatives of the government, private sector, academia, and civil society—TIF offers an unparalleled platform for outreach and communication of project outcomes to a wide and diverse audience.

The participation of the RESPECT Label in TIF 2024 marked a significant milestone in the project's dissemination and stakeholder engagement strategy. The presence of the Label at this major event contributed to raising awareness of its core objectives, namely the promotion of environmentally responsible production practices and the reinforcement of coexistence between humans and large carnivores in protected areas.

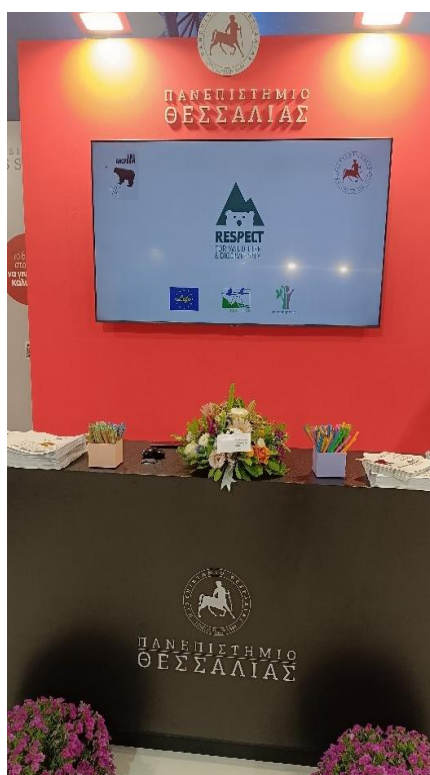
Throughout the exhibition, numerous stakeholders were engaged in discussions about the Label's conceptual foundation, the application and evaluation process, and its potential to add value to local products and services originating from ecologically sensitive regions. Particular attention was given to the alignment of the RESPECT Label with European and national sustainability policies, including biodiversity conservation targets, rural development strategies, and circular economy principles.

To ensure continuous and visible communication throughout the fair, a dedicated audiovisual presentation was developed and displayed on large digital screens across the exhibition space. The presentation featured real-life examples of RESPECT-certified producers—primarily from the three participating National Parks (Northern Pindos, Rhodope Mountain Range, and Prespa)—as well as key messages about the label's contribution to the sustainable development of rural and protected areas. This visual material served as both an informative and promotional tool, enhancing the visibility of the label and increasing recognition among both institutional and consumer audiences.

Additionally, the participation in TIF provided an opportunity for direct networking and consultation with representatives from ministries, environmental NGOs, producer associations, and certification bodies. These interactions are expected to inform the design of future steps toward the institutional integration and potential national scaling-up of the RESPECT Label after the conclusion of the LIFE ARCPROM project.



Picture 4. Professor Charalambos Billinis presenting the objectives and framework of the RESPECT Label to Ms. Zetta Makri, Deputy Minister of Education and Religious Affairs.



Picture 5. RESPECT Label promotional material displayed on exhibition screens during the Thessaloniki International Fair.



Picture 6. Presentation of the "Agios Germanos" Guesthouse, a certified beneficiary of the RESPECT Label.

Following its presence at major national exhibitions, the RESPECT Label was also presented at a regional-level thematic event organized by the Development Agency of the Municipality of Trikala, held on 21 November 2024. The event focused on the theme “Agri-food Products and Local Gastronomy as Pillars for Tourism Attraction and Sustainable Rural Development”, and brought together stakeholders from the fields of agriculture, tourism, food marketing, local governance, and environmental management.

Within this context, the RESPECT Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label was introduced as a pioneering initiative, demonstrating how environmental conservation can be effectively linked with local economic development and the promotion of territorial identity. The presentation emphasized the innovative nature of the Label as a tool that enables producers operating in ecologically sensitive areas—such as national parks and bear habitats—to gain visibility and recognition for their environmentally responsible practices.

The project team from the UTH presented the conceptual basis, certification process, and expected benefits of the RESPECT Label, highlighting its relevance to contemporary market trends, including the growing consumer demand for sustainable, wildlife-friendly, and origin-certified products. Special attention was paid to the synergy between conservation values and gastronomic heritage, demonstrating how protected-area products can contribute to both environmental goals and rural branding strategies.

The participation of the RESPECT Label in this event also served to strengthen horizontal links with regional development actors, opening up new discussions on the integration of the Label into broader local tourism and marketing plans. As such, this event contributed not only to the dissemination of the RESPECT Label at the regional level but also to the strategic dialogue around its potential institutional embedding in future agri-food and tourism development policies.



Picture 7. Professor Charalambos Billinis presenting the objectives and scope of the Bear-Friendly “RESPECT” Label



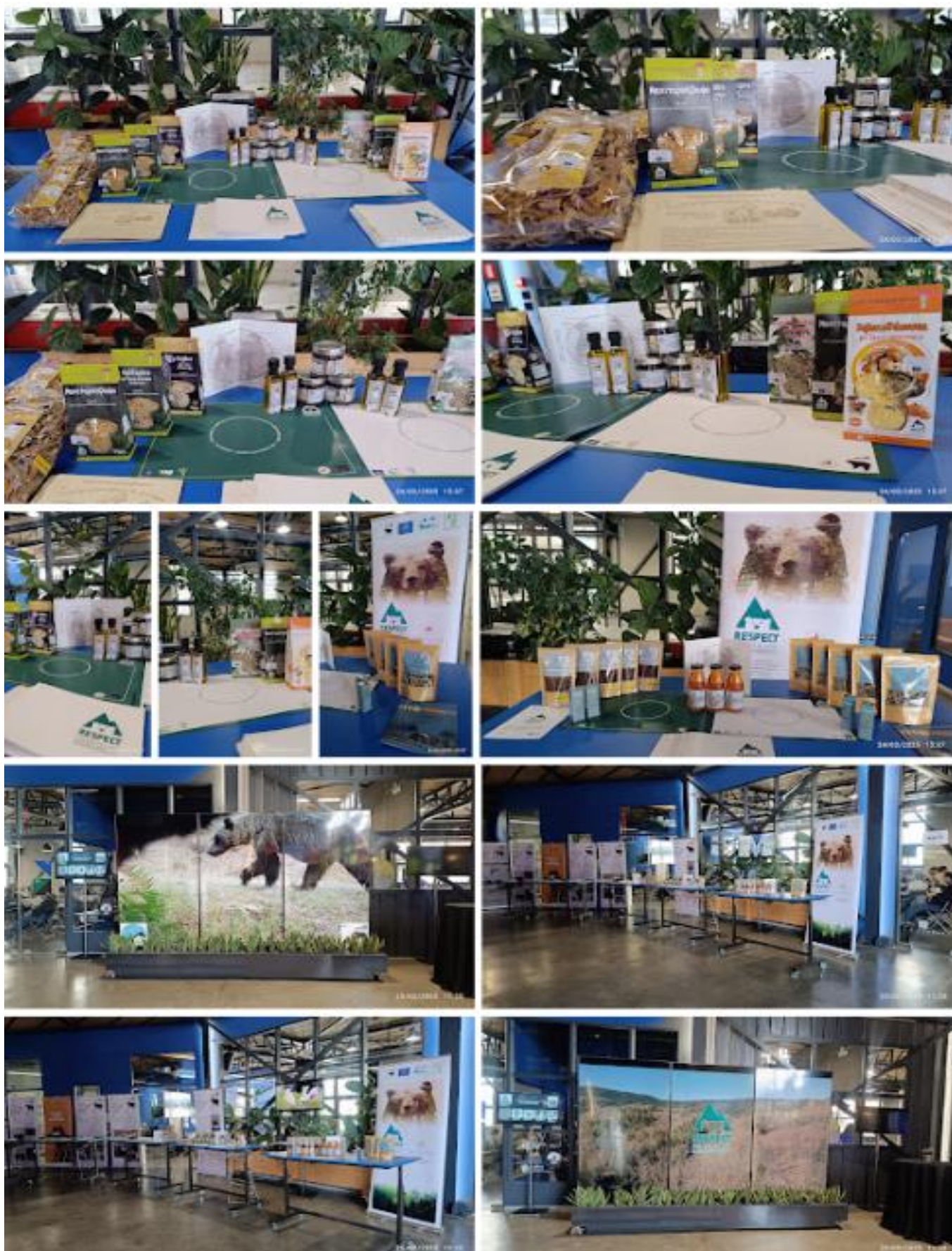
Thereafter, the RESPECT Label was presented during the “Innovent 2025” event, which took place in February 2025. This annual innovation fair, hosted by the University of Thessaly, provides a platform for showcasing applied research, technological advancement, and academic–industry collaboration.

During the event, the project team delivered a detailed update on the progress made in the development and implementation of the RESPECT Label, including key achievements, lessons learned, and planned next steps. The presentation focused on both the operational aspects—such as certification procedures and digital infrastructure—and the broader impacts of the Label in terms of stakeholder engagement, environmental awareness, and sustainable rural development. The event provided a valuable opportunity to re-engage with the local community and entrepreneurial ecosystem, reaffirming the Label’s dual focus on biodiversity protection and the promotion of high-quality, place-based products originating from protected areas.



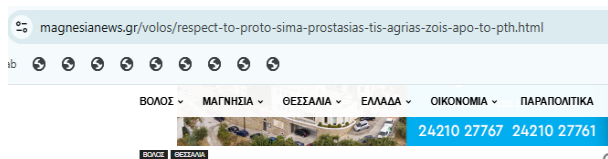
Picture 8. Presentation of the RESPECT Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label to the Minister of Digital Governance

Finally, during the proceedings of the project’s final conference, all certified products bearing the RESPECT Label and currently available on the Greek market were displayed. In parallel, visual presentations highlighted hotel units and other businesses officially recognized as RESPECT Label holders, showcasing the Label’s real-world application across multiple sectors, including agri-food, hospitality, and sustainable tourism.



Picture 9. The exhibition of the "RESPECT" labelled products conducted during the LIFE ARCPROM Final Conference.

Online news media were also used to promote the RESPECT Label, as each major development was covered by a wide range of press outlets.



Respect: Το πρώτο σήμα προστασίας της άγριας ζωής από το ΠΘ

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ΜΟΙΡΑΣΟΥ ΤΟ

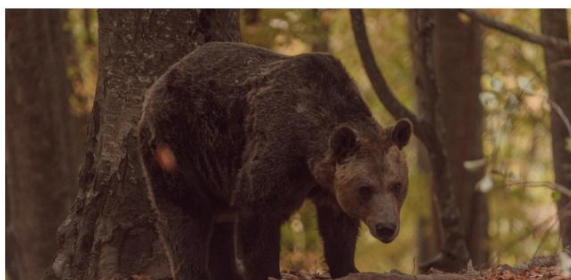


Το Εργαστήριο Μικροβιολογίας και Παρασιτολογίας του Τμήματος Κτηνιατρικής του Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλίας, στο πλαίσιο του ευρωπαϊκού έργου LIFE ARCPROM Improving Human-Bear Coexistence in 4 National parks of South Europe, παρουσιάζει ένα καινοτόμο πρόγραμμα σήμανσης των προϊόντων και υπηρεσιών που διακρίνονται για την προστασία προστασίας της άγριας ζωής και διατήρησης της βιοποικιλότητας.



Το πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας δίνει... «Respect» σε όσους σέβονται εμπράκτως την άγρια ζωή

Το νέο εμπνευσμένο σήμα που σχεδιάστηκε στο πλαίσιο του ευρωπαϊκού έργου LIFE ARCPROM - Πίστα τα κρέτα για να τα αποκτήσεις ένας παραγωγός ή ένας πάροχος υπηρεσιών



- Newstroom

Ένα νέο εμπνευσμένο σήμα για προϊόντα και υπηρεσίες, με τον τίτλο «RESPECT» παρουσιάζεται και κυκλοφορεί ήδη στην αγορά από το Εργαστήριο Μικροβιολογίας και Παρασιτολογίας του Τμήματος Κτηνιατρικής του Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλίας, στο πλαίσιο του ευρωπαϊκού έργου LIFE ARCPROM (<https://lifearcprom.uowm.gr/>).

Το σήμα «RESPECT», όπως άλλωστε δηλώνεται από το όνομά του, αφορά τα σκεπασμένα προς την **άγρια ζωή** και τη **βιοποικιλότητα** και στοχεύει στην ενίσχυση της τοπικής ανάπτυξης με γνώμονα την προστασία του περιβάλλοντος. Το σήμα απευθύνεται σε **παραγωγούς** αγροτικών προϊόντων και **πάρους** υπηρεσιών που απευθύνονται και με συνέπεια εφαρμόζουν μέτρα και κανόνες προστασίας του περιβάλλοντος, επιτρέποντας τη συνύπαρξη των άγριων ζώων και των ανθρώπων εντός ενός υγιούς φυσικού περιβάλλοντος.



Picture 10. Excerpts from press releases and media publications issued to support the promotion of the Bear-Friendly “RESPECT” Label

The conceptual approach, preliminary outcomes, and future merits of the Action were presented during the proceedings of the 11th International Conference on Environmental Management, Engineering, Planning and Economics (CEMEPE), held from 16 to 20 June 2024. Ms. Spentzou, a member of the project team from the University of Thessaly, delivered a presentation titled: “Empowering Environmental Conservation by Designing an Information System for Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label Award”. The presentation outlined the rationale, methodological framework, and key features of the information system developed to support the award process of the RESPECT Label.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM	
Thursday, June 20, 2024 Day 5	
	ROOM A
	Global climate change II
	<i>Chairs: G. Adamos, A. Baldoni</i>
09:15-09:30	Evaluating coastal inundation in a climate change scenario: the case of the Marche Region. <i>A. Baldoni, F. Marini, L. Melito, C. Lorenzoni and M. Brocchini</i>
09:30-09:45	Empowering environmental conservation by designing an information system for wildlife and biodiversity protection label award. <i>M. Spentzou, E. Chatzopoulou, P. Argyraki, A. Giannakopoulos, D. C. Chatzopoulos, A. Economou, C. Laspidou and C. Billinis</i>
09:45-10:00	Citizen science approach to create a biodiversity observatory through the MINKA platform for the Athens metropolitan area. <i>A. E. Ioannou, E. Hatzieleftheriou, K. Ntai, C. Laspidou</i>
10:00-10:15	An Improved FB-Prophet Model for Wheat Production Forecasting in Turkey <i>İ. Bereketli, T. Özcan and A. Kemal Konyalıoğlu</i>
	Special session: NexusNet-COST action network on Water-Energy-Food Nexus
	<i>Chairs: C. Laspidou, D. Kassiteropoulou</i>
10:15-10:30	Advancing organizational aspects of WEF Nexus policy implementation: a particular need for developing countries. <i>S. Živković, T. Radjenović, D. Vasović, Ž. Vranjanac and Ž. Radjenović</i>
10:30-10:45	Comparative analysis of WEF Index in Western Balkan countries and EU developed countries: WEF indicators applicability to public utilities. <i>Ž. Vranjanac, Ž. Radjenović, D. Vasović, S. Živković and T. Radjenović</i>
10:45-11:00	A system dynamics model to assess the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems nexus at transboundary river basin level. <i>N. Mellios, I. Kourtis, M. P. Papadopoulos, V. A. Tsihrintzis and C. Laspidou</i>
11:00-11:15	Exploring the water, energy, food, transport and health Nexus approach to enhance biodiversity resilience under climate change-the pilot case study of Greece. <i>A. E. Ioannou, D. Kassiteropoulou, K. Ziliaskopoulos, C. Laspidou</i>
11:15-11:30	WEF nexus sustainability indicators at urban scale: a systematic review. <i>B. Feizollahbeigi, L. P. Dias, J. Seixas</i>
11:30-11:45	Assessment and mitigation of uncertainty in modelling regional resilience against climate change. <i>D. Kofinas, M. Drews, R. Ludwig, C. Moujan, I. La Jeunesse, G. Papangelis, K. Ziliaskopoulos, E. Athanasopoulou, N. Votsi, N. Cruz Perez, Juan C. Santamarta, G. Adamos, D. Kassiteropoulou, S. Mimis and C. Laspidou</i>
11:45-12:00	The Integration of NbSs in NDCs: towards an Evidence-based Assessment Framework at the EU Level. <i>G. Tseva, A. Spyropoulou, A. Vion Loisel and C. Laspidou</i>

Figure 4. Excerpt is taken from the official program of the 11th International Conference on Environmental Management, Engineering, Planning and Economics, where the RESPECT Label presentation was scheduled.

Likewise, the conceptual approach and the strategic significance of the RESPECT Label in the context of environmental marketing and consumer awareness were published in the peer-reviewed journal “*Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*”. The article, entitled “Development and Implementation of a Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Eco-label: The ‘RESPECT’ Initiative”, explores the role of eco-certification in influencing environmentally responsible consumer behavior and highlights the design and deployment of the Bear-Friendly “RESPECT” Label as a case study of applied environmental policy innovation.

Furthermore, a promotional video developed by the UTH project team (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_LA3aNH7xA) played a pivotal role in communicating the purpose and added value of the Bear-Friendly labelling initiative. The video served as an accessible and engaging communication tool, emphasizing the ecological rationale behind the label and its relevance to both producers and consumers. It was widely disseminated through the project’s official website and social media channels, significantly contributing to outreach and public awareness efforts.

Finally, it is worth noting that throughout the duration of the Action, the University of Thessaly has maintained an official Facebook account under the name of the RESPECT Label (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61556664542574>). This platform has served as an important communication channel, providing regular updates to followers and stakeholders on a range of topics, including public dissemination events, the admission of new certified beneficiaries, and other developments related to the implementation and expansion of the Label.



Figure 5. Sample of outreach material designed for publication on the RESPECT Label's official Facebook page, aimed at increasing public awareness and stakeholder engagement.

The Bear-Friendly “RESPECT” Label Beneficiaries

To date, a total of 23 producers and businesses have been certified under the RESPECT Label, all of whom operate within the three selected NPs. Specifically, 14 entities are active within the Northern Pindos NP, 4 within the Prespa NP, and 5 within the Rhodope Mountain Range NP.

Bear-Friendly “Respect” Grant Holders in North Pindos NP, Greece

N	Name	Type	Year of granting	Village
1.	North Pindos Ecotourism Office	Ecotourism Services	2024	Lavda Village
2.	“Rokka” Guesthouse	Accommodation Facilities	2024	Elafotopos Village
3.	Hotel “Porfyron”	Accommodation Facilities	2024	Ano Pedina Village
4.	“Aggelon Katafygio” Guesthouse	Accommodation Facilities	2024	Asprangeloi Village
5.	“Kerasies” Guesthouse	Accommodation Facilities	2024	Vovoussa Village
6.	“Frida's Berries”, Food Products	Agricultural farm	2024	Skamneli Village
7.	“Wild Mushroom Products”, Food Products	Agricultural farm	2024	Old Grevena – Kozani National Road
8.	“Koziakas” Honey	Apiculture	2024	Milea Village
9.	“Iama Zagori Herbs” Food Products	Apiculture and Agriculture Farm	2024	Asprangeloi Village
10.	Kontogiannis Michalis	Carved wooden structures	2024	Iliochoi Village
11.	“Hippophaes Zagoriou”, Food Products	Agricultural farm	2024	Fragkades Village
12.	“Laista Beans” Food Products	Agricultural farm	2024	Laista Village
13.	“Honey-900”- Honey Diamantopoulos Manolis	Apiculture	2024	Dilofo Village
14.	“Trekking Hellas”	Ecotourism Services	2024	Kleidonia Village



Picture 11. UTH project team members during their visit to “Rokka” Guesthouse, on the occasion of the formal awarding of the RESPECT Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label.

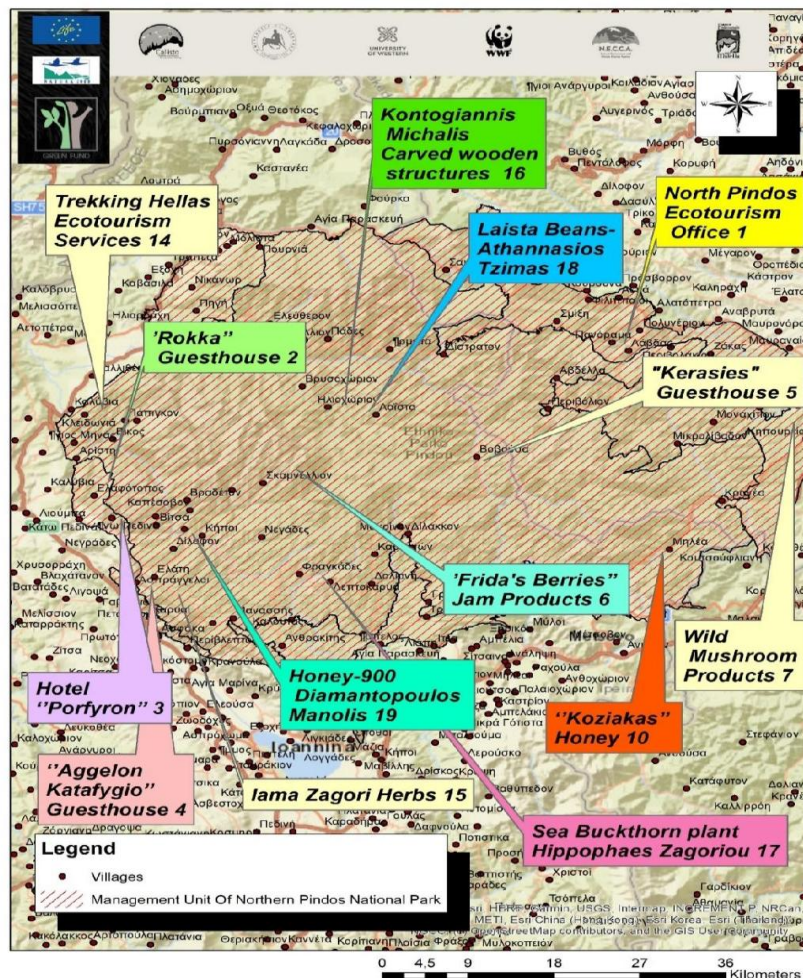


Figure 6. Spatial representation of the producers and entrepreneurs enrolled in the scheme within the boundaries of the North Pindos

Bear-Friendly “Respect” Grant Holders in Prespa NP

N	Name	Type	Year of granting	Village/ National Park
1.	“Ktima Chroni” Honey	Apiculture and Agriculture Farm	2024	Ano Klines Village
2.	Hotel “Agios Germanos”	Accommodation Facilities	2024	Agios Germanos Village
3.	“Prespa Top” Food Products	Agricultural farm	2024	Lefkonas Village
4.	“Vrighis” Guesthouse	Accommodation Facilities	2024	Agios Germanos Village

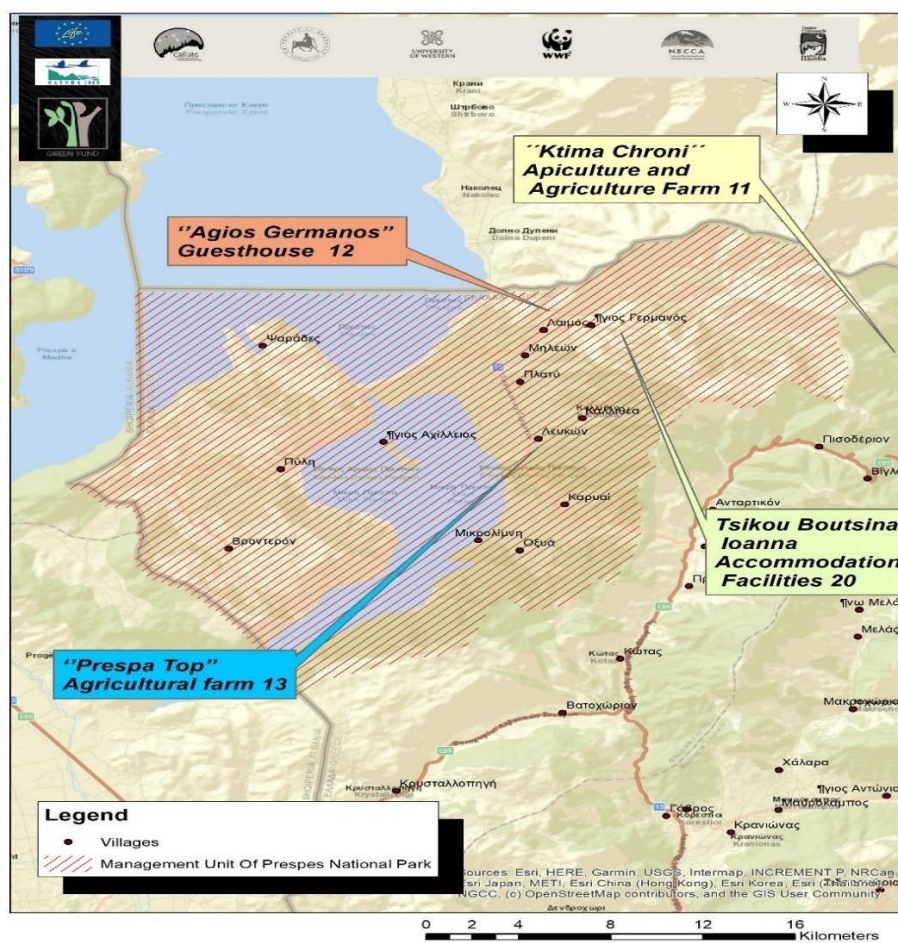


Figure 7. Spatial representation of the producers and entrepreneurs enrolled in the scheme within the boundaries of the Prespa NP

Bear-Friendly “Respect” Grant Holders in Rodopi Mountain-Range NP

N	Name	Type	Year of granting	Village/ National Park
1.	“Forestis” Outdoor Activities	Ecotourism Services	2024	Paranesti Village
2.	“To Meli tis Arkoudas” Honey	Apiculture	2024	Paranesti Village
3.	“Kirgion” Honey - Fondoulakos Michalis	Apiculture	2024	Kyrgia-Kalikarpo Village
4.	“Hotel Nessos”	Accommodation Facilities	2025	Paranesti Village
5.	“Thracian Beekeeping”	Apiculture	2025	Lykodromo, Xanthi



Picture 12. The RESPECT Label logo featured during a canoe-kayak tour operated by “Forestis” Outdoor Activities in the Rhodope Mountain Range National Park.



Figure 7. Spatial representation of the producers and entrepreneurs enrolled in the scheme within the boundaries of the Rhodope Mountain NP



Picture 13. Dr Alexios Giannakopoulos, member of the UTH project team, with Mr. Dimitris Chatzigiannis, owner of 'Frida's Berries', in the village of Skamnelli, Zagori, Northern Pindos, NP

Granted to

Traditional Guesthouse Rokka

Παραδοσιακός Ξενώνας Ρόκκα



Το σήμα προστασίας για την άγρια ζωή και τη βιοποικιλότητα **RESPECT*** απονεμήθηκε στην παρούσα επιχείρηση από το Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος LIFE ARCPROM

RESPECT* label is granted to this accommodation business by University of Thessaly in the context of the LIFE ARCPROM project.



Figure 8. The Sign displayed at the Reception of Hospitality Businesses that are Beneficiaries of the “RESPECT” Label

Maiella National Park, Italy

The path toward the granting of the Bear-Friendly label to producers

The building of the path toward the granting of the Bear-Friendly label was founded on the choice of making this path a participatory process. MNP and WWF agreed on the importance of share the draft of the regulation with the potential beneficiaries in order to build the final version of it together with the beneficiaries themselves, taking into consideration their ideas, concerns and suggestions. In fact, a participatory approach in this kind of situations (drafting of regulations) helps not only draft documents consistent with the reality but also helps to involve beneficiaries as the more they are part of the project the more they are willing to join it. The process that led to the drafting of the final regulation passed thus through the following two steps: involvement of potential beneficiaries and official approval by the Park management board.

Two seminars were dedicated to the involvement of potential beneficiaries and, despite the difficulties generated to the restrictions applied to counter the SARS-CoV2 pandemic, we managed to hold both of them in presence. One was held in the Scientific Headquarter of MNP in Caramanico Terme on November 9th 2021 and the other was held in the MNP Headquarter in Sulmona on April 28th 2022.



Picture 14. MNP staff, WWF staff and potential beneficiaries of the Bear-Friendly label during the first meeting held in the Scientific Headquarter of MNP to present the project and share the draft of the regulations.



Picture 15. Potential beneficiaries preparing to attend the meeting held in the Scientific Headquarter of MNP to present the Bear-Friendly labelling project and share the draft of the regulations.

During the first seminar the Bear-Friendly labelling project was presented to the 20 potential beneficiaries attending the meeting. Participants were then asked to report their comments and were asked to fill-in a questionnaire aimed at assessing their opinions/doubts/interest on the project. Questionnaires were immediately analyzed and results were shared with the participants. All the inputs collected during this meeting were used to improve the draft of the regulation and its new version was delivered to the management board of the Park (Consiglio Direttivo) to ask their opinion and receive the official approval. The first feedback from the Consiglio Direttivo was the request for a modification aimed at improving the consistency of the regulation with the *National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products*. Once made the necessary adjustments, on March 3rd 2022 the regulation was finally approved by the Consiglio Direttivo and on April 28th 2022 it was presented to the potential beneficiaries during a second seminar held in the MNP headquarter in Sulmona. During this meeting the draft of the contracts to be signed was also shared with potential beneficiaries and the draft of the Bear-Friendly logo graphic layout was presented. In addition, the formal process to be followed to grant the Bear Friendly label was explained to the participants.

Table 2. Seminars organized during the participatory process that led to the production of the final regulation for granting the Bear-Friendly label to beekeepers and farmers in the Maiella National Park.

* This number refers only to the potential beneficiaries attending the meeting and excludes the WWF and MNP staff.

TYPE OF EVENT	WHEN AND WHERE	PARTICIPANTS*	TOPICS	OUTCOME
Seminar	9/11/2021 MNP Scientific Headquarter Caramanico Terme	20	Presentation of the Bear-Friendly project, acknowledgement of participant expectations, collection of opinions and suggestions	Improvement of some of the criteria contained in the regulation.
Seminar	28/4/2022 MNP Headquarter Sulmona	10	Presentation of the final version of the regulation, the outline of the contract to be signed and of the first draft of the logo graphic layout. Explanation of the process to be followed to grant the Bear Friendly label.	Approval by participants of the final regulation and of the proposed label granting process.

In April and May, MNP worked on the preparation of a page on his official website where to report all the information on the Bear-Friendly project and all the documents useful to submit the applications (Figure 1).



Figure 9. Page dedicated to the Bear-Friendly label embedded in the official website of the Maiella National Park (<https://www.parcomajella.it/marchio-bear-friendly.htm>).

On June 3rd 2022, the application submission was opened through an official communication to all the potential beneficiaries as well as through the use of social Media. In total, in 2022 and 2023, 27 producers joined the project: 16 beekeepers, 10 agricultural farmers and 1 beekeeper/agricultural farmer. The first 20 producers received the granting during an official and institutional ceremony held, in presence of local media and with an intro of the Abruzzo Region President, at the MNP headquarter on December 19th 2022 (Pictures 16-19). Each beneficiary received a certificate and a Bear-Friendly kit that were delivered by the President of the Maiella National Park and the President of WWF Italy (Picture 19).



Picture 16. The first Bear-Friendly producers together with WWF and MNP representatives during the official and institutional ceremony held in the MNP headquarter on December, 19th 2022.



Picture 17. Interview to the President of the Maiella National Park for the Regional section of the National TV channel "Rai" during the official and institutional ceremony held in the MNP headquarter on December, 19th 2022 to award the first Bear-Friendly producers.



Picture 18. People attending the official ceremony for the granting of the Bear-Friendly label to the first 20 producers held in the Maiella National Park headquarter on December, 19th 2022.



Picture 19. Example of awarding of a Bear-Friendly producer during the official ceremony held on November 19th 2022 in the Maiella National Park headquarter. On the left: each beneficiary received from the President of the Maiella National Park and the President of WWF Italy a certificate and a Bear-Friendly kit. On the right: each Bear-Friendly kit consisted in a Bear-Friendly box with a plate, a T-shirt, a cap, Bear-Friendly stickers, Bear-Friendly labels, the Bear-Friendly leaflet and the LIFE ARCPROM pen drive with the Bear-Friendly logo image files. A roll-up was also separately delivered to each beneficiary.

The 7 producers that joined the project in 2023 officially received the granting during the first training workshop (see below).

The establishment of the Bear-Friendly project was promoted in national and local media in two moments: in occasion of the Parks Day, in spring 2022, to celebrate the application submission opening and on December 2022 when the first producers were granted (Figure 2 and 3). This activity produced over 80 publications in National and Regional newspapers.



Figure 10. Screenshot of the TV news on the Bear-Friendly project transmitted by the Regional branch of the National TV channel Rai (RaiTre) in May 2022 during the Parks Day.



Figure 11. Screenshot of the TV news transmitted by the National TV channel Canale 5 on December 2022 when the first Bear-Friendly producers were granted.

The “Bear-Friendly” logo

The creation of the Bear-Friendly logo graphic layout was a step taken by MNP and WWF taking starting from the idea of creating a logo with 4 key features: 1) it had to be highly related with the LIFE ARCPROM logo, 2) it had to be associated with the Maiella National Park, 3) it had to recall the concepts of the Bear-Friendly project and 3) it had to be catchy. For these reasons, MNP hired a professional studio to create both the logo and the layouts of the main Bear-Friendly gadgets (stickers, roll-up, labels, certificate, plate, poster, T-shirt, cap).

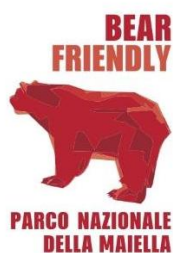
The concept of the logo created is a phrase by the poet Leigh Hunt “Colors are the smiles of nature” and 6 colors were chosen to represent the Bear-Friendly project:



Yellow: You exist in the most unexpected places like the yellow of a flower glimpsed for a moment, from the train window, in a December meadow.
(Fabrizio Caramagna, writer)



On blue summer evenings,
I'll go along the paths,
pricked by the ears,
to trample the tender grass:
dreamy, I will feel the coolness at my feet. I'll
let the wind wash my naked head. *(Arthur Rimbaud, poet)*



I would like to have for each person
the care that red has for poppies.
(Fabrizio Caramagna, writer)



The crystal scattered unexpected
and they grew and they multiplied
the numerous green, green pastures and eyes, green with marine love,
green of bell tower, green thin, for the net, for the seaweed, for the sky, for the
forest the trembling green, for the grapes a green grape.
(Pablo Neruda, poet)



Orange is the morning sun coming through the sky and the color of a burning ember in the middle of a bonfire on the beach.

It's the leaf in autumn, carrots in a vegetable soup on a cold winter day, tulips in spring and ladybugs in a grassy park on a hot summer afternoon.

Orange is life.

It's what is unexpected but beautiful.

(Aly Martinez, writer)



Purple was born one spring day in a lavender field.

He must have searched for a long time for a place like this where the rows go straight towards the horizon as if they were invited to a dance with infinity. *(Fabrizio Caramagna, writer)*

Two black and white versions were also created and a document with all the colors specifications, the font used, all the rules to be used to label products (e.g. minimum size allowed of the logo) and examples of its use, was drafted and delivered to the producers.

Thanks to the fund shift among partners, approved by CINEA in 2022, MNP produced several gadgets to be delivered to producers (Picture 6, 7 and 8).



Picture 20. Gadgets to be delivered to Bear-Friendly producers realized by MNP thanks to the funds shift among partners in 2022.

Specifically, the following gadgets were produced:

- Caps and T-shirts to be worn during events
- A certificate
- A roll-up for to be shown in the selling point and to be brought during fairs/events (Picture 21)
- A metal plate to be hung on producers' selling points/headquarters (Picture 22)
- Stickers
- Small labels for products
- A Bear-Friendly box



Picture 21. Example of a Bear-Friendly roll-up exposed in the structure of a Bear-Friendly beekeeper.



Picture 22. Example of a Bear-Friendly plate installed on the structure of a Bear-Friendly Agricultural Farm.

The quality and quantity of the Bear-Friendly gadgets were highly appreciated by producers and they

enhanced the diffusion of diversified means to make the Bear-Friendly label visibility be the highest possible.

The Bear-Friendly producers

The Bear-Friendly producers of the Maiella National Park are those beekeepers and those agricultural farmers that accomplish the rules reported in the document *Criteria for granting the Bear-Friendly label in the Maiella National Park*.

Beekeepers have to accomplish a total of 7 rules, all mandatory and to be respected at the same time during the validity period of the Agreement:

Rule n.1 - The beekeeper produces honey and other products of the hive within the area of interest identified (Figure 4), relating to the territory of the 39 municipalities of the Park modified on the basis of criteria of geographical continuity and political competence;

Rule n.2- The beekeeper, for the beekeeping stations object of the request for the granting of the *Bear-Friendly* label, is in possession of the certification issued by CREA (or other accredited institute) certifying that the bees belong to the genetic type *Apis mellifera ligustica*.

Rule n.3 - The beekeeper adopts the damage prevention measures approved and recommended by the Park Authority also on the basis of the most updated data on bear presence, and guarantees their constant and correct use with periodic maintenance;

Rule n.4- The beekeeper exhibits and distributes, at his shop or other points of sale of honey and other products from the hive, printed material received from the Park with information on the *Bear-Friendly* label and for raising awareness and education about coexistence with the bears;

Rule n.5- The beekeeper disseminates the digital material addressing the *Bear-Friendly* label and the human-bear coexistence, on the web platforms (website, social media etc.) of his company;

Rule n.6 - The beekeeper exhibits the totem pole (s), *roll up* or other information material provided by the Park Authority for the presentation of the purposes of the *Bear-Friendly* label at fairs or other public events in which he participates voluntarily or at the request of the Park Authority, also organizing product tastings and carrying out awareness and information activities on human-bear coexistence addressed to its clients;

Rule n.7 - The beekeeper undertakes to adhere to commercial and marketing initiatives, promoted by the Park Authority, for the enhancement of the network of companies that have obtained the *Bear-Friendly* label.

Agricultural farmers have to accomplish a total of a total of 7 rules as well, all mandatory and to be respected at the same time during the period of validity of the agreement:

Rule n.1 - The farmer produces within the area of interest identified (Figure 4), relating to territory of the 39 municipalities of the Park modified on the basis of criteria of geographical continuity and political competence.

Rule n.2 - The agricultural company falls into at least one of the following types:

- a) it holds the certification for organic farming pursuant to the EU Agreement 2018/848 and subsequent amendments, or it is in the process of conversion, for any product grown in the area of interest;
- b) it cultivates in the area of interest local agricultural varieties reported in the register of the Maiella National Park and collaborates in the initiatives of the Network of Farmers Guardians of the Park;
- c) cultivates in the area of interest using agricultural production methods with low use of plant protection products in accordance with the provisions of the "National action plan for the sustainable use of plant protection products" (Art. 6 Legislative Decree no. 150 of 14/08/2012) and in the specific guidelines approved by the Interministerial Decree of 10 March 2015 relating to protected natural areas and Natura 2000 sites.
- d) cultivates in the area of interest agricultural products with a protected designation of origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), Traditional Specialties Guaranteed (TSG) referred to in EEC regulations 2081/92 and 2082/92 or similar, recognized by EU, if in the specific regulations of the aforementioned certifications practices are envisaged to favor the protection of the ecosystem and biodiversity;
- e) the production company is equipped with an ISO 14001 or Emas certified environmental management system;
- f) the production company adheres to initiatives promoted by the Park Authority or by other public research bodies that envisage the adoption of improving production techniques aimed at promoting the protection of biodiversity.

Rule n.3 - The farmer undertakes, if necessary, to adopt measures approved by the Park Authority to prevent bear damages and guarantees their constant and correct use with periodic maintenance.

Rule n.4: The farmer exhibits and distributes printed material received from the Park with information on the *Bear-Friendly* label and for raising awareness and education about coexistence with the bears, in at least one of the following ways:

- a) at its own shop;
- b) if the manufacturer does not have its own shop, it undertakes to supply the printed material received by the Park Authority to the third-party company or reseller and ensures that they take care of the exhibition.

Rule n.5: The farmer disseminates the digital material addressing the *Bear-Friendly* label and the human-bear coexistence on its web platforms (website, social media, etc.);

Rule n. 6: The farm exhibits the totem (s), *roll up* or other information material provided by the Park Authority for the presentation of the purposes of the *Bear-Friendly* label at fairs or other public events in which it voluntarily participates or at the request of the Park Authority, also organizing product tastings and carrying out awareness and information activities on human-bear coexistence addressed to its clients.

Rule n. 7: The farmer undertakes to adhere to commercial and marketing initiatives, promoted by the Park Authority, for the enhancement of the network of companies that have obtained the *Bear-Friendly* label.

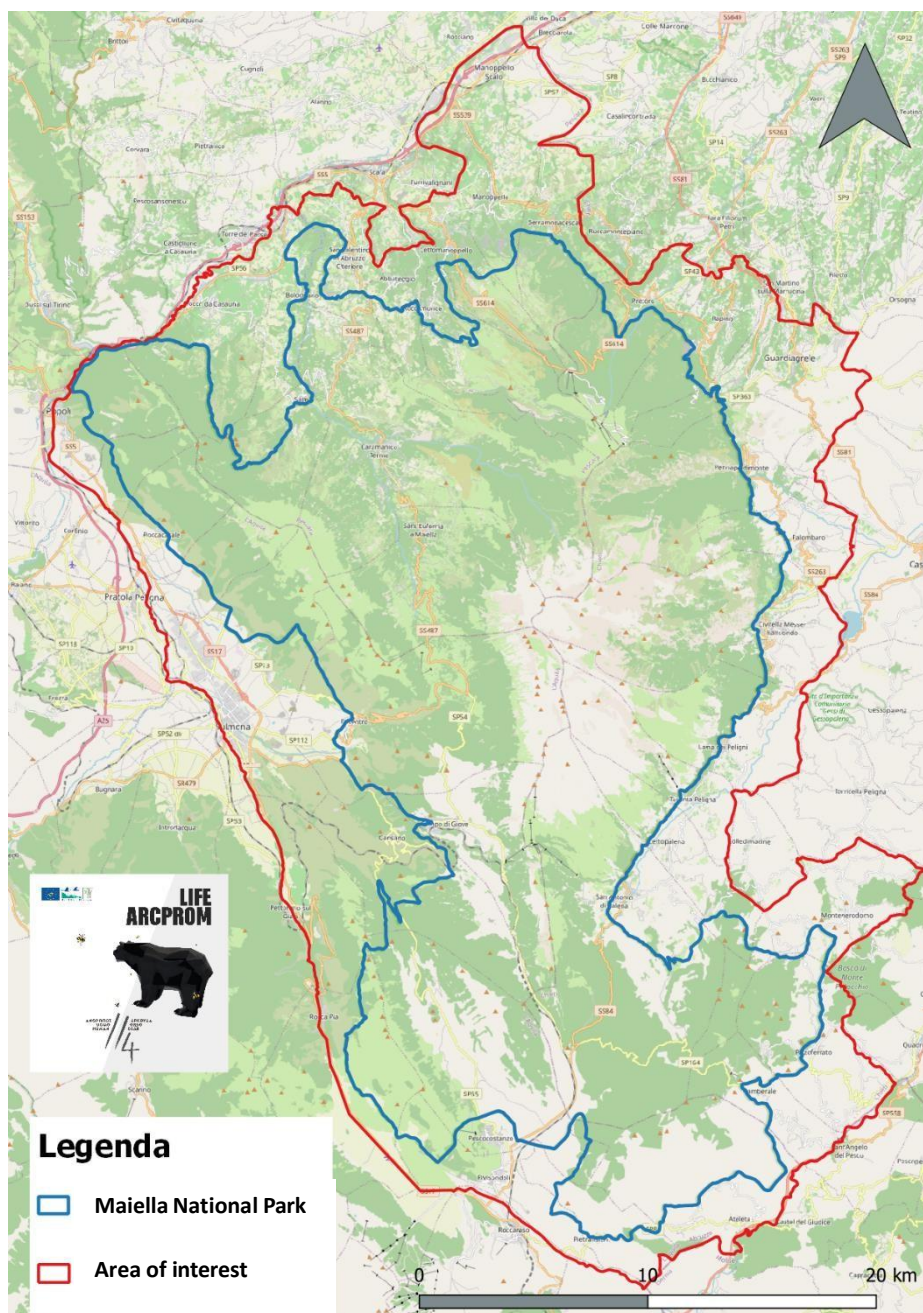


Figure 12. Area of interest identified for the granting of the Bear-Friendly label in MNP. Beekeepers must have their Bear-Friendly beehives inside this area while agricultural farmers must have inside it the whole land cultivated with the Bear-Friendly products.

In order to facilitate the understanding of all the 14 above-reported rules, all of them were clearly explained in the document *Criteria for granting the Bear-Friendly label in the Maiella National Park* and FAQs were also produced as Annex II of the document itself.

The 27 Bear-Friendly producers have their production stations (beehives or cultivated land) distributed in the whole area of interest with 21 municipalities (54%) interested by at least 1 Bear-Friendly production (Figure 5). The municipalities with the highest number of production stations are Bolognano, Lettomanoppello, Roccamorice, S.Valentino in A.C. and Roccamorice and they are all located in the northern portion of the Area of Interest. A total of 66 production stations are present (36 beehive stations and 30 cultivated land) for a mean of 2.4 stations/producer.

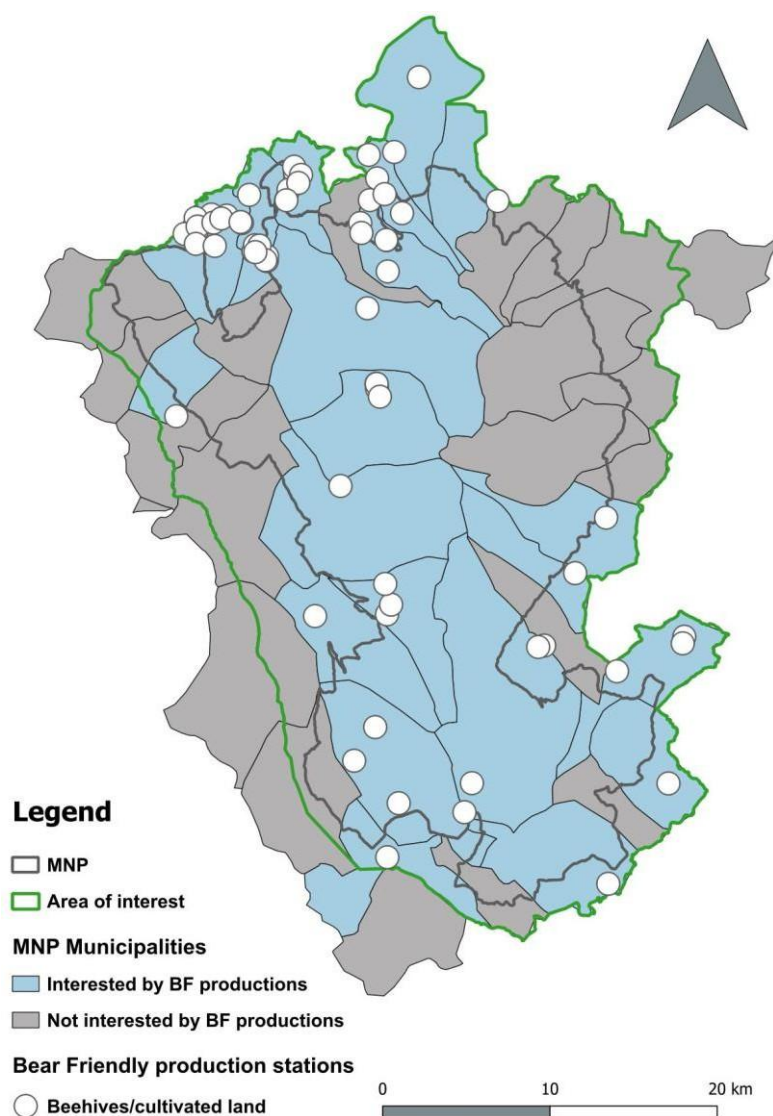


Figure 13. Distribution of the Bear-Friendly productions (i.e. location of the beehives station/cultivated land) in the 39 municipalities included in the Area of interest of Action C10.

In the proposal of Action C10, it was foreseen that the labelling of at least 10 Bear-Friendly products had to be reached. In MNP the inclusion of agricultural farmers allowed to reach more than 70 Bear-Friendly products and this, in turn, highly augmented the visibility of the logo by people and its diffusion in the territory.

Table 2. List of Bear-Friendly producers and corresponding Bear-Friendly products in the Maiella National Park. Beekeepers are pink-shadowed while agricultural farmers are green-shadowed.

N	NAME	TYPE	YEAR OF GRANTING	PRODUCTS TYPE AND NUMBER OF PRODUCTS	
1	Apicoltura Franco Di Cesare	Beekeeper	2022	Honey	1
2	Soc. Coop. Tavola Rotonda	Agricultural Farmer	2022	Local cereals and legumes	7
3	Apicoltura Rattenni	Beekeeper	2022	Honey	1
4	Il tartufo degli Eremi	Beekeeper	2022	Honey	4

N	NAME	TYPE	YEAR OF GRANTING	PRODUCTS TYPE AND NUMBER OF PRODUCTS	
5	Apicoltura Rosalba Spineto	Beekeeper	2022	Honey	1
6	Giradini di Giulio	Agricultural Farmer	2022	organic extra virgin olive oil made from local olives	1
7	Apicoltura Bianco	Beekeeper	2022	Honey and other beehives products	5
8	Tenuta Arabona	Agricultural Farmer	2022	Organic wines, sparkling wines, grape-based products, and organic extra virgin olive oil	5
9	Le Tartufaie	Beekeeper	2022	Honey and other beehives products	3
10	Apicoltura Glam	Beekeeper	2022	Honey	2
11	Abbaprid	Beekeeper	2022	Honey	2
12	Apicoltura Dolci Colline	Beekeeper	2022	Honey	1
13	La Casa del Miele	Beekeeper	2022	Honey	1
14	Apicoltura Colle Salera	Beekeeper	2022	Honey	8
15	Agriturismo La Torretta	Agricultural Farmer	2022	Organic extra virgin olive oil	1
16	Di Michele Carla	Beekeeper	2022	Honey and other beehives products	3
17	Di Nardo Michele	Agricultural Farmer	2022	Local cereals and legumes	5
18	Apicoltura Finocchio	Beekeeper	2022	Honey	1
19	Poderi Lupone	Agricultural Farmer	2022	organic extra virgin olive oil made from local olives	1
20	Apicoltura Le Api di Papà	Beekeeper	2022	Honey	2
21	ADI Apicoltura	Beekeeper	2023	Honey	1
22	Apicoltura Nicolai Lorenzo	Beekeeper	2023	Honey	1
23	Az. Agricola Cantalupo	Beekeeper and Agricultural farmer	2023	Honey and other beehives products; extra virgin olive oil made from local olives	2
24	Az. Agricola La Quercia	Agricultural Farmer	2023	Organic solibam wheat and extra virgin olive oil made from local olives	2
25	Az. Agricola Malfatti Paola	Agricultural Farmer	2023	Organic cereals and extra virgin olive oil made from local olives	4
26	Az. Agriturstica Pietrantica	Agricultural Farmer	2023	Organic local cereals, legumes, and apples	6
27	Olearia Vinicola Orsogna	Agricultural Farmer	2023	Organic wine	1
Total					72



Figure 14. Collage with pictures of the 27 Bear-Friendly producers granted in the Maiella National Park between 2022 and 2023. From top left to bottom right the producers are the following (numbers of Table 2): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 6, 7, 16, 12, 13, 11, 8, 9, 14, 15, 18, 17, 20, 19, 21, 22, 24, 23, 25, 26 and 27.

The individuation of the 27 Bear-Friendly producers was indeed a huge achievement for Action C10 but, in the same time, it was the starting point of a close collaboration between them, MNP and WWF that needed to be built and improved day by day.



Picture 23. Examples of products with the Bear-Friendly label/logo. From top left to bottom right: honey jar, flour packs, extra-virgin olive oil, pearled spelt.

Training of the Bear-Friendly producers

According to the rules established in the regulation for the label granting, Bear-Friendly producers have to help the Park and WWF spread the coexistence message also through the diffusion of information. Training the producers on bear biology and coexistence was thus an essential step for the proper implementation of the regulation produced. Additionally, given the importance to accomplish all the rules and to do it over time in a steady and consistent way, it was equally important to train the producers to help them implement the good practices required in the rules and, in general, the good practices to prevent human- bear conflicts and preserve the bear habitat.

Having this in mind, MNP and WWF implemented one of the most significant task of Action C10: the organization of a training program (Table 3). A total of 4 workshops were organized addressing the following topics:

- A. Apennine brown bear biology and use of e-fences to prevent damages
- B. Cultivation of local varieties, low use of plant protection products, organic cultivation
- C. Organic apiculture and the breeding of the local bee *Apis mellifera ligustica*
- D. Bear-Friendly label marketing and promotion

The first workshop, addressing themes A, was held on June 30th 2023 on the Bear Trail realized in the frame of Action E5; the second workshop addressing themes B was held on December 2nd 2023, in the morning, in the MNP headquarter and was mainly addressed to agricultural farmers; the third workshop was held on December 2nd 2023, in the afternoon, in the MNP headquarter and was mainly addressed to beekeepers; finally, the fourth workshop was held on January 20th 2024 in the MNP headquarter and targeted all the producers categories. The detailed programs of the workshops are reported in Annex VII.

Table 3. Workshops organized in the frame of the training program for Bear-Friendly producers in the Maiella National Park.

*This number refers only to the producers attending the meeting and excludes the WWF and MNP staff.

TYPE OF EVENT	WHEN AND WHERE	PARTICIPANTS*	TOPICS	OUTCOME
Workshop	30/6/2023 Bear Trail	17 from 13 enterprises	Apennine brown bear biology, conservation measures and use of e-fences to prevent damages	Increased knowledge and awareness of participants
Workshop	2/12/2023 (morning) MNP Headquarter Sulmona	22 from 21 enterprises	Cultivation of local varieties, low use of plant protection products, organic cultivation	Increased knowledge of Agricultural Farmers on the good practices required to receive the Bear-Friendly label granting

TYPE OF EVENT	WHEN AND WHERE	PARTICIPANTS*	TOPICS	OUTCOME
Workshop	2/12/2023 (afternoon) MNP Headquarter Sulmona	22 from 21 enterprises	Organic apiculture and the breeding of the local bee <i>Apis mellifera ligustica</i>	Increased knowledge of beekeepers on the topics related to rule n. 2 and on the organic production.
Workshop	21/1/2024 MNP Headquarter Sulmona	17 from 14 enterprises	Bear-Friendly label and marketing promotion	Increased knowledge of producers as well as of MNP and WWF staff on the marketing potentials of the Bear-Friendly logo; drafting of a shared promotion plan; establishment of a “network of BF producers” with the election of a representative.

In order to make the training course reach the highest number of producers possible, not only Bear-Friendly producers were invited but also other producers potentially suitable for the label granting.

The interventions foreseen during the workshops were held not only by MNP and WWF staff but also by external experts who kindly collaborated recognizing the high value of this task to augment producers' awareness on several key issues related to the implementation of good practices. Specifically, during the workshop held on December 2nd 2023, two external experts participated: one expert on organic production and organic labels granting, one expert on the *Apis mellifera ligustica*. The workshop held on January 20th 2024 was held and guided by a professor of the Department of Business Administration of the Roma Tre University of Rome.

Beyond the 4 workshops organized by MNP and WWF in the frame of the LIFE ARCPROM, in 2022, before the granting of the first's producers, Bear-Friendly potential beneficiaries were invited to attend a webinar on the *Apis mellifera ligustica* organized in the frame of the Project BeeSafe by the Monti Sibillini National Park. During the webinar, the LIFE ARCPROM Bear-Friendly project was also presented with the intervention *The Bear-Friendly label and the Apis mellifera ligustica: a story of commitment and responsibility*. The webinar was recorded, was visualized by more than 150 people and is still available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sv4zGkRuyqo&t=27s>.



Picture 25. Explanation of the functioning of an e-fence (left) and example of a lecture (right) during the workshop held on June 30th 2023 along the Bear Trail realized in the frame of Action E5.



Picture 26. Bear-Friendly beneficiaries attending the workshop held on December 2nd 2023 in the Maiella National Park headquarter.



Picture 27. Bear-Friendly beneficiaries attending the workshop held on January 20th 2024 in the Maiella National Park Headquarter.



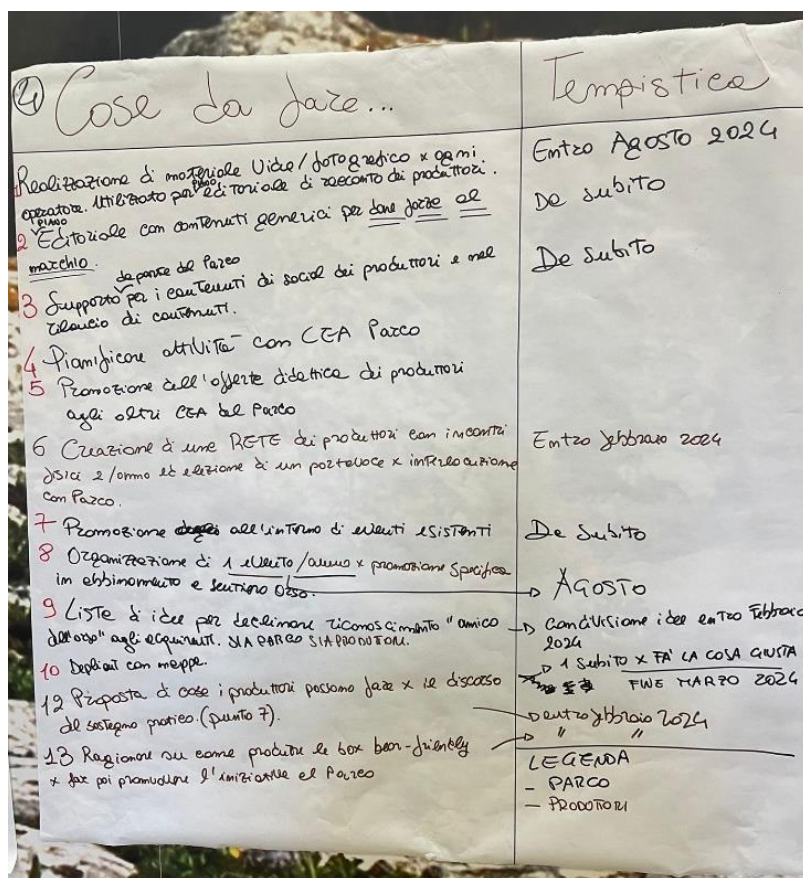
Picture 28. Bear-Friendly producers' consultations during the participatory phase of the workshop held on January 20th 2024 in the Maiella National Park Headquarter.



Picture 29. A Bear-Friendly producer reporting to everybody the outcome of the consultations in her group during the participatory phase of the workshop held on January 20th 2024 in the Maiella National Park Headquarter.

The “Bear-Friendly” logo promotion plan

In the project proposal, in Action C10, the promotion of Bear-Friendly products was centered around the implementation of promotion events for tourists (30 events foreseen) and the production of a general Bear-Friendly leaflet was foreseen. The leaflet was produced by MNP and WWF and was delivered to all the Bear-Friendly producers (see Picture 6 and Picture 9). The promotion during events for tourists was instead a promotion strategy to be evaluated in light of the actual needs/possibilities of the territory. In fact, the promotion and the marketing of any product should always be thoroughly evaluated in light of several factors like the social context, the target of the products seller (e.g. national or international market; locals or tourists etc.), the number of pieces produced and so on. Most importantly, the promotion strategy of any products should always be based on what the producers themselves consider important and successful for the promotion of their products. For this reason, during the last workshop held on January 20th 2024 a participatory session was foreseen. Bear-Friendly producers, after listening to a lecture on the Advertising Value Equivalent of the Apennine brown bear and a lecture on the theory of labels like the Bear-Friendly one, formed consultation groups (Picture 12) to discuss issue related to the building of the present and future promotion plan. After discussing, a representative of each group reported to everybody the outcome of the discussion (Picture 13). Basing on all the inputs received by the producers and on a feasibility analysis made by MNP and WWF staff, a promotion plan was drafted (Picture 14).



Picture 30. Bear-Friendly label promotion plan drafted together with the producers during the workshop held on January 20th 2024 in the Maiella National Park Headquarter. The titles reported in the poster stand for “Things to do” and “timing”.

The plan drafted identified 12 points as the “things to do” by the Park and/or by the producers in the short and long term to promote the Bear-Friendly label in a manner considered as appropriate and effective by both the granters (MNP and WWF) and the granted (the Bear-Friendly producers).

Table 4. Points of the Bear-Friendly label promotion plan and assessment of its implementation progress.

THINGS TO DO	WHO	WHEN (STATUS)
1. Realize professional photos and videos of the Bear-Friendly producers.	MNP	Within August 2024 (achieved)
2. Write an editorial with contents explaining the background of the Bear-Friendly logo to introduce the public to this project.	MNP and WWF	As soon as the photo/video material is ready (in progress)
3. Support the Bear-Friendly producers when they need to produce bear-related contents for the website and the social media channels	MNP	Every time needed (achieved)
4. Plan specific educational activities with the official Centre of Environmental Education (CEA)	MNP	Within spring 2024 (achieved 28/02/2024)

THINGS TO DO	WHO	WHEN (STATUS)
5. Promote producers' educational activities to the official Centre of Environmental Education (CEA)	MNP & BF producers	Within spring 2024 (achieved 28/02/2024)
6. Creation of a producers' network that meets periodically and elects a representative	BF producers	Within February 2024 (achieved)
7. Promotion of Bear-Friendly products during existing events addressing relevant issues.	MNP & BF producers	Immediately (achieved, first event 22-24/03/2024)
8. Organize 1 event/year combined with the Bear Trail specifically dedicated to Bear Friendly producers	MNP & BF producers	Within August 2024 (achieved 03/08/24)
9. Drafting of ideas to grant a "Bear-Friendly prize" to people that frequently buy Bear-Friendly products	MNP & BF producers	Sharing of ideas within February 2024 (in progress)
10. Define what Bear-Friendly producers can possibly do to promote the granting of the "Bear-Friendly prize"	BF producers	Sharing of ideas within February 2024 (in progress)
11. Production of a leaflet with all the Bear-Friendly producers	MNP & BF producers	Within spring 2023 (achieved summer 2023)
12. Define how to create Bear Friendly boxes for customers	BF producers	Sharing of ideas within February 2024 (in progress)

It is worth to underline that the plan drafted also includes things to be done by the producers and not only by the Park/WWF. This is a key feature to make a promotion plan work and it could only be achieved implementing a participatory drafting of the plan itself.

The plan resulted from the meeting, contemplates the promotion during events for tourists as a side activity. It is mentioned only in 2 out of 12 points and this task is relegated to the promotion during existing events and to the organization of just 1 specific event/year. This is the reason why the promotion of the Bear-Friendly products in MNP was implemented (is being implemented) in a different way from what it was foreseen in the proposal. It would have been meaningless and highly ineffective to stick to the proposal when producers themselves were asking for different things.

The choice to draft an *ad hoc* plan and follow the producers' needs, implied for MNP and WWF a huge commitment and additional funds needed to be used to actually implement the tasks foreseen. For example, the production and the printing of the specific Bear-Friendly producers leaflet required the use of MNP funds as well as the realization of professional photos that required the hiring of a professional photographer. Action C10 is one of the actions of the LIFE ARCPROM that require the most a deep long-lasting type of commitment, especially to make the Bear-Friendly label project continue and grow after the project ending. The amount of promotional activities implemented so far witnesses a concrete willing to make the Bear-Friendly label work and last for the next years. In fact, when this report has been written, 8 out of the 12 points foreseen in the plan have been already achieved, also including important steps like the production of the leaflet, the promotion during existing events, the organization of a specific event in August 2024 and the promotion of the Bear-Friendly project to the guides and the subjects involved in the Environmental Education Activity. The specific promotion event was organized during the "coexistence tour", a task yearly implemented by WWF Italy in MNP in the frame of

Action C6 while the promotion of the Bear-Friendly producers during existing events was implemented participating to high-profile events like the National fair “Fà la cosa giusta” (Do the right thing) held in Milan on March 22nd-24th 2024 (Picture 15) and during the Abruzzo most important fair dedicated to honey “Tornareccio Regina di Miele 2024”, held in Tornareccio (CH) on September 8th, 2024.



Picture 31. MNP staff and Bear-Friendly producers participating at the National fair “fà la cosa giusta” held in Milan on March 22nd – 24th 2024.

The producers network creation established in point 6 of the plan is an unexpected and very welcomed outcome of the plan drafting. This action taken by the Bear-Friendly producers highly contributed to strengthen the Bear-Friendly project, favoring the group cohesion and, ultimately, favoring the probability of success of the project. A group of producers that talk, propose ideas, work together, concretely help creating a solid reality of a Bear-Friendly network in the territory.

Final considerations

The objectives set for Action C10 were fully and successfully achieved across all four National Parks involved in the project—Northern Pindos, Prespa, and Rhodope Mountains in Greece, as well as MNP in Italy.

This success is primarily attributed to three key strategic decisions:

1. The decision to invest substantial additional time and effort—beyond what was originally foreseen—in the preparatory Action A3.
2. The adoption of a participatory approach in drafting both the regulation and the promotional plan.
3. The application of fair and impartial procedures, uniformly implemented for all applicants, which helped avoid conflicts with local communities.

The outcomes of Action C10 are significant not only within the framework of the LIFE ARCPROM project but also on a broader scale, both in Greece and Italy.

In Greece, producers and entrepreneurs beyond the three initially participating National Parks have already submitted requests to join the initiative, indicating strong potential for replication. Notably, the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency has formally recognized the creation of a new certification label related to environmental protection as a national priority. This label will be awarded to producers and entrepreneurs across the country. In this context, the pilot implementation of Action C10 in Greece is rightly considered a success.

The UTH's collaboration with the *"RESPECT"* label awarded producers and entrepreneurs will be continued beyond the project's conclusion. UTH has committed to providing ongoing educational, financial, and administrative support to help beneficiaries maintain and strengthen their certification. Additionally, a formal association of *"RESPECT"* label holders is already being established. This association will foster mutual support among producers, facilitate access to new markets, and allow beneficiaries to manage future certification applications. At the request of the producers themselves, UTH will also play an active role in ensuring compliance with the necessary conditions, maintaining impartiality, and overseeing the proper management of the *"RESPECT"* label.

In MNP, the level of producer engagement achieved through Action C10 was unprecedented—both in terms of participation and the depth of involvement. While this success stems from the aforementioned strategies, two unique aspects of the Bear-Friendly label also played a crucial role:

1. The use of the bear as the symbol of the certification.
2. The innovative ecosystem-based approach that the label represents.

The Bear-Friendly label is awarded to producers who already implement a range of environmentally sustainable practices—such as organic farming, preservation of native bee species, reduced use of agrochemicals, and protection of agrobiodiversity—not for profit, but out of principle and ecological awareness. For these producers, the Bear-Friendly label serves as recognition and reward. Having the bear—an iconic symbol of Abruzzo's cultural and natural heritage—represent their work was regarded as a deeply meaningful honor.

The success of Action C10 is not only a major milestone but also a long-term commitment for both MNP and WWF. Building lasting relationships with producers who identify with and support the initiative requires ongoing investment to sustain and expand the visibility and impact of the Bear-Friendly label. Although much has been

achieved in aligning the label with producer identity, further work is needed to communicate its value to consumers and to build a strong market presence for Bear-Friendly products.

Initial steps toward this goal were taken during the LIFE ARCPROM project; however, it is essential to reinforce these actions during the post-LIFE phase and in the years ahead. The foundational work completed in Action A3 will guide the next steps. MNP and WWF have already explored strategies to further develop the Bear-Friendly initiative, including extending the label to other categories such as restaurants and tourist guides. Additional proposals include launching consumer reward programs and building promotional networks for Bear-Friendly products.

Producers themselves will continue to play an active role in this development. A Bear-Friendly Producers Network has already emerged organically, with a representative elected to act as a liaison between MNP, WWF, and the producers. This network will be crucial for maintaining collaboration and driving continued growth.

In summary, Action C10 successfully led to the creation of a certification label that:

1. Reflects the identity of environmentally responsible producers.
2. Enables consumers to choose products that support ecosystems and wildlife, especially bear conservation.
3. Supports MNP and WWF in raising public awareness of the Apennine brown bear and the steps necessary for its protection.
4. Promotes the perception of the bear as a respectful and valuable marketing symbol—without encouraging potentially harmful practices (e.g., unsafe wildlife tourism). This positive shift in public perception will improve acceptance of the species and contribute directly to its long-term conservation.
5. Helps preserve biodiversity: being the bear an umbrella species, any rule that helps preserve the bear's habitats also helps other less attractive wildlife species that share the same natural space with it.
6. In Greece, action C.10 triggered the involvement of State Agencies and is expected to led to significant additions within the national labelling system for products and services that are wildlife- and environmentally-friendly.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I	User Manual for the Bear-Friendly “RESPECT” Label – Intended for Certified Beneficiaries
ANNEX II	Structure of the Questionnaire to Be Completed by Label Applicants
ANNEX III	Press Release
ANNEX IV	Presentation of the Label at the 11th International Conference on Environmental Management, Engineering, Planning and Economics
ANNEX V	Publication in the <i>Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development</i>
ANNEX VI	Bear-Friendly “RESPECT” Leaflet
ANNEX VII	Detailed Programs of the Workshops for Training Bear-Friendly Producers in MNP
ANNEX VIII	Layout of the Generic Bear-Friendly Leaflet Produced by MNP and WWF

ANNEX I – User Manual for the Bear-Friendly “RESPECT” Label – Intended for Certified Beneficiaries



intro

Το σήμα RESPECT® συμβολίζει την προστασία της άγριας ζωής και της βιοποικιλότητας, βοηθώντας τους καταναλωτές να επιλέγουν προϊόντα και υπηρεσίες που ταιριάζουν με τις περιβαλλοντικές αξίες τους.

Τα κριτήρια για την απονομή του σήματος προστασίας άγριας ζωής και βιοποικιλότητας (RESPECT®) περιλαμβάνονται στην ειδική προδιαγραφή που έχει εκδοθεί από το Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας (www.respect-label.gr).

Το σήμα RESPECT® δύναται να χρησιμοποιηθεί σε προϊόντα φυτικής ή ζωικής προέλευσης καθώς και σε υπηρεσίες αγροτουρισμού, φιλοξενίας (ξενοδοχεία), δραστηριοτήτων αναψυχής κ.α.



RESPECT

Η έννοια σεβασμού στο περιβάλλον με σκοπό την ομαλή συνύπαρξη του ανθρώπου με την άγρια ζωή και τη βιοποικιλότητα. Το υπό προστασία οικοσύστημα, το οποίο χάρη στο σεβασμό και τη φροντίδα παραμένει ανεπηρέαστο, ισορροπημένο και αρμονικό. Μέσα σε αυτό αναπτύσσεται ιδανικά η άγρια ζωή και η βιοποικιλότητα.



το Tagline (επεξήγηση)

Η επεξήγηση γράφεται στην αγγλική γλώσσα και περιλαμβάνει τις λέξεις for Wild Life & Biodiversity, οι οποίες σε συνδυασμό με το logo "RESPECT" σχηματίζουν την πρόταση:

RESPECT FOR WILD LIFE & BIODIVERSITY



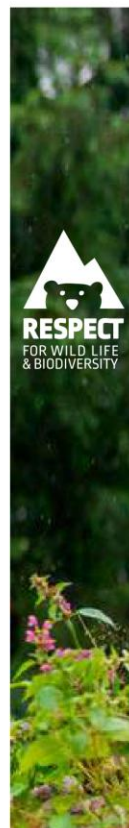
το σύμβολο



Αφαιρετική σιλουέτα κεφαλιού αρκούδας μπροστά από σχήμα βουνών.
Η αρκούδα συμβολίζει την άγρια ζωή και τα βουνά, τη βιοποικιλότητα.



το σήμα “RESPECT®”



Το σήμα στην πλήρη ανάπτυξή του.



Βασική σχεδίαση





Το σήμα σε ελαχιστοποιημένη ανάπτυξη.



Βασική σχεδίαση



Παραλλαγή 1, με το βάρος αριστερά
(χρησιμοποιείται στις περιπτώσεις όπου
δεν υπάρχει διαθέσιμο επαρκές ύψος).



παραλλαγές





Παραλλαγή 2, με το βάρος δεξιά
(χρησιμοποιείται στις περιπτώσεις όπου
δεν υπάρχει διαθέσιμο επαρκές ύψος).



παραλλαγές

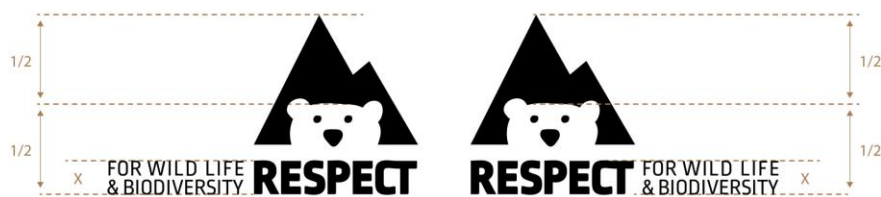


Οι βασικές αναλογίες του σήματος στηρίζονται σε απλούς λόγους του 1/2 και 1/6.



δομή

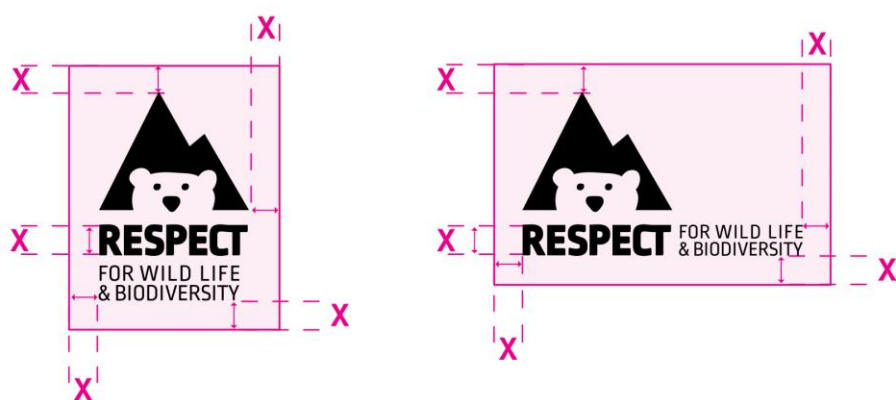
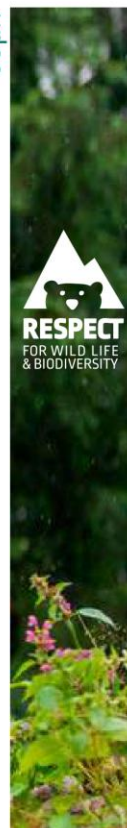




Στην οριζόντια ανάπτυξη του σήματος, το ύψος της επεξήγησης (tag line) είναι ίσο με το ύψος του λογότυπου.



δομή



Σε κάθε εφαρμογή του, το σήμα RESPECT®, πρέπει να έχει περιμετρικά κενό χώρο ίσο με το ύψος του γράμματος "R" του λογότυπου.



κενό περιθώριο



Κύριο χρωματικό



Pantone 562 C

C 90%
M 30%
Y 60%
K 20%

Hex : #006f62

Rgb : rgb(0,111,98)



κύριο χρωματικό



κύριο χρωματικό





Σε εφαρμογές που έχουν λευκό ή ανοιχτόχρωμο φόντο, το σήμα εφαρμόζεται θετικό, διατηρώντας το βασικό χρωματικό του.



σε λευκό ή ανοιχτόχρωμο φόντο



Στις περιπτώσεις όπου υπάρχει ενδιάμεση απόχρωση φόντο και το σήμα δεν διακρίνεται καλά στο βασικό χρωματικό του ή στο αρνητικό - λευκό του, μπορεί να εκτυπωθεί σε μαύρο χρώμα.



σε ενδιάμεσο φόντο





Σε εφαρμογές με σκούρο φόντο, το σήμα εφαρμόζεται λευκό- αρνητικό.



σε σκούρο φόντο



μονοχρωμία



Χρωματική αλλαγή επιτρέπεται μόνο σε ασπρόμαυρες ή μονόχρωμες εφαρμογές. Στις περιπτώσεις αυτές το σήμα μπορεί να εκτυπωθεί με το μοναδικό χρώμα της εκτύπωσης. Μονόχρωμες επίσης, είναι οι περιπτώσεις της θερμotypίας-χρυσotypίας, πυρογραφίας, αναγλυφotypίας κλπ, όταν δεν συνοδεύονται από εκτύπωση άλλων χρωμάτων.

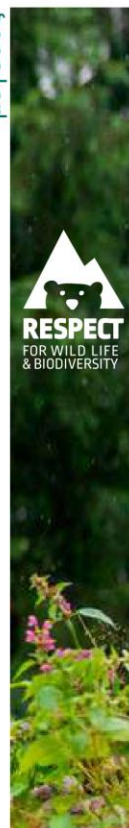




Το σήμα RESPECT® μπορεί να εκτυπωθεί σε οποιαδήποτε διάσταση.
 Το ελάχιστο επιτρεπτό μέγεθος όμως είναι σε πλάτος 1,3 cm. Σε πολύ μικρές συσκευασίες μπορεί να χρησιμοποιηθεί η ελαχιστοποιημένη σχεδίασή του σε πλάτος 1 cm.



μέγεθος



παραδείγματα χρήσης του σήματος





Το σήμα RESPECT® απευθύνεται σε ένα ιδιαίτερα ευαισθητοποιημένο καταναλωτικό κοινό. Για τον λόγο αυτό συνιστάται η τοποθέτησή του στην κύρια όψη της επισήμανσης προϊόντων ή επιγραφών.

Ενδεικτική θέση είναι κάτω δεξιά ή κάτω αριστερά στην κύρια όψη.

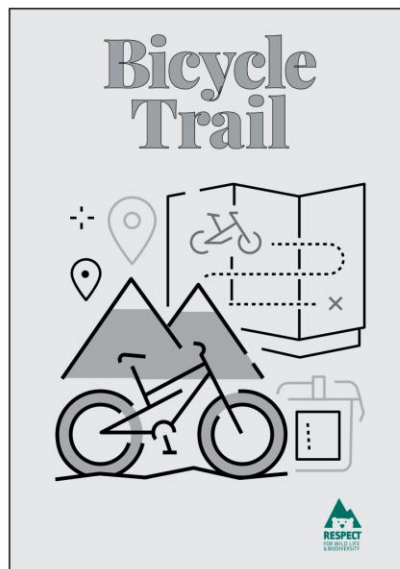
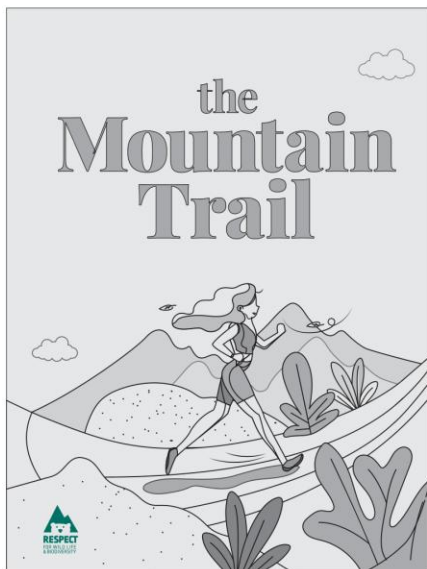


τοποθέτηση σε προϊόντα

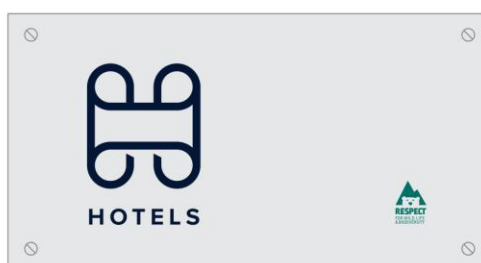
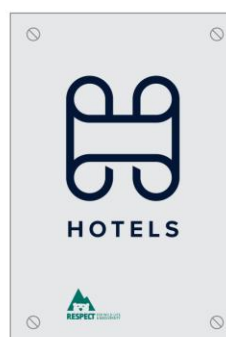
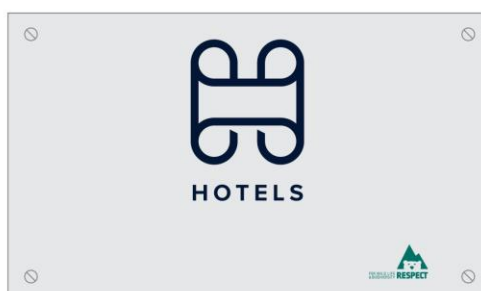
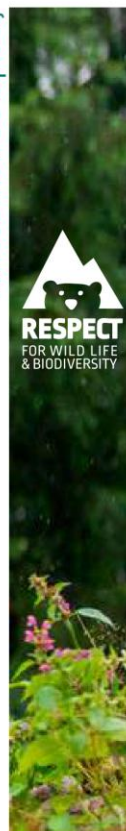


τοποθέτηση σε έντυπα





τοποθέτηση σε αφίσες

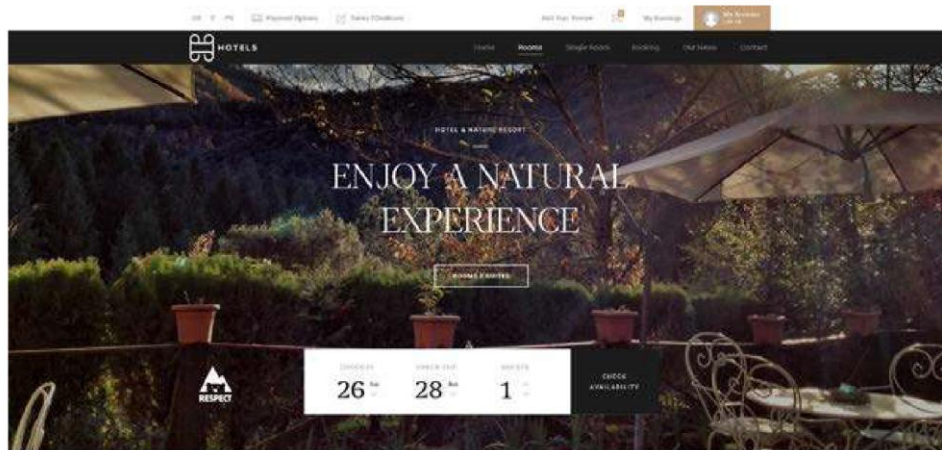


τοποθέτηση σε επιγραφή





τοποθέτηση σε επιγραφή



τοποθέτηση σε web site





Δεν επιτρέπεται
καμία προσθήκη
γύρω από το σήμα.



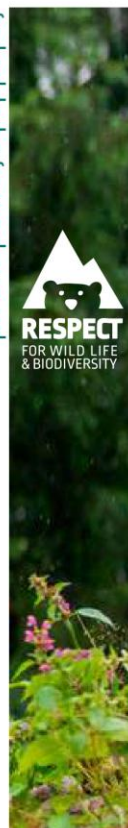
Δεν επιτρέπεται
καμία προσθήκη στο
εικαστικό ή λεκτικό
μέρος του σήματος.



Δεν επιτρέπεται
οποιαδήποτε
τροποποίηση του
σήματος.



μη επιτρεπές εφαρμογές



Δεν επιτρέπεται
η αλλαγή του
χρώματος
του σήματος
(εκτός από την
περίπτωση
μονοχρωμίας).



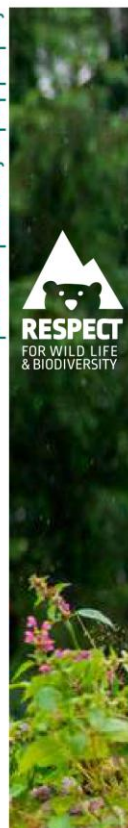
Δεν επιτρέπεται η
χρήση εφέ.



Δεν επιτρέπεται η
χρήση του σήματος
με διαφάνεια.



μη επιτρεπές εφαρμογές





Δεν επιτρέπεται
η παραμόρφωση
του σήματος.



Δεν επιτρέπεται
η χρήση στοιχείων
του σήματος
ως διακοσμητικά.



Δεν επιτρέπεται
η τροποποίηση
του σχήματος
του σήματος.



μη επιτρεπτές εφαρμογές



ANNEX II – Structure of the Questionnaire to Be Completed by Label Applicants

Requirement	Compliance Criteria / Actions	Required Documentation
Basic Requirements		
Are the legal obligations concerning the operation of the business fulfilled?	1.Operation notification number 2. Operating license	Proof of notification submission or reference to license number
Does the business comply with hygiene and product safety requirements in accordance with applicable legislation?	The HACCP plan includes the controlled activities	HACCP plan (issue date, version number)
Does the business hold a valid food safety management certificate according to ISO 22000?	Valid ISO 22000 certificate issued by an accredited certification body for the specific standard. IFS, BRC, FSSC 22000 certificates are also accepted.	1.ISO 22000 or equivalent recognized certificate with issue/expiry date 2.Reference to the certification body
Facilities & Equipment		
Does the business document its exact location and maintain a record describing the facilities and equipment used in production/operations?	The business must: 1. Describe its location by recording address and geographic coordinates 2. Maintain a record of the facilities and equipment used in production 3. Describe the services offered	1.Description of the location (address and geographic coordinates) 2.Record describing facilities 3.Brief description of the services offered
Does the business have appropriate signage in areas where RESPECT specification requirements are applied?	The business must place signage in areas to document and communicate the implementation of wildlife and biodiversity protection rules	Photograph of signage or required items in paragraphs
Production or Operational Activities		
Do the business's production activities, operations, or facilities hinder wildlife feeding, reproduction, passage, or cause disturbance?	The business must ensure that no harmful methods (e.g. baits, traps) are used to deter or remove wild animals from the operation areas	Written commitment
Does the business apply the requirements of this specification to all products/services produced/provided at the same facility/location?	The business must apply the requirements to all its products/services at the same facility	Detailed reference to products/services per facility/location

Does the business have a system for notifying and preventing wild animals from approaching?	Select actions from a list: -lighting - noise devices -camera surveillance - guard animals -photoelectric cells to detect wild animals at dangerous points -alarm covering environment - reporting to the awarding body and relevant authorities in case of wild animal appearance -electrified fences -special waste bins to prevent wild animal approach -other action	1.Proof of purchase of related materials 2. Photographs
Does the business describe all production/operation stages and the processes carried out under its responsibility and/or subcontracted?	The business must: 1.Maintain a process flow diagram showing all stages of product/service production. 2. Mention its subcontractors.	1.Process flow diagram 2.List of subcontractors
a) Does the business ensure the implementation of measures for the protection of the environment where its production or operational activities take place, avoiding methods or practices that degrade, pollute or contaminate the natural ecosystem and the products produced? b) Does the business choose actions or preventive measures that contribute to the protection of wildlife and biodiversity, benefiting both the natural environment and its economic viability?	Selection of actions from the dropdown list: -Placement of animal-proof garbage bins -Fencing of waste collection area -Maintenance of greenery/biodiversity in the surrounding area -Creation of plant hedges -Locked storage of animal feed/medicines and other items that may attract wildlife -Application of organic farming -Implementation of Integrated Management -Implementation of environmental management system standards -Sustainable soil management/restoration -Sustainable water management -Waste/wastewater management without environmental burden -Proper disposal of empty pesticide/veterinary medicine containers -Use of non-chemical substances for plant/animal health -Recycling of waste -Use of alternative energy sources -Fencing of animal enclosures to prevent wildlife access -Use of labelled products in catering services -Measures to prevent forest fires -Measures to avoid disturbing wildlife	1. Proof of purchase of relevant materials/equipment 2. Maintenance work 3. Certificate of organic farming/AGRO 2/ISO 45000, etc. 4. Photos

Are measures taken for the safe storage, protection, or removal of products or items that may attract wild animals?	The business must describe: -The measures for the storage and safeguarding of products or items that may attract wildlife -The method of waste/wastewater management	Description of protection and storage measures for products or items
Does the business ensure the creation and maintenance of appropriate fencing for its facilities and surrounding area to prevent wildlife approach, thus avoiding injuries, movement disruption, or animal entrapment?	Documentation of the purchase and installation of fencing around the entire facilities, with emphasis on dangerous spots regarding wildlife access	Proof of purchase and installation of fencing
In the case of agricultural production, does the business avoid using genetically modified plant varieties or hybrids?	The business must possess a laboratory certificate or a clear declaration from the producing company that the propagating material used is not genetically modified (especially for crops where GMO methods are possible)	1.NON-GMO certificate from a laboratory or the propagating material's producer 2.Use of self-produced material from traditional local varieties
Is the use of plant protection, veterinary, pharmaceutical or chemical products justified, rational, and documented—when necessary for the health of cultivated plants or animals?	1.Proper storage and environmental safety must be ensured for any use of such products 2.A record must be kept annually listing all substances or materials used	1.Description of storage area 2.Record of used substances/materials 3.Description of disposal procedure for expired/empty containers
Is hunting prohibited in the business's properties, as well as the killing of wild animals by any means (except in force majeure situations such as euthanasia, public health, or threats to human life)?	1.Business commitment 2.Incident report in case of force majeure killing	1.Business commitment 2.Incident report in case of force majeure killing
Does the business take measures to preserve or restore wildlife habitats where possible?	Report on relevant measures	Report on relevant measures (if applicable)
Traceability		
Has the business established a traceability procedure for: a) ensuring continuity of traceability during any intermediate production processes/handling within the business, b) verifying the identity of finished products leaving the business, while maintaining the ability to reverse-trace them?	The business keeps records documenting the implementation of the traceability procedure.	1. Traceability procedure (code, version, issue date) 2. Example of traceability showing the record of at least one batch verified using reverse traceability technique and outcome

Are the products/services awarding the Label recorded in the Register maintained by the Awarding Body? Are any changes in the Registry information updated by the business?	The business fills out a list of the products/services awarded the Label and is responsible for keeping it updated.	List of products/services to which the Label is awarded
Use of the Label / Indications		
Use of the Label / Indications a) Are the requirements described in the Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label Use Regulation respected? b) Is the use of the Label on product labeling in conflict with current food labeling legislation?	1.The business must maintain a file of label/package mockups to verify compliance with the Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label Use Regulation. 2. The business must ensure compliance with food labeling legislation.	Copy of packaging or signage mockup or photo
Occupational Health Protection		
Does the business identify potential risks to employee health and safety and take appropriate preventive measures?	Identified risks must align with production processes and products/services. The business must demonstrate preventive measures.	Business commitment
Is there evidence of staff training or upskilling conducted on an annual basis?	The business must: 1. Identify training needs for staff concerning wildlife species, critical periods of their presence, and local ecosystems. 2. Implement a training program.	Reference to training sessions with topics, dates, and trainers
Crisis Management		
Does the business have a crisis management procedure to identify, prevent, and handle accidents or emergencies related to wildlife or the environment?	The procedure must define actions for preventing and responding to accidents/emergencies and especially mitigating potential environmental impacts.	1.Crisis management guideline 2.Reference to planned training/upskilling sessions with topics, dates, and trainers
Actions for Label Promotion and Public Awareness		
Does the business ensure promotion of the Label and inform consumers through printed or digital promotional or informational material about prevention actions and measures taken to protect wildlife and biodiversity?	The business must report the actions it implements for promoting the Label and informing the consumer public. Select from dropdown list: -Informational brochures -Reference on the company website -Social media posts -Presentations to visitors/customers -Educational activities for guests/visitors -Signage at operational sites -Promotional gifts with relevant information	1.Action report 2.Supporting examples



ΔΕΛΤΙΟ ΤΥΠΟΥ

Έναρξη λειτουργίας πλατφόρμας για την απόκτηση του σήματος RESPECT®

Το ΕΡΓΑΣΤΗΡΙΟ ΜΙΚΡΟΒΙΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΡΑΣΙΤΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΤΜΗΜΑΤΟΣ ΚΤΗΝΙΑΤΡΙΚΗΣ του Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλίας, στο πλαίσιο του ευρωπαϊκού έργου **LIFE ARCPROM Improving Human-Bear Coexistence in 4 National parks of South Europe**, παρουσιάζει ένα **καινοτόμο πρόγραμμα σήμανσης** των προϊόντων και υπηρεσιών που διακρίνονται για την προσπάθεια προστασίας της άγριας ζωής και διατήρησης της βιοποικιλότητας.

Το RESPECT® αποτελεί το πρώτο σήμα προστασίας της άγριας ζωής και βιοποικιλότητας που κυκλοφορεί στην Ελλάδα και σκοπό έχει την επιβράβευση παραγωγών και παρόχων υπηρεσιών που πληρούν θεσπισμένα κριτήρια συμμόρφωσης, και καλές πρακτικές λειτουργίας. Παράλληλα, βοηθά τους καταναλωτές να επιλέξουν προϊόντα/υπηρεσίες που ταιριάζουν με τις περιβαλλοντικές αξίες τους.

Τα κριτήρια για την απονομή του σήματος προστασίας άγριας ζωής και βιοποικιλότητας (RESPECT®) περιλαμβάνονται σε ειδική Προδιαγραφή που έχει εκδοθεί από το Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας και βρίσκεται αναρτημένη στην ιστοσελίδα του σήματος www.respect-label.gr. Από την ίδια ιστοσελίδα δίδεται πρόσβαση στο Πληροφοριακό Σύστημα, μέσω του οποίου μπορεί κάθε ενδιαφερόμενος παραγωγός ή επιχείρηση να εισέλθει, να εγγραφεί και να αξιολογηθεί στη συνέχεια για την απόκτηση του σήματος.

Το σήμα δύναται να απονεμηθεί σε προϊόντα φυτικής ή ζωικής προέλευσης, καθώς και σε υπηρεσίες αγροτουρισμού, φιλοξενίας, δραστηριοτήτων αναψυχής κ.α.

Η πιλοτική εφαρμογή του σήματος αφορά τις περιοχές των Εθνικών Πάρκων Βόρειας Πίνδου, Πρεσπών και Οροσειράς Ροδόπης και την προστασία της άγριας πανίδας των περιοχών αυτών, με είδος εξαιρετικού ενδιαφέροντος την εμβληματική καφέ αρκούδα (*Ursus arctos*).



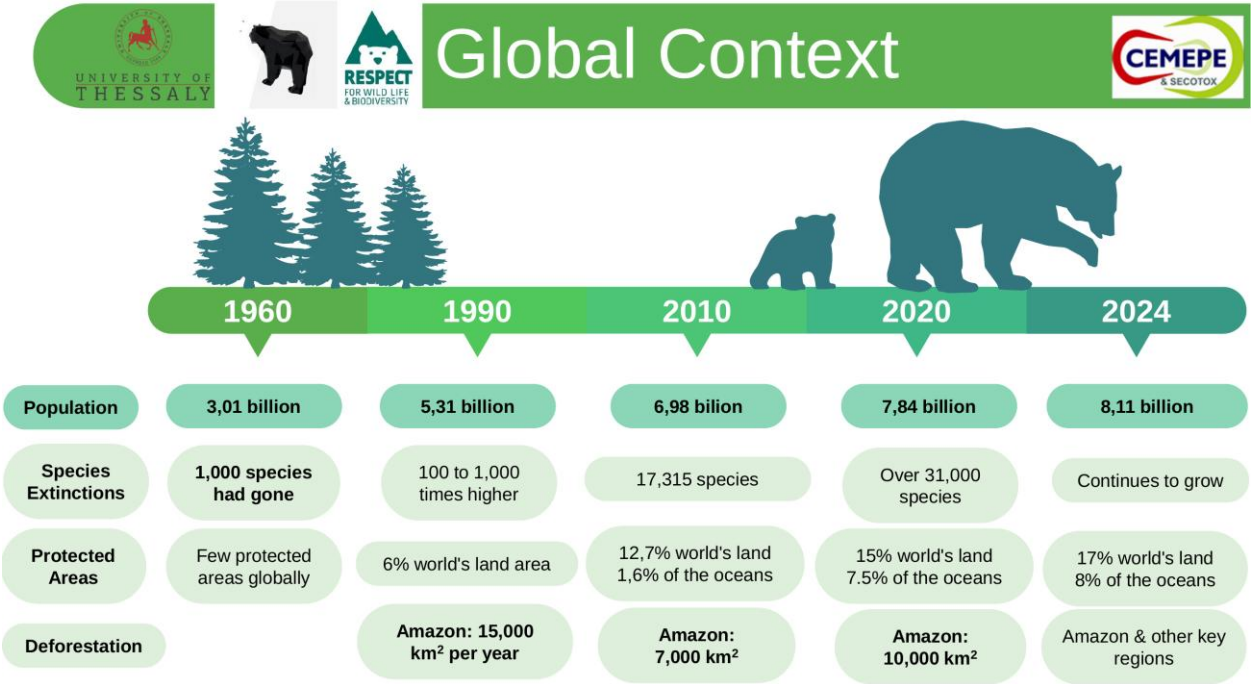
Επιστημονικός Υπεύθυνος του έργου LIFEARCPROM, Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας
Καθηγητής Χαράλαμπος Μπιλλίνης,
Πρύτανης Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλίας



ANNEX IV – Presentation of the Bear Friendly “RESPECT” Label at the 11th International Conference on Environmental Management, Engineering, Planning and Economics

Empowering Environmental Conservation by Designing an Information System for Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label Award

Spentzou M,
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Chatzopoulos DC, Economou A , Laspidou CS,
Billinis C





Importance of Biodiversity



Essential for human health and socio-economic stability



Need for innovative solutions to conserve biodiversity



Objective

Develop an information system (IS) for awarding wildlife and biodiversity protection labels



Eco-Label

Indicate compliance with environmental standards.
Over 2500 eco-label licenses granted by the EU by September 2023.
Environmental labeling fosters a shared commitment to preservation, reminding consumers to consider ecological concerns in their purchases



Challenges

Variety of labels causing consumer confusion.
Questions about the efficacy and validity of existing labels.
Absence of specific labels certifying wildlife and biodiversity-friendly products.
Necessity for a dedicated system to highlight products protecting wildlife and biodiversity.

Methodology



Describe the IS operation for wildlife/biodiversity-friendly labels.

Present practical application via a case study on honey producers.



Qualitative research using Strategic Information Systems Planning (SISP).

Case study approach for real-world application.

S Architecture



System Design

Client-Server model with a cloud-hosted, web-based interface.



Key User Roles:

Applicant: Submits product for labeling.

Evaluator: Assesses compliance.

Administrator: Oversees the process.



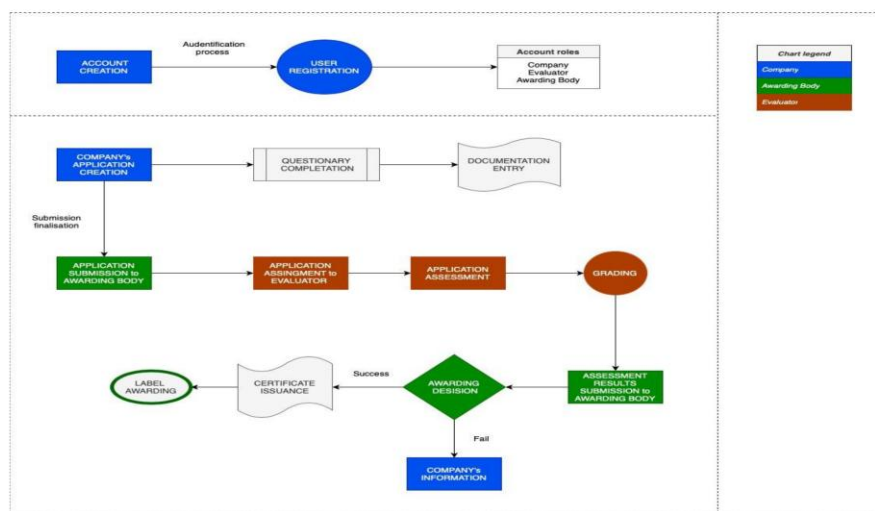
Workflow

Application submission → Evaluation → Awarding → Monitoring



Security Features:

SSL encryption, GDPR compliance for data protection.



Services provided

The creation of an account for each interested company for entering the IS.

The online application of the interested companies by completing all the requested information and registering the required supporting documents.

The selection of biodiversity and wildlife protection actions through a designed list.

Grading criteria for label awarding

The entry of labeling details (mockup).

The electronic awarding of the label by the Awarding Body if the prescribed requirements are met and the minimum required score is collected.

The supervision of the implementation of the requirements by the Awarding Body

Monitoring the status of the application and the progress of the label-awarding process

Keeping a register of incorporated companies.

Electronic communication between the incorporated companies and the awarding body by sending-receiving messages and notifications.

Downloading files with specified requirements and guidelines.

Issuing statistics.



Case Study

HONEY PRODUCERS



Honey producers utilized the IS to apply for wildlife-friendly labels.

Steps: Account creation → Application submission → Evaluation → Label awarding.



Estimated score of the criteria was automatically calculated higher than the evaluator's score reveals the evaluator's critical role.

Transparency observed in certification systems to ensure the Label's credibility



Conclusions



- Streamlined, transparent label awarding process.
- Enhanced consumer trust in labeled products.
- Competitive advantage for environmentally friendly products.
- Social Impact by collaborations between business, local community and consumers
- Promotes environmental conservation and sustainable practices.



- Encourages sustainable production and consumption.
- Facilitates coexistence of human activities with wildlife conservation.



Label Utilization Strategies

- Prominent display on product packaging
- Strategic communication to highlight label benefits.
- Engaging opinion leaders and social media influencers for promotion.



Business Opportunities

- Collaboration to offer integrated, wildlife-friendly services.
- Enhanced brand reputation and market positioning.

01

Business Collaborations:

Explore partnerships among labeled companies.

02

Consumer Behavior Studies:

Assess willingness to identify and purchase wildlife-friendly products.

03

Market Dynamics:

Investigate impacts on corporate social responsibility and market behavior.





THANK YOU

Empowering Environmental Conservation by Designing an Information System for Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label Award

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Case Report

Development and implementation of a wildlife and biodiversity protection Eco-label: The “RESPECT” initiative

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Abstract: The reduction of biodiversity and the decline in wildlife populations are urgent environmental issues with devastating consequences for ecosystems and human health. As a result, the protection of wildlife and biodiversity has emerged as one of humanity’s greatest goals, not only for protecting and maintaining human health but also for environmental, economic, and social well-being. In recent years, people have become increasingly aware of the importance and effectiveness of wildlife conservation efforts alongside environmental protection measures, sustainable agricultural practices and non-harmful production procedures and services. This study describes the development and implementation of a labeling scheme for wildlife and biodiversity protection for products or services. The label is designed to encourage the adoption of sustainable and environmentally friendly production methods and services that will contribute to biodiversity conservation and the harmonic coexistence of human-wildlife. Moreover, using a case study approach, the research presents an innovative information system designed to streamline the label-awarding process, ensuring transparency and efficiency. The established system evaluates the sustainability practices and measures implemented by businesses, with a focus on honey production in this case. Additionally, the study explores the broader social implications of the label, particularly its potential to engage consumers and promote awareness of biodiversity conservation.

Keywords: biodiversity; wildlife; bear; RESPECT; Eco-label

1. Introduction

The reduction of biodiversity and the decline in wildlife populations are pressing environmental issues with far-reaching consequences for natural ecosystems and all life on Earth (Carter et al., 2016; Dasgupta, 2021; Rahman, 2024; Steffen et al., 2015; World Economic Forum, 2022). Recently, the One Health approach has remarkably highlighted that human actions affecting animal and environmental health will continuously increase the frequency and scope of zoonotic diseases. Further, due to the inextricable link among humans, animals, and ecosystems, biodiversity and wildlife losses will also lead to economic, social, and cultural issues. The main drivers of biodiversity degradation have been widely recognized, involving human overconsumption, population growth, unsustainable farming, wildlife habitat destruction, poaching, and the illegal wildlife trade (Abrahms et al., 2021; Darwall et al., 2008; Glikman et al., 2021; IPBES, 2019; König et al., 2020; Pooley et al., 2021;

Steering Committee, 2012). Unsurprisingly, all of the above is implemented with the aim of profit at the expense of the planet's sustainability. However, in recent years, economic benefits seem to be increasingly used to trigger and further promote biodiversity and wildlife protection efforts, leading to the rise of a new generation of eco-conscious consumers. Voluntary standard systems have emerged as mechanisms for producers and companies to demonstrate adherence to environmental, social, ethical, or other standards.

These systems generally consist of three key components (Lybbert et al., 2002; Marx and Wouters, 2022): (a) the standard definition, which sets out social and environmental best practices for specific industries, crops, or products, including compliance criteria, indicators, scoring systems, and implementation guidelines; (b) the compliance verification, which involves on-site inspections, interviews, and record reviews to ensure that products marketed as certified sustainable meet the relevant standards. Independent third parties typically oversee audit integrity, while traceability systems track certified products from origin to sale; and (c) the sustainability labels, that distinguish sustainable products at the consumer level. These standard systems for Eco-labels play a crucial role in encouraging producers to adopt sustainable practices, reducing negative impacts on ecosystems, and shaping consumer behavior.

Eco-labeling plays a crucial role in promoting environmental preservation. First, Eco-label schemes enable producers to play an active role in protecting nature. By complying with the standards established by those labels, producers adopt sustainable practices in areas such as resource management, waste reduction, and the utilization of environmentally friendly materials. This active engagement helps reduce the negative impact on ecosystems and supports the preservation of biodiversity (Bansal and Roth, 2000; Tscharnkte et al., 2015; Waldron et al., 2012). Moreover, eco-friendly labels establish a mutual commitment among producers, consumers, and certification bodies (Grunert et al., 2014). From this perspective, they are further shaping consumer perceptions based on trust, awareness, and active involvement in a mutual goal (Bangsa and Schlegelmilch, 2019; Chen and Tung, 2016; Taufique et al., 2016). Also, they can be used as engagement and training tools, improving consumers' understanding and knowledge of biodiversity (Asioli et al., 2020; Donato and D'Aniello, 2021).

A growing number of consumers are now more conscious of their environmental impact, choosing products and services aligned with sustainable practices (Kolodenko et al., 2024). This remarkable shift in consumer behavior is motivating businesses to adopt eco-friendly strategies and innovate towards more sustainable solutions (Díaz et al., 2020; Edenbrandt and Lagerkvist, 2021; European Commission, 2019; Risius and Hamm, 2018; Tulloch et al., 2021) and motivating them to make environmentally friendly choices (Stampa et al., 2022; Tanveer et al., 2024; Torma and Thøgersen, 2021; van Amstel et al., 2008; Zaharia et al., 2021). Recent studies show that Eco-labels can influence consumer behavior in areas such as seafood, coffee, wine, tuna, and agricultural products (Bansal and Roth, 2000; European Commission, 2019; Sorqvist et al., 2013; van Amstel et al., 2008; Zaharia et al., 2021). Consumers tend to distinguish between conventional products and environmentally friendly products (Díaz et al., 2020; Panopoulos et al., 2022b). The latter are usually being preferred even if the traditional products available on the market are identical (Samant and Seo,

2016). In fact, consumers are often willing to pay more for products or services that do not negatively impact the environment. This is undoubtedly a strong argument that encourages producers to adopt sustainable practices, even if these practices come with higher production costs. Despite the importance and market acceptance of Eco-labeling systems, significant challenges remain, particularly concerning the procedures and requirements that the potential beneficiaries should meet (Pomarici et al., 2018; Weinrich and Spiller, 2016). Thus far, each Eco-label scheme seems to follow its logic, focusing on only one or a few species of animals or plants without considering the overall environmental footprint of the production process. Also, most of the schemes that are already in place are based only on qualitative criteria, often leading to confusion among consumers and conflicts between producers.

The main objectives of the present paper are (a) to present an Eco-label award that has a holistic approach to wildlife and biodiversity protection; (b) to present the innovative design and pilot implementation of a wildlife and biodiversity conservation label for products and services implemented in Greece; and (c) to briefly describe the newly established certification information system, emphasizing ease of use and open access to all stakeholders.

2. Materials and methods

A qualitative methodology was used to obtain the research objectives for the purpose of this study, included two stages: Strategic Information System Planning (SISP) methodology for Information System (IS) and a qualitative case study after the software's design.

2.1. Information system methodology

2.1.1. Framework for SISP methodology and technological architecture

Concerning information technology resource planning, Strategic Information System Planning (SISP), at the most basic, can be defined as “the process of determining an organization’s portfolio of computer-based applications that will help it achieve its business objectives” (Newkirk and Lederer, 2006, p. 34). Before SISP, the information technology resource planning process was referred to simply as Information System Planning (ISP) (Ferguson, 2012; Teo and King, 1996). ISP is defined as: “IS (Information System) planning is a set of activities directed toward achieving three objectives: (a) recognizing organizational opportunities and problems where IS might be applied successfully; (b) identifying the resources needed to allow IS to be applied successfully to these opportunities and problems; and (c) developing strategies and procedures to allow IS to be applied successfully to these opportunities and problems.” (Hann and Weber, 1996, p. 1044).

The software infrastructure is based on a Client-Server architecture. Clients (or front end) input information and request services from a server (or back end), which processes and offers the requested information. The technologies used to implement the information infrastructure were compatible with internationally recognized technological standards and standardized communication protocols (e.g., HTML, JavaScript, etc.).

2.1.2. Criteria formulation for the Eco-label and IS

The evaluation criteria for the Eco-label were carefully formulated, drawing on international best practices in biodiversity and wildlife conservation, taking under consideration the existing literature. These criteria were based on a) standards for sustainable resource management (ensuring efficient use of materials and energy), b) waste reduction (promoting recycling and minimizing environmental impact), c) wildlife habitat preservation (prohibiting actions that harm biodiversity), and d) the prohibition of harmful chemicals (eliminating the use of harmful substances in production processes). The criteria were developed to ensure that businesses demonstrate comprehensive actions for protecting biodiversity, including the adoption of eco-friendly materials and practices. These standards are aligned with internationally recognized sustainability frameworks (Bansal and Roth, 2000; IPBES, 2019).

The decision to employ an IS is grounded in the increasing recognition of digital tools as essential components of label award systems, offering advantages such as automation, data integrity, and enhanced user accessibility (Marx and Wouters, 2022; Nikolaou and Tsalis, 2018). Furthermore, an IS allows for centralized data management, secure information storage, and user access control, aligning with best practices in Eco-labeling systems and certification standards. Traditional, manual certification procedures are often labor-intensive and susceptible to inconsistencies. In contrast, an IS automates repetitive processes such as application handling, preliminary scoring, and document verification, which significantly alleviates administrative workloads and accelerates the certification timeline. Transparency, a fundamental attribute of Eco-label credibility, is another crucial advantage provided by the IS. By employing predefined criteria and algorithms for scoring, the system minimizes subjective biases and ensures equitable treatment of all applicants. This objectivity is essential for building trust among stakeholders and aligning with best practices in certification systems, as highlighted by existing literature (Grunert et al., 2014; Weinrich and Spiller, 2016). Furthermore, the centralized data management capabilities of the IS further strengthen its suitability. By securely storing all information and implementing safeguards such as SSL encryption and GDPR compliance, the system ensures the integrity and confidentiality of sensitive user data. Finally, the IS is designed to accommodate a diverse range of stakeholders, including producers, the awarding body, and the general public.

2.1.3. Quality assurance and integrity measures

To ensure the integrity of the awarding process, quality assurance techniques were embedded into the design of the IS. The IS uses predefined algorithms for scoring, reducing the risk of subjective bias during evaluations. Additionally, the process is also monitored through periodic audits to ensure continued compliance and the sustainability of the Eco-label.

The methodology was implemented through iterative cycles of development, testing, and refinement. Each phase included stakeholder input to ensure alignment with organizational objectives and end-user requirements. Monitoring frameworks were also integrated to track progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the SISP-based IT (Information Technology) resource planning system. By combining the principles

of SISP with cutting-edge technology and rigorous evaluation criteria, this methodology establishes a robust foundation for IT resource management that prioritizes both organizational goals and ecological sustainability.

2.2. Case study

After the literature review and design of the IS, a case study was considered. A case study is defined as an empirical investigation that explores a contemporary phenomenon within its actual context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and cannot be separated from its context (Baxter and Jack, 2008; Yin, 2009), which depends on the qualitative approach as a method used in an information system. According to a research by Onatu (2013), three reasons have been identified that the choice of case study in information system (IS) research is the best method of qualitative approach: The case study 1) allows the researcher to study the IS in its physical settings and generate theories from practice; 2) is the most appropriate method when the research question is how and why, to gain clearer information; and 3) allows the researcher to know the nature and complexity of the process. This research applied a case study, in which the implementation of the information system was examined. It was the most appropriate method as it was not possible to disconnect the application from the practice.

The IS was piloted with honey producers to assess its functionality and effectiveness, using a stratified sampling process. Selection criteria included: i) geographic representation to ensure diverse environmental contexts; ii) adherence to initial biodiversity-friendly practices; and iii) willingness to participate and provide feedback. During the pilot test, the system recorded detailed information about producers' biodiversity measures, supporting documents, and scoring outcomes. Evaluators assessed both quantitative (e.g., compliance with specific criteria) and qualitative (e.g., innovativeness of implemented measures) aspects.

3. Information system (IS) development and structure

The IS developed for the Eco-label was conceived as a modern solution to streamline the awarding process while ensuring transparency, efficiency, and scalability. This inclusivity promotes broader participation and engagement in biodiversity protection efforts, demonstrating the system's role as a versatile and impactful tool for environmental conservation. The website www.respect-label.gr developed and offers this IS.

The IS was designed to serve the following categories of users/beneficiaries: (a) Production/classification/packaging/trading/service provision companies; (b) Awarding Body; and (c) Any interested party wishing to access the register of incorporated businesses or information on protecting wildlife and biodiversity.

The IS was meticulously designed to reflect the Eco-label's holistic approach to biodiversity and wildlife protection. The workflow (**Figure 1**) incorporates the following steps:

- Registration: Businesses create accounts and provide preliminary organizational information.

- Application Submission: Applicants complete a comprehensive questionnaire detailing biodiversity protection measures and upload supporting documents.
- Automated Scoring: The system calculates preliminary scores based on specific actions and documentation, weighted by their environmental significance (Torma and Thøgersen, 2021).
- Evaluator Review: Independent evaluators review applications, assign final scores, and note any deficiencies.
- Award Decision: The awarding body issues a digital certificate with unique identifiers, ensuring authenticity.
- Ongoing Monitoring: The IS supports periodic audits and compliance checks to maintain label standards.

Criteria for evaluation were derived from best practices in Eco-labeling and aligned with international sustainability standards. These include measures such as sustainable soil management, prohibition of harmful chemicals, and the protection of wildlife corridors (Bansal and Roth, 2000; IPBES, 2019).

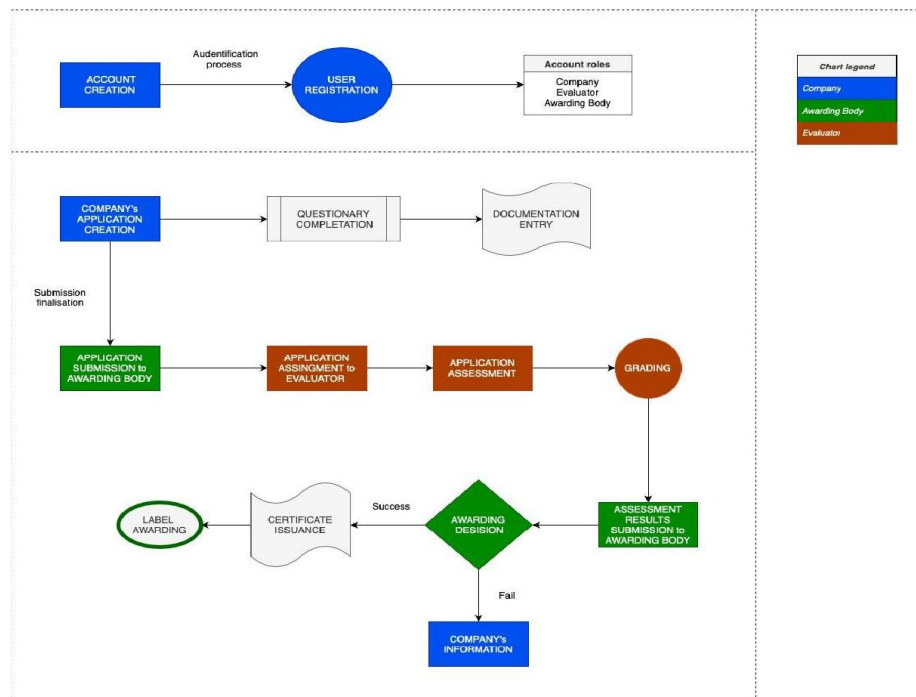


Figure 1. The workflow of the awarding process in the designed information system.

4. Label awarding scheme and label design

Following the IS design, a label awarding scheme was developed, incorporating several documents. The Specification Guide for the label awarding sets the standard, requiring businesses to use methods that are friendly to wildlife and biodiversity, demonstrate environmental protection, and distinguish their products/services in the

market. Compliance grants a Certificate from the Awarding Body, the Veterinary Science faculty of the University of Thessaly, permitting the use of the “RESPECT” label on product labeling and promotional materials. The requirements include measures to protect the environment and practices beneficial to wildlife. The procedure for awarding the label is described in the guideline that stipulates the procedure of verification of compliance, including submission of applications, evaluation, issuance of certificates, and maintenance of monitoring over time on continued compliance. Finally, the guideline contained an appendix with a manual of the awarding information system, which provided how-to instructions to use the specific information system in awarding. This comprehensive scheme ensures that businesses meet the required standards and can effectively communicate their commitment to biodiversity and wildlife conservation.

This study introduces the “RESPECT” label, which recognizes organizations committed to protecting biodiversity and wildlife. The awarded label design, therefore, tries to reinforce clarity and consumer perception. The chosen label name, “RESPECT”, relates a message of environmental respect and is in pursuit of harmonious co-existence between human beings, wildlife, and biodiversity. The label’s tagline (slogan), “for Wildlife and Biodiversity”, complements the “RESPECT” logo, completing the phrase: “RESPECT FOR WILDLIFE and BIODIVERSITY”. The label’s design reveals an abstract silhouette of a bear’s head in front of a mountain, representing wildlife and biodiversity, as shown in **Figure 2**. The bear’s head was intentionally chosen for the logo, as it is the largest mammal in Europe and it has been listed in the Red Book of Endangered Species. Additionally, the mountain and the green color in the logo symbolizes biodiversity, which is also under threat.

To guarantee the legal safeguarding of the “RESPECT” label, its design was officially registered as a trademark with the appropriate regulatory authorities. This process included an in-depth evaluation to verify the originality of the design and its consistency with the label’s core mission and values (De Vries et al., 2017; Kerly, 2020). By obtaining trademark protection in international level, the Eco-label’s exclusive use was ensured, preventing unauthorized reproduction and reinforcing its distinctiveness in the marketplace (Block et al., 2014; Kerly, 2020). This step was crucial in maintaining the integrity and credibility of the label, allowing it to be recognized as a trusted symbol of sustainability and biodiversity conservation (Bently and Sherman, 2014; de Almeida and Trzaskowski, 2018).



Figure 2. The awarded label “RESPECT”.

5. Application of IS

5.1. Specification criteria

The awardees of this label exemplify a robust involvement in environmental conservation through a comprehensive set of criteria they apply and are committed to continuing to apply, as shown in **Table 1**. These include strict prohibitions on practices that degrade or pollute natural ecosystems. In addition, awardees implement sustainable soil management or restoration measures, ensuring the longevity of vital ecosystems. The “RESPECT” prohibits the use of Genetically Modified Organisms and highly toxic pesticides, prioritizing the health of both wildlife and their habitats. In addition, strict restrictions are placed on the hunting and killing of wild animals, underlining the deep respect for wildlife. Measures for sustainable water management and preservation of wildlife corridors further demonstrate the commitment to harmonious coexistence with nature. At the same time, criteria related to the protection of their feeding, reproduction, or disturbance were set through some targeted applications and actions, such as the placement of waste bins that were inaccessible to wild animals, the regulation of light pollution, and the appropriate use of the road network. Finally, the criteria envisage installing notification systems and preventive measures in case of approach of wild animals and keeping wild animal diaries. By meeting these rigorous standards, “RESPECT” label recipients embody the essence of responsible stewardship, ensuring the protection of our planet’s precious biodiversity for generations to come.

Table 1. Biodiversity and wildlife-friendly criteria.

Specification’s criteria
Measures to protect the environment and prohibition of methods or practices that degrade or contaminate or pollute the natural ecosystem, e.g., waste recycling, use of alternative energy sources, creation of plant hedges, preservation of biodiversity in surrounding areas
Implementation of sustainable soil management or restoration measures
Prohibition of using varieties or hybrids of cultivated plants derived from modification by genetic engineering (GMO)
Prohibitions on using highly toxic and synthetic pesticides
Restrictions on hunting or killing wild animals
Implementation of measures for sustainable water management
Requirements for not obstructing the feeding, breeding, or crossing of wild animals or their disturbance, e.g., placement of waste bins that are inaccessible to wild animals
Maintenance or restoration of wildlife corridors
Measures to avoid disturbing wild animals (e.g., avoiding the use of road networks in wintering areas of wild animals)
Installation of notification systems and prevention measures in case of approach of wild animals

The scheme criteria were developed to cover a wide range of products and services to identify market, legislative, or consumer demand concerning biodiversity and wildlife protection. In particular, “RESPECT” can be used for products and services, enabling their distinction in the market. This distinction benefits their competitiveness by giving them the comparative advantage of having an

environmentally friendly character over other conventional ones. This label on a honey product packages informs consumers that the product complies with these specific requirements. Furthermore, when an independent third party (in this case, a University) verifies compliance with these requirements and is not just a company claim, the information provided to the discerning and aware consumer is guaranteed. As a voluntary sustainability standard, specification requirements facilitate stakeholders' commitment to implementing an environmental policy that protects biodiversity and wildlife.

5.2. Application of IS: Case study

The implication of an information system (IS) for awarding label honey producers in wildlife and biodiversity conservation marks a significant advancement in streamlining Eco-labeling processes. The case study outlines the application of the IS, the insights gained during its pilot test implementation, and the outcomes for stakeholders in the honey production industry.

Honey producers tested the use of the information system. All necessary steps were followed as were designed.

- Account creation: Producers created user accounts to initiate the process.
- Application filling out: Producers completed their applications by providing necessary details and documentation. A comprehensive application form was completed that describes company profile information and implementing biodiversity protection actions. There is a Questionnaire with mandatory fields to fill out as described in **Table 1**. Mandatory fields within the questionnaire form correspond to predetermined scores, ensuring thorough documentation. Before applying, a completeness check is conducted to inform the user of any deficiencies. Once completed, the application is automatically submitted to the system administrator for evaluation.
- Application evaluation-grading: The system conducted automated preliminary scoring based on submitted data, followed by evaluations from independent reviewers. The evaluation in the information system is based on a point system logic. A predetermined point is earned for each document attached to the application and for each statement the user makes. The points are assigned based on the importance of the actions taken by the concerned company to protect wildlife and biodiversity. When applying, the user is automatically informed of the score received. The administrator assigns the application to an evaluator to assess quality and grade criteria, recording any identified deficiencies.
- Awarding decision: Scores were assessed against the minimum requirements for certification, and award decisions were made accordingly. Evaluation results, including accurate scores for each criterion, are submitted to the administrator for the award decision. If the total score meets or exceeds the minimum prescribed threshold, a "verification label award" is issued, confirming compliance with specified requirements.
- Issuance of verification label award: Certified producers were granted the right to use the wildlife and biodiversity protection label for the specified period. This digital document, complete with a unique code and QR code for authenticity

verification, is available for download. Ongoing compliance is ensured through onsite audits conducted by auditing teams, with any non-conformities addressed through corrective actions within the IS. As a result, the awarding body verified that the companies meet the requirements set out in the relevant specification in the scope of “honey production and labeling” and have the right to use the wildlife and biodiversity protection label on their honey products for the period indicated in the corresponding verification award.

During application evaluations, discrepancies emerged between the system’s automated scores and those assigned by human evaluators. The automated scores were higher in cases where applicants failed to provide adequate supporting documentation. For example, applicants claimed biodiversity measures but lacked evidence, leading evaluators to adjust the scores downward. Despite this, most applicants met the minimum score required for certification. The findings underscored the importance of ensuring principles of independence and transparency in the certification process. The final award decisions relied on third-party reviews to uphold the integrity and credibility of the label.

The label awarded fostered increased market opportunities, as the label aligned with growing consumer demand for sustainability-certified products. Honey producers leveraged the “RESPECT” label, to enhance their competitiveness. Feedback from the honey producers, the IS’s effectiveness was in simplifying the label award process. The honey producers reported increased market interest in their products, particularly from hotels and retailers. Hotels indicated plans to incorporate the label into their sustainability initiatives, further promoting biodiversity awareness among consumers. The label helped differentiate their products and attracted eco-conscious customers.

6. Discussion

This study introduced the “RESPECT” Information System (IS), a novel digital platform designed to facilitate the awarding of an Eco-label for wildlife and biodiversity protection, outlining its structure and functionality. The IS addressed key challenges in awarding processes, such as subjective evaluations, and limited accessibility for stakeholders (Marx and Wouters, 2022). Thus, its development is a significant contribution to the environmental certification field, offering a transparent, user-friendly, and scalable solution. A major achievement of the IS is its ability to simplify traditionally labor-intensive processes. By combining technological innovation with environmental conservation goals, the IS demonstrates how digital tools can bridge gaps in complex workflows, as noted in previous research (Grunert et al., 2014; Marx and Wouters, 2022).

The “RESPECT” Information System has simple requirements and procedures for awarding the label and ensuring its credibility. The innovative information system concerns all steps from application submission to suitable practitioners’ assessment and awarding of a label. It is based on a workflow that assures the independence of the compliance evaluation and the awarding decision carried out by different roles. This systematic approach guarantees the label’s integrity and promotes continued adherence to biodiversity protection measures. The automated scoring mechanism reduces administrative burdens and ensures consistency in evaluations (Weinrich and

Spiller, 2016). Moreover, the system's structured workflow ensured independence in compliance evaluations and award decisions, fostering transparency and stakeholder trust (Grunert et al., 2014).

The case study of honey producers provided valuable insights into its performance. The automated scoring system successfully identified compliance gaps, prompting corrective actions from producers. However, discrepancies between automated and evaluator-assigned scores highlighted the need for more comprehensive documentation. The case study also revealed that honey producers saw increased interest from competitors. Certified honey products were perceived as high-value and ethically produced, aligning with consumer trends favoring sustainable goods (Lazzarini et al., 2018; Pomarici et al., 2018; Tanveer et al., 2024). The workflow of the IS ensures the independence of compliance evaluations and final award decisions. By clearly defining roles and responsibilities, the system upholds principles of fairness and transparency. This structured approach has been instrumental in building trust among stakeholders and establishing the credibility of the "RESPECT" Eco-label. Furthermore, the label's widespread publicity and educational initiatives have amplified its impact, encouraging broader adoption and promoting biodiversity conservation as a market priority (Bhatia, 2021).

Despite its successes, the case study identified areas for improvement, including refining criteria to address documentation gaps and expanding user training resources. Addressing these challenges will improve the system's functionality and support its scalability across different sectors. Additionally, integrating feedback from stakeholders will help ensure the IS remains responsive to evolving environmental and market dynamics (Glikman et al., 2021; Marx and Wouters, 2022).

7. Conclusion

The "RESPECT" Eco-label represents a pioneering effort in wildlife and biodiversity protection, underpinned by an innovative IS that redefines Eco-labeling processes. This study highlights the system's ability to streamline application, evaluation, and monitoring workflows, ensuring transparency and accessibility for all stakeholders. By harnessing technological innovation, the IS establishes a new model for environmental labeling systems, focusing on fairness, objectivity, and scalability (Grunert et al., 2014). The presented IS and label were designed to be applied in various fields, e.g. agriculture, food production and marketing, agritourism services, hospitality services (hotels), and recreational activities, as well as to facilitate the development of environmental, economic and social consciousness.

From environmental perspective, Eco-labels like "RESPECT" are crucial in addressing global environmental challenges, such as biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. By setting rigorous standards for eco-friendly practices, the label directly mitigates harmful practices such as habitat destruction and overexploitation of resources (IPBES, 2019). Its criteria, which prohibit genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and toxic pesticides, ensure sustainable production methods that protect ecosystems and wildlife (Darwall et al., 2008; Tscharncke and Clough, 2015). Businesses adopting the label contribute to reducing their environmental footprint, while customers are encouraged to support products that align with their ecological

values (Bhatia, 2021). The integration of technological tools within the information system further reinforces these efforts by simplifying compliance and enabling transparency in environmental stewardship (Marx and Wouters, 2022).

By encouraging sustainable practices and providing consumers with credible information, these labels contribute to market transformations that benefit both the environment and society (Bhatia, 2021; Glikman et al., 2021; Shi and Omar, 2024). The holistic approach of the “RESPECT” label, which incorporates various environmental criteria, aligns with global demands for more comprehensive sustainability standards (IPBES, 2019). Eco-labels, generally, and the “RESPECT” label, can motivate consumers to make environmentally friendly choices (Bhatia et al., 2021, Carter et al., 2016, Glikman et al., 2021, König et al., 2020; Panopoulos et al., 2022), boost the brand image of producers’ products and strengthen the bond with product/services consumers. The Eco-labelling system’s success hinges on consumer recognition of the certification (Donato et al., 2021; Mameno et al., 2022; Nikolaou et al., 2018) and the proposed specification criteria.

The “RESPECT” label provides significant economic benefits both businesses and consumers, enhancing their market competitiveness and brand value (Kabaja et al., 2022; Lybbert et al., 2002; Mameno et al., 2021; Tschardt et al., 2015; Waldron et al., 2012). Certified businesses gain a competitive edge by distinguishing their products in the market, often commanding higher premiums due to the perceived value of sustainable practices (Nikolaou and Tsalis, 2018; Pomarici et al., 2018). The label attracts eco-conscious consumers who are increasingly willing to pay more for products that align with their values, fostering market growth for sustainable goods (Mameno et al., 2022). Furthermore, businesses achieve long-term cost savings through sustainable resource management and improved supply chain efficiencies, positioning themselves as leaders in the eco-conscious marketplace (Lybbert et al., 2002). These economic incentives strengthen the adoption of sustainable practices, creating a robust framework for market transformation.

From the social perspective, customers align their sustainable purchases with their personal beliefs and values. Any environmentally conscious consumers strive to minimize their ecological impact and preserve the environment for future generations (Taufique et al., 2016; Zaharia et al., 2021). Therefore, they have turned to consuming products that are sustainable and have minimal impact on the environment. Many consumers, especially those who care about animal welfare and the environment, are opting for goods that have certifications confirming their ethical and environmentally friendly production methods. These consumers are not only concerned with the environment and animal protection but also with the working conditions involved in the production. They prioritize products that are certified to be safe for consumption, free from harmful chemicals, and produced using eco-friendly methods. On a broader scale, the label promotes community engagement by highlighting the importance of wildlife protection and ecological balance, fostering a culture of responsibility and shared stewardship (Glikman et al., 2021). Businesses, in turn, benefit from enhanced social capital, positioning themselves as ethical leaders in their industries.

Future research

The findings of this study point to several areas for future research and development. These include exploring the long-term impacts of Eco-label adoption on market dynamics and biodiversity conservation, investigating consumer behavior and willingness to pay for certified products, enhancing the IS to support new product categories, and examining the phenomenon of label renewal after certification and its implications for market trust and sustainability. In addition, widespread dissemination of the Label awarded requires consistent communication from the awarding body and certified businesses through integrated communication across traditional and digital media, such as advertising and social media campaigns and seminars. Integrated communication should address the stages of the information processing, alternative evaluation, and buying decision of the decision-making process. Therefore, the use of opinion leaders and social media influencers who will emphasize the value of the labels' benefits, highlighting the importance of sustainability, will act as a determining factor in the final behavior of buyers. Businesses awarded with the "RESPECT" label can work together to offer integrated services and customer experiences that are geared towards their shared goal of protecting wildlife and biodiversity. Professionals and the awarding body can leverage the aforementioned promoting strategies to build trust with all involved shareholders and educate certified companies and their consumers.

Having designed the first version of the information system for the label awarding, there is a need for its future improvement. It is believed that the implementation of the specifications for different categories of products and services will highlight the improvement points of both the specifications and the information system's elements. However, market trends, consumer preferences, advantages, disadvantages or any impacts related to using this label on products or services should be studied in the future.

By addressing these areas, the "RESPECT" initiative can continue to evolve and expand its impact, contributing to sustainable development goals and fostering harmony between human activities and natural ecosystems.

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ANNEX VI – Bear-Friendly “RESPECT” Leaflet

What is the RESPECT Label

The RESPECT® label certifies that the labeled company has tested and successfully fulfilled a collection of standards and requirements for protecting wild animals and conserving biodiversity published by the University of Thessaly.

The criteria for awarding the seal can be found at www.respect-label.gr



Certification Body

The RESPECT® label and its awarding process were developed by the Laboratory of Microbiology & Parasitology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Thessaly, within the framework of the LIFE ARCPROM project (<https://lifearcprom.uowm.gr/en>).

The primary objective of the project is to enhance human-bear coexistence in four National Parks across Greece and Italy, while fostering sustainable wildlife conservation and ecosystem management.



Advantages for Producers / Entrepreneur

Producing agricultural products and adopting practices that support wildlife and biodiversity in tourism and other services can enhance local cultural identity, uphold high-quality standards in products and services, and ultimately promote the sustainable development of rural areas.



Eligibility for the RESPECT® Label

The RESPECT® certification applies to both plant- and animal-based products, as well as agritourism services, accommodation facilities, recreational activities and related sectors. Furthermore, it may be extended to certify wildlife-friendly production processes, promoting the conservation of diverse wild species beyond Brown Bears.



Advantages for Consumers

RESPECT-awarded products and services enable consumers to make informed choices that align with their environmental values.

Notably, 49% of consumers have adjusted their diet in the past two years to adopt a more environmentally friendly lifestyle.



The Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos*) and the RESPECT® Label

The brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) is classified as an endangered species and recognized as a priority species under European legislation, ensuring its strict legal protection.

As part of the project's commitment to the long-term conservation of brown bears and the promotion of harmonious coexistence with livestock farming and other human activities, an award program has been established.

This initiative designates products as "Bear-Friendly", certifying that they are produced using sustainable agricultural and production practices, as indicated by the registered RESPECT® label.



LIFE ARCPROM



Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label RESPECT®

Information:
www.respect-label.gr

The label was created within the framework of the EU LIFE project
LIFE ARCPROM: <https://lifearcprom.uowm.gr/el>

Funding:
European Union, Green Fund,
University of Thessaly

Laboratory of Microbiology and Parasitology
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine,
University of Thessaly,
Project Team LIFE ARCPROM



ANNEX VII – Detailed programs of the workshops to train Bear-Friendly producers

TRAINING WORKSHOPS FOR BEAR-FRIENDLY PRODUCERS

I MEETING – JUNE 30TH 2023

Meeting point: Lago Ticino, Bear Trail starting point

Meet at:

10:00 (morning shift)

16:00 (afternoon shift)

Duration: approximately 4 hours

PROGRAM

Outdoor theoretical session (along the Bear Trail):

The Apennine brown bear: introduction and its presence in the Maiella National Park

Apennine brown bear preservation: the commitment of WWF Italy

We will walk the Bear Trail. A striking ring-trail to discover bears hiking and playing!

Outdoor practical session (at the Bear Trail starting point):

Theory and practice of e-fences: how they work and how to properly set an e-fence to prevent bear damages

For info or doubts: giovanna.didomenico@parcomajella.it, 3665853942.



TRAINING WORKSHOPS FOR BEAR-FRIENDLY PRODUCERS II AND III MEETINGS

DECEMBER, 2ND 2023

Maiella National Park Headquarter, Sulmona (AQ)



Events and time schedule:

- 10:00 II workshop – target: Agricultural Farmers
- 12:30 Plenary meeting of Bear Friendly producers followed by offered lunch
- 14.30 III workshop – target: Beekeepers



PROGRAM

10:00	Welcome, registration of participants and introduction by the Maiella National Park and WWF Italy
10:15	“Local agricultural varieties: list and their cultivation” by Marco Di Santo (Head of the Agronomic Office of the MNP)
10:45	“Cultivation with low input of plant protection products: The National Action Plan” by Franco Ferroni (Senior Biodiversity Specialist – Sustainability Office WWF Italy)
11:15	Coffee break
11:30	“Organic cultivation: how to carry it out and opportunities in Abruzzo” by Tullio De Felicibus (National contact person for organic beekeeping and regional ICEA audit coordinator)
12:00	Questions and debate
12:30	Plenary meeting of Bear Friendly producers, MNP and WWF
13:30	Lunch break (offered)
14:30	“Organic beekeeping: how to carry it out and what are the advantages” by Tullio De Felicibus (National contact person for organic beekeeping and regional ICEA audit coordinator)
15:00	“Breeding of the bee <i>Apis mellifera ligustica</i> : how to do it and advantages” by Tiziano Gardi (National beekeeping expert appointed by Agriculture Ministry)
15:30	Questions and debate
16:00	Conclusions and closure

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TRAINING WORKSHOPS FOR BEAR-FRIENDLY PRODUCERS IV WORKSHOP JANUARY 20TH 2024

Maiella National Park Headquarter, Sulmona (AQ)

When: from 10:00 to 15.30

This day will be dedicated to delving deeper into the dynamics of sustainable marketing fundamental for the diffusion of the Bear Friendly label. The speakers will provide an overview of tools and methods aimed at enhancing the project and the commitment of Bear Friendly producers for the conservation of the Apennine brown bear.

Most of the time will be dedicated to the active involvement of participants in order to arrive at a shared marketing and content dissemination plan, in line with the objectives of the Bear Friendly project.

PROGRAM

10:00	Welcome, registration of participants and introduction by the Maiella National Park and WWF Italy
10:30	"The value of the Apennine brown bear" by Clara Tattoni (Department of Analysis and management of Environmental Resources, University of Insubria).
11:00	"How to communicate the Bear Friendly label: sustainable marketing dynamics" by Carlo Alberto Pratesi (professor at the Department of Business Administration University of Roma Tre, Rome).
11:30	Coffee break
12:00	"Participatory lab: let's build together the proper strategy to promote the Bear Friendly label" by Carlo Alberto Pratesi professor at the Department of Business Administration University of Roma Tre, Rome).
13:30	Lunch (offered)...while still working!
15:30	Closure

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ANNEX VIII – Layout of the generic Bear-Friendly leaflet produced by MNP and WWF





Un orso unico al mondo

L'orso bruno marsicano vive solo sull'Appennino centrale. Sopravvivono 50-70 individui e per questo è classificato in **pericolo critico di estinzione**.

Proteggere l'orso significa aiutare questa popolazione ad accrescersi, dando agli orsi la possibilità di usare il territorio in modo ottimale e **riducendo la mortalità** causata dalle attività umane.



Parola d'ordine: convivenza!

In Italia e in Europa uomo e orso condividono lo stesso territorio e questo determina l'insorgenza di conflitti che possono essere una minaccia concreta alla conservazione di questa specie.

Ridurre il conflitto uomo-orso

e promuovere la convivenza è un obiettivo prioritario per garantire un futuro all'orso bruno marsicano e acquistando questo prodotto contribuisce concretamente a raggiungerlo!

Il **marchio Bear Friendly** del Parco Nazionale della Maiella è infatti un premio che viene concesso ai produttori che applicano buone pratiche per prevenire l'insorgenza del conflitto uomo-orso e per salvaguardare l'ecosistema dove vive l'orso bruno marsicano.



Come fa un prodotto a diventare Bear Friendly?

Il marchio *Bear Friendly* è concesso agli apicoltori e agli agricoltori che, nel territorio dei comuni del Parco Nazionale della Maiella, **prevencono i danni da orso** attraverso l'uso di recinzioni elettrificate e che **applicano sistemi di produzione che favoriscono la biodiversità e la salute dell'ecosistema**, come l'allevamento dell'ape autoctona *Apis mellifera ligustica*, la coltivazione con metodi di agricoltura biologica, la coltivazione di varietà antiche, l'applicazione di metodi di produzione agricola a basso apporto di prodotti fitosanitari.

