



LIFE ARCPROM



ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ
HUMAN

ΑΡΚΟΥΔΑ
ORSO
BEAR

1/4

LIFE18 NAT/GR/000768

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

E3.2 Report on activities to ensure replicability & transferability of project actions



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SUMMARY

Despite the initial difficulties and delays that arose in the development of the project's LIFE ARCPROM actions, due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the Project Team has made intensive efforts to disseminate the knowledge and experience gained from its actions so that they can be adopted by similar organisations across Europe. The report, which describes the project's replication and transfer activities, shows that the efforts have significantly exceeded the initial objectives:

- **Poison Bait Seminars:** The project beneficiaries organised five seminars and four technical meetings, surpassing the initially planned three seminars. These events reached a total of 123 staff members from various governmental and non-governmental organizations in Greece and neighbouring Balkan countries. The seminars included presentations on Anti-Poison Dog Units (ADUs) and Bear Emergency Teams. The ADUs were also deployed in four real-world poisoning incidents, providing a practical opportunity to transfer knowledge to local authorities.
- **“Problem” Bear Management Seminars:** A seminar was held at Prespa National Park with 21 participants from Greece, Albania, and North Macedonia. The project also held two webinars in partnership with the LIFE IP4Natura project, which reached a total of 227 individuals, including government officials, students, farmers, and other citizens. These webinars were organized at no cost to the LIFE ARCPROM project. In Italy, MNP and WWF organized a meeting in Sulmona, inviting all the protected areas (National Parks, Regional Parks, Nature Reserves, etc.) and authorities falling in the Apennine brown bear range, as well as members of the LIFE BEAR-SMART CORRIDORS to promote the replication of methods used to manage problematic/confident bears. A total of 24 people belonging to 9 entities participated.
- **Meetings with Authorities:** The project organized five meetings with officers from the Green Fund, NECCA, and the Ministry of Environment/Forestry Service, exceeding the initial plan for one meeting. These meetings facilitated discussions on financial support, potential replication of project actions in other protected areas, and led to the establishment of the “National Platform on Coexistence of People with Large Carnivores” in Greece.
- **“Bear-Friendly” Label Seminars:** In Greece, the UTH team introduced the “RESPECT Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label” at two major events. These seminars highlighted how the label links environmental conservation with local economic development. An exhibition of “RESPECT” labelled products at the Agricultural Conference “EPI GIS, V” generated significant interest and enhanced the project's visibility. In Italy, a specific meeting was organized with the Sibillini National Park, and, additionally, the Bear Friendly label was also one of the issues addressed during the meeting organized by MNP and WWF to promote the replication of the LIFE ARCPROM actions in the other areas falling in the Apennine brown bear range.
- **International Workshop:** The project’s International Conference in Larissa, held from February 25-27, 2025, attracted 185 participants from six countries. A special workshop during the conference led to the decision to establish a Network of organizations and experts on Large Carnivore Conservation in Southern Europe. The participants agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize the network's function as a forum for knowledge exchange and cooperation. The network is designed to be an informal body, not a legal entity, that encourages collaboration among its members.

We estimate that **at least 1022 individuals** improved their capacity or knowledge through various replication activities, events, and seminars:

- **Poison Bait Mitigation:** 123 staff members attended five seminars and four technical meetings on the mitigation of illegal poison baits.
- **Problem Bear Management:** A total of 248 people attended seminars and webinars on managing “problem” bears: 21 participants at a seminar in Prespa National Park, 153 staff members at the July 2024 webinar, 74 attendants at the April 2025 webinar, and 24 participants in the meeting organised by MNP and WWF.

- **"Bear-Friendly" Practices:** An estimated 432 people attended seminars and events promoting "bear-friendly" products and practices. This includes 24 staff members at a meeting in Sulmona, 8 staff members at the meeting in the Sibillini National Park, an estimated 50 attendants at an event in Kalampaka, and at least 350 people at the Agricultural Conference "EPI GIS, V".
- **International Workshop:** 185 participants attended the International Conference, and 32 of them specifically participated in a workshop on establishing a large carnivore conservation network.
- **Data Collection Training:** Two (2) trainees received capacity building for data collection through interviews.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Παρά τις αρχικές δυσκολίες και καθυστερήσεις που προέκυψαν στην ανάπτυξη των δράσεων του έργου LIFE ARCPROM λόγω της πανδημίας του Covid 19, η Ομάδα του Έργου κατέβαλε εντατικές προσπάθειες για τη διάδοση της γνώσης και της εμπειρίας που αποκτήθηκαν από τις δράσεις της, ώστε να μπορέσουν να υιοθετηθούν από παρόμοιους οργανισμούς σε όλη την Ευρώπη. Η έκθεση, η οποία περιγράφει τις δραστηριότητες αναπαραγωγής και μεταφοράς του έργου, δείχνει ότι οι προσπάθειες έχουν ξεπεράσει σημαντικά τους αρχικούς στόχους.

- **Σεμινάρια για τα δηλητηριασμένα δολώματα:** Οι δικαιούχοι του έργου διοργάνωσαν πέντε σεμινάρια και τέσσερις τεχνικές συναντήσεις, ξεπερνώντας τα αρχικά προγραμματισμένα τρία σεμινάρια. Αυτές οι εκδηλώσεις προσέλκυσαν συνολικά 123 μέλη προσωπικού από διάφορους κυβερνητικούς και μη κυβερνητικούς οργανισμούς στην Ελλάδα και στις γειτονικές βαλκανικές χώρες. Τα σεμινάρια περιλάμβαναν παρουσιάσεις για τις Μονάδες Αντιμετώπισης Δηλητηριασμένων Δολωμάτων (ADUs) και τις Ομάδες Έκτακτης Ανάγκης για την Αρκούδα. Οι ADUs αναπτύχθηκαν επίσης σε τέσσερα πραγματικά περιστατικά δηλητηρίασης, παρέχοντας μια έμπρακτη ευκαιρία για τη μεταφορά γνώσης στις τοπικές αρχές.
- **Σεμινάρια Διαχείρισης «Προβληματικών» Αρκούδων:** Ένα σεμινάριο πραγματοποιήθηκε στο Εθνικό Πάρκο Πρεσπών με 21 συμμετέχοντες από την Ελλάδα, την Αλβανία και τη Βόρεια Μακεδονία. Το έργο πραγματοποίησε επίσης δύο διαδικτυακά σεμινάρια σε συνεργασία με το έργο LIFE IP4Natura, τα οποία προσέλκυσαν συνολικά 227 άτομα, συμπεριλαμβανομένων κυβερνητικών αξιωματούχων, φοιτητών, αγροτών και άλλων πολιτών. Αυτά τα διαδικτυακά σεμινάρια οργανώθηκαν χωρίς κόστος για το έργο LIFE ARCPROM. Στην Ιταλία, το Εθνικό Πάρκο (MNP) και το WWF διοργάνωσαν μια συνάντηση στη Sulmona, προσκαλώντας όλες τις προστατευόμενες περιοχές (Εθνικά Πάρκα, Περιφερειακά Πάρκα, Φυσικά Καταφύγια κ.λπ.) και τις άλλες αρμόδιες αρχές στην περιοχή εξάπλωσης της καφέ αρκούδας στα Απέννινα, καθώς και στελέχη του έργου LIFE BEAR-SMART CORRIDORS, για να προωθήσουν την αναπαραγωγή των μεθόδων που χρησιμοποιούνται για τη διαχείριση προβληματικών/εξοικειωμένων αρκούδων. Συνολικά συμμετείχαν 24 άτομα που ανήκαν σε 9 φορείς.
- **Συναντήσεις με τις Αρχές:** Το έργο διοργάνωσε πέντε συναντήσεις με στελέχη του «Πράσινου Ταμείου», του ΟΦΥΠΕΚΑ (Οργανισμός Φυσικού Περιβάλλοντος και Κλιματικής Αλλαγής) και του Υπουργείου Περιβάλλοντος/Δασικής Υπηρεσίας, ξεπερνώντας το αρχικό σχέδιο για μία συνάντηση. Αυτές οι συναντήσεις διευκόλυναν τις συζητήσεις για οικονομική στήριξη, πιθανή αναπαραγωγή των δράσεων του έργου σε άλλες προστατευόμενες περιοχές, και οδήγησαν στην καθιέρωση της «Εθνικής Πλατφόρμας Συνύπαρξης Ανθρώπων με Μεγάλα Σαρκοφάγα» στην Ελλάδα.
- **Σεμινάρια για τη σήμανση "Φιλικό προς την Αρκούδα":** Στην Ελλάδα, η ομάδα του Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλίας παρουσίασε το «Σήμα Προστασίας της Άγριας Ζωής και της Βιοποικιλότητας RESPECT» σε δύο μεγάλες εκδηλώσεις στην Ελλάδα. Αυτά τα σεμινάρια τόνισαν τον τρόπο με τον οποίο η ετικέτα συνδέει την περιβαλλοντική προστασία με την τοπική οικονομική ανάπτυξη. Μια έκθεση προϊόντων με την ετικέτα "RESPECT" στο Γεωργικό Συνέδριο "EPI GIS, V" δημιούργησε σημαντικό ενδιαφέρον και ενίσχυσε την προβολή του έργου. Στην Ιταλία,

διοργανώθηκε μια ειδική με το θέμα συνάντηση με το Εθνικό Πάρκο Sibillini. Επιπλέον, το σήμα «Φιλικό προς τις Αρκούδες» ήταν ένα από τα θέματα που συζητήθηκαν κατά τη διάρκεια της συνάντησης που διοργάνωσαν το Εθνικό Πάρκο Sibillini και το WWF για την προώθηση της αναπαραγωγής των δράσεων του LIFE ARCPROM σε άλλες περιοχές στη ζώνη εξάπλωσης της καφέ αρκούδας στα Απέννινα Όρη.

- **Διεθνές Εργαστήριο:** Το Διεθνές Συνέδριο του έργου στη Λάρισα, που πραγματοποιήθηκε από τις 25 έως τις 27 Φεβρουαρίου 2025, προσέλκυσε 185 συμμετέχοντες από έξι χώρες. Ένα ειδικό εργαστήριο κατά τη διάρκεια του Συνεδρίου οδήγησε στην απόφαση να δημιουργηθεί ένα Δίκτυο οργανώσεων και εμπειρογνομόνων για τη Διατήρηση των Μεγάλων Σαρκοφάγων στη Νότια Ευρώπη. Οι συμμετέχοντες συμφώνησαν να υπογράψουν ένα Μνημόνιο Συνεργασίας για την επισημοποίηση της λειτουργίας του δικτύου ως φόρουμ για την ανταλλαγή γνώσεων και την προώθηση της συνεργασίας μεταξύ τους. Το δίκτυο έχει σχεδιαστεί για να είναι ένα άτυπο όργανο, όχι νομική οντότητα, που ενθαρρύνει τη συνεργασία μεταξύ των μελών του.

Εκτιμούμε ότι **τουλάχιστον 1022 άτομα** βελτίωσαν την ικανότητα ή τις γνώσεις τους μέσω διαφόρων δραστηριοτήτων αναπαραγωγής, εκδηλώσεων και σεμιναρίων:

- **Αντιμετώπιση των δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων:** 123 στελέχη παρακολούθησαν πέντε σεμινάρια και τέσσερις τεχνικές συναντήσεις για τη μείωση της παράνομης χρήσης δηλητηριασμένων δολωμάτων.
- **Διαχείριση «προβληματικών» αρκούδων:** Συνολικά 272 άτομα παρακολούθησαν σεμινάρια και διαδικτυακά σεμινάρια για τη διαχείριση των «προβληματικών» αρκούδων: 21 συμμετέχοντες σε ένα σεμινάριο στο Εθνικό Πάρκο Πρεσπών, 153 μέλη προσωπικού στο διαδικτυακό σεμινάριο του Ιουλίου 2024, 74 συμμετέχοντες στο διαδικτυακό σεμινάριο του Απριλίου 2025 και 24 συμμετέχοντες στην συνάντηση που οργάνωσαν MNP και WWF στην Ιταλία.
- **Πρακτικές "Φιλικές προς την Αρκούδα":** Περίπου 432 άτομα παρακολούθησαν σεμινάρια και εκδηλώσεις που προωθούν προϊόντα και πρακτικές φιλικές προς την αρκούδα. Αυτό περιλαμβάνει 24 μέλη προσωπικού σε μια συνάντηση στη Sulmona, 8 στελέχη στη συνάντηση στο Εθνικό Πάρκο Sibillini, περίπου 50 συμμετέχοντες σε μια εκδήλωση στην Καλαμπάκα και τουλάχιστον 350 άτομα στο Γεωργικό Συνέδριο "EPI GIS, V".
- **Διεθνές Εργαστήριο:** 185 συμμετέχοντες παρακολούθησαν το Διεθνές Συνέδριο, ενώ 32 από αυτούς συμμετείχαν στο ειδικό εργαστήριο για την καθιέρωση ενός δικτύου διατήρησης μεγάλων σαρκοφάγων.
- **Κατάρτιση στη Συλλογή Δεδομένων:** Δύο (2) εκπαιδευόμενοι έλαβαν κατάρτιση για τη συλλογή δεδομένων μέσω συνεντεύξεων.

RIASSUNTO

Nonostante le difficoltà iniziali e i ritardi che sono sorti nello sviluppo delle azioni del progetto LIFE ARCPROM a causa della pandemia di Covid 19, il team di progetto ha compiuto sforzi intensi per diffondere le conoscenze e l'esperienza acquisite dalle sue azioni in modo che possano essere adottate da organizzazioni simili in tutta Europa. Il rapporto, che descrive le attività di replicazione e trasferimento del progetto, mostra che gli sforzi hanno superato in modo significativo gli obiettivi iniziali.

- **Seminari sulle esche avvelenate:** I beneficiari del progetto hanno organizzato cinque seminari e quattro incontri tecnici, superando i tre seminari inizialmente previsti. Questi eventi hanno raggiunto un totale di 123 membri del personale di varie organizzazioni governative e non governative in Grecia e nei paesi balcanici limitrofi. I seminari includevano presentazioni sulle Unità Cinofile Anti-Veleno (ADUs) e sulle Squadre di Emergenza Orso. Le ADUs sono state impiegate anche in quattro incidenti di avvelenamento reali, offrendo un'opportunità pratica per il trasferimento di conoscenze alle autorità locali.

- **Seminari sulla gestione degli orsi "problematici":** Un seminario si è tenuto nel Parco Nazionale di Prespa con 21 partecipanti provenienti da Grecia, Albania e Macedonia del Nord. Il progetto ha anche tenuto due webinar in collaborazione con il progetto LIFE IP4Natura, che hanno raggiunto un totale di 227 persone, inclusi funzionari governativi, studenti, agricoltori e altri cittadini. Questi webinar sono stati organizzati senza costi per il progetto LIFE ARCPROM. In Italia PNM e WWF hanno organizzato un incontro a Sulmona invitando tutte le aree protette (Parchi Nazionali, Parchi Regionali, Riserve Naturali etc.) e le autorità ricadenti nell'areale dell'orso bruno marsicano, così come i membri del progetto LIFE BEAR-SMART CORRIDORS, per promuovere la replicazione dei metodi usati nel PNM per gestire gli orsi confidenti/problematici. Un totale di 24 persone appartenenti a 9 Enti hanno preso parte a questo incontro.
- **Incontri con le autorità:** Il progetto ha organizzato cinque incontri con funzionari del "Green Fund", della NECCA e del Ministero dell'Ambiente/Servizio Forestale, superando il piano iniziale di un incontro. Questi incontri hanno facilitato le discussioni sul sostegno finanziario, sulla possibile replicazione delle azioni del progetto in altre aree protette, e hanno portato alla creazione della "Piattaforma Nazionale per la Coesistenza di Persone e Grandi Carnivori" in Grecia.
- **Seminari sull'etichetta "Bear-Friendly":** In Grecia, il team ha introdotto la "RESPECT Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label" in due importanti eventi in Grecia. Questi seminari hanno evidenziato come l'etichetta colleghi la conservazione ambientale con lo sviluppo economico locale. Un'esposizione di prodotti con l'etichetta "RESPECT" al Convegno Agricolo "EPI GIS, V" ha generato un interesse significativo e ha migliorato la visibilità del progetto. In Italia, un incontro specifico è stato organizzato da MNP e WWF presso la sede del Parco Nazionale dei Monti Sibillini. Inoltre, il progetto relativo al marchio Bear Friendly è stato presentato anche durante l'incontro organizzato a Sulmona per promuovere la replicazione delle azioni del LIFE ARCPROM nelle altre porzioni dell'areale dell'orso Bruno marsicano.
- **Workshop internazionale:** La Conferenza Internazionale del progetto a Larissa, tenutasi dal 25 al 27 febbraio 2025, ha attirato 185 partecipanti da sei paesi. Un workshop speciale durante la conferenza ha portato alla decisione di istituire una Rete di organizzazioni e esperti sulla Conservazione dei Grandi Carnivori nel Sud Europa. I partecipanti hanno concordato di firmare un Memorandum d'Intesa per formalizzare la funzione della rete come un forum per lo scambio di conoscenze e la cooperazione. La rete è stata concepita come un organismo informale, non un'entità legale, che incoraggia la collaborazione tra i suoi membri.

Stimiamo che **almeno 1022** persone abbiano migliorato la loro capacità o conoscenza attraverso varie attività di replicazione, eventi e seminari:

- **Mitigazione delle esche avvelenate:** 123 membri del personale hanno partecipato a cinque seminari e quattro incontri tecnici sulla mitigazione dell'uso illegale delle esche avvelenate.
- **Gestione degli orsi "problematici":** Un totale di 272 persone ha partecipato a seminari e webinar sulla gestione degli orsi "problematici": 21 partecipanti a un seminario nel Parco Nazionale di Prespa, 153 membri del personale al webinar di luglio 2024, 74 partecipanti al webinar di aprile 2025 e 24 partecipanti all'incontro organizzato a Sulmona da PNM e WWF.
- **Pratiche "Bear-Friendly":** Si stima che 432 persone abbiano partecipato a seminari ed eventi che promuovono prodotti e pratiche "bear-friendly". Questo include 24 membri del personale a un incontro a Sulmona, 8 membri del personale all'incontro tenutosi nel Parco Nazionale dei Monti Sibillini, circa 50 partecipanti a un evento a Kalampaka e almeno 350 persone al Convegno Agricolo "EPI GIS, V".
- **Workshop internazionale:** 185 partecipanti hanno partecipato alla Conferenza Internazionale, e 32 di loro hanno partecipato specificamente a un workshop sull'istituzione di una rete di conservazione dei grandi carnivori.
- **Formazione sulla raccolta dati:** Due (2) tirocinanti hanno ricevuto un potenziamento delle capacità per la raccolta di dati tramite interviste.

Part 1: Foreseen activities to ensure replication

Beyond the successful implementation of the actions of a project supported by the LIFE Programme, an important concern of the implementing partners is to ensure that the experience and knowledge gained from the implementation of the proposal are disseminated more widely and that the solutions given to specific problems or threats will be reproduced and adopted by similar bodies in other regions or countries of the European Union.

For this purpose, from the stage of the proposal drafting, a set of events facilitating replication and transfer was foreseen, including the following:

Seminars on the mitigation of the illegal use of poison baits:

Three (3) seminars in selected areas, preferably Parks or other areas where incidents of poisoned baits occur, for presenting and discussing the problem and its extent with local authorities, other wildlife management actors, and key stakeholder groups (especially hunters and livestock raisers).

Seminars on the management of bears exposing a “habituated” behaviour and/or causing frequent damage to agriculture

Four (4) seminars (2 in Greece & 2 in Italy) organised in Parks/areas outside the project area to ensure replication and transfer of prevention measures and use of special aversive means in hot-spots of bear-human interference, of bear-proof refuse containers, and of electric fences into/near human settlements.

It was planned to make special reference to prevention measures that can be applied by farmers, beekeepers, and animal breeders, including the use of LGDs (Livestock Guarding Dogs), utilising the LGD Owners Network created by the project. Besides lectures and presentations, demonstration of the operation of Bear Emergency Teams and of bear-dog units was also foreseen.

Special meeting with officers of the “Green Fund”, the Ministry of Environment/Forestry Service & the Ministry of Citizen Protection

The special meeting was planned to contribute substantially to the replication and transfer of this measure to other areas, within the bear distribution in Greece by officers and administrators of the “Green Fund”, the Ministry of Environment/Forestry Service and the Ministry of Citizen Protection.

Seminars on the production of bear-friendly agricultural products and the adoption of bear-friendly practices by tourist holdings

Seminars (2 in Greece & 1 in Italy) addressing agriculture professionals (farmers, beekeepers & livestock raisers), people employed in tourism (ecotourism offices & guest houses) & local/regional authorities.

International workshop for the transfer of best practices to neighbouring countries:

A special workshop addressing participants of the project Closing Conference from neighbouring countries (Albania, Republic of Northern Macedonia & Bulgaria) to transfer best practices & lessons learned during implementation of the project in Greece & Italy.

Although the organisation of replication activities started before the elaboration of the Replicability Plan in 2024, its elaboration identified actions with the highest replicability/transferability potential and guided the project beneficiaries on the most important initiatives they should undertake.

Ultimately, as explained in the second Part of this report, the replication and transfer activities organised within the framework of the project far exceeded the initial design and the objectives that had been set.

Part 2: Implementation of replication activities

2.1 Implementation of the foreseen replication activities

2.1.1 Seminars on mitigation of the illegal use of poison baits

The Project Team considered it useful to implement more than three seminars in the context of the implementation of this task:

On 8 May 2023, a first seminar on the subject was organised by CALLISTO and NECCA at Prespa National Park, in cooperation with the project “Tri-Point Brown Bear” (TBB), which was implemented in the transborder area between Greece, Albania, and North Macedonia, with financial support by the German NGO “Euronatur”.



Figure 1: Seminar on the illegal use of poison baits and the use of ADUs, at Prespa National Park, in cooperation with the project “Tri-Point Brown Bear” (TBB)

Mr. D. Vavylis, NECCA, presented the subject to the participants of the meeting in the Town Hall of Prespes Municipality, focusing on particular activities of the LIFE APCPROM project and of NECCA to fight the illegal use of poison baits, such as the operation of Antipoison Dog Units (ADUs) in synergy with Bear Emergency Teams.

The presentation was attended by *fifteen (15) participants* from Greece, Albania and N. Macedonia, staff members of governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Antipoison Canine Units (A.C.U) in synergy with Bear Emergency Teams



Prespa, 08/05/2023
Tri-Point Brown Bear Workshop

Dimitris Vavylis
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Figure 2: First page of the presentation made on the illegal use of poison baits and the use of ADUs

In addition to these events, four (4) seminars on mitigation of the illegal use of poison baits were organised by NECCA/ARCPROM, in four different towns:

- Arta, October 26, 2023, Grigoriadou Elpida: 20 participants
- Ioannina, October 27, 2023, Grigoriadou Elpida: 26 participants
- Pramanta Ioannina, October 28, 2023, Grigoriadou Elpida: 19 participants
- Metsovo, November 03, 2023, Korakis Athanasios: 19 participants

Namely, the four seminars were attended by *eighty-four (84)* participants, totally.

In addition to these events, four (4) technical meetings on mitigation of the illegal use of poison baits were organised by NECCA/ARCPROM, in four different towns, following the activities organised for replication of the Sub-action C3.1 (“Operation of Anti-Poison Dog Units - ADUs) by using the RMNP’s ADU and applying the protocol established in the framework of the project in four (4) incidents of illegal use of poisoned baits in areas outside the borders of the National Park: Ferres, Lekani, Isaia, and Messouni. The technical meetings were attended by 24 staff members of the local authorities involved in the treatment of the poisoning incidents. Please see details in paragraph 2.2.1 below (“Replication of the Sub-action C3.1”).

The incidents were dealt in collaboration with the competent authorities and has been an opportunity for transfer of the experience gained & lessons learned to staff members of the services involved, encouraging the replication of similar initiatives and activities successfully in other incidents or/and improving their performance. Consequently, four more seminars organised on the subject for the staff members of the services involved. Therefore, instead of the three seminars foreseen in the framework of the project proposal, finally, five (5) seminars and four (4) technical meetings were organised, that were attended by 123 staff members of Parks and other governmental and non- governmental organisations from Greece and neighbouring Balkan countries.

2.1.2 Seminars on management of bears exposing a “habituated” behaviour or/and causing unusually frequent damage to agriculture in Greece

In cooperation with the project “Tri-Point Brown Bear” (see above), a seminar was organised on 9 May 2023, at Prespa National Park. Staff members of CALLISTO, NECCA, and UTH presented techniques used in LIFE ARCPROM for managing “problem” bears and for supporting damage prevention measures.

The seminar, which included an open-air demonstration of the equipment used by Bear Emergency Teams in Greece, attended by *twenty-one (21) participants* from Greece, Albania and N. Macedonia, staff members of the Forestry services, NGOs, NECCA and other stakeholders (gamekeepers, etc.).



Figures 3 & 4: Seminar and open-air demonstration of the equipment used by BETs in Greece (Prespa National Park)

Furthermore, in cooperation of the LIFE Projects “LIFE ARCPROM” and “LIFE IP4Natura”, Dr. Yorgos Mertzanis, bear expert, and staff member of CALLISTO and of the LIFE ARCPROM Project Team, presented the same subject in two webinars, held on 2 July 2024, and 8 April 2025 respectively.

The July 2024 webinar was addressed to the competent authorities such as forestry and veterinary services, protected areas management units of NECCA, central ministry services, regional and decentralized administration authorities, etc., while the April 2025 webinar was addressed to all interested groups of citizens related to Natura 2000 areas, either through their professional activity or as members of civil society.

In particular, the July 2024 webinar was attended by *one hundred and fifty-three (153) staff members* of the aforementioned competent authorities (Ministry of Environment and Energy, Forestry Service, Ministry of Rural Development and Food, Ministry of Citizen Protection, Decentralised Administrations, NECCA, ELGA, Regional and Municipal Authorities, Local Development Agencies, etc.), while the April 2025 webinar was attended by *seventy-four (74) attendants*, including staff members of Universities and Research Institutes, Schools, Beekeeper Associations, Non-Governmental Organisations, consultants, teachers, students, farmers, as well as other citizens and individuals.

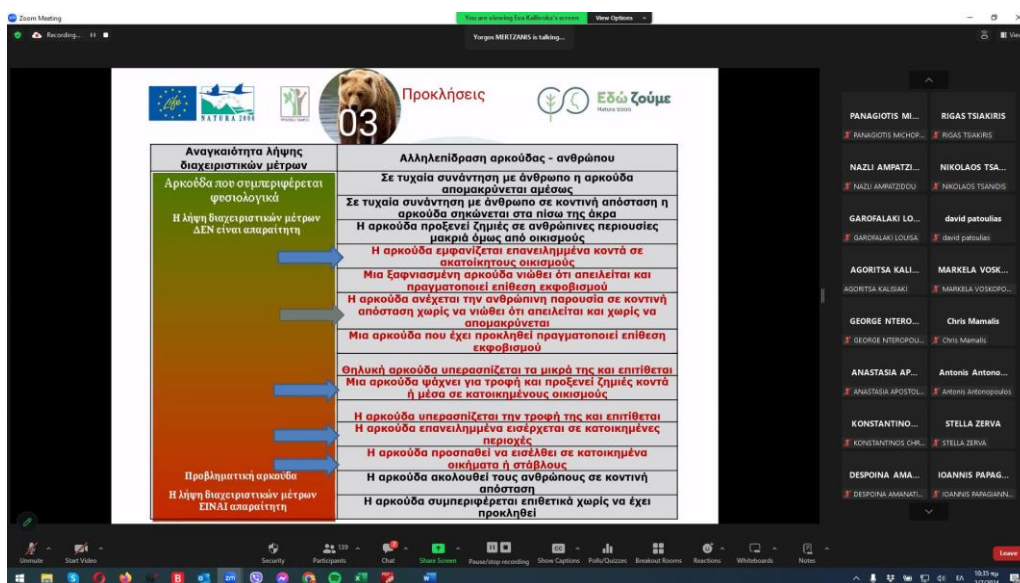


Figure 5: Screenshot from the webinar of July 2024

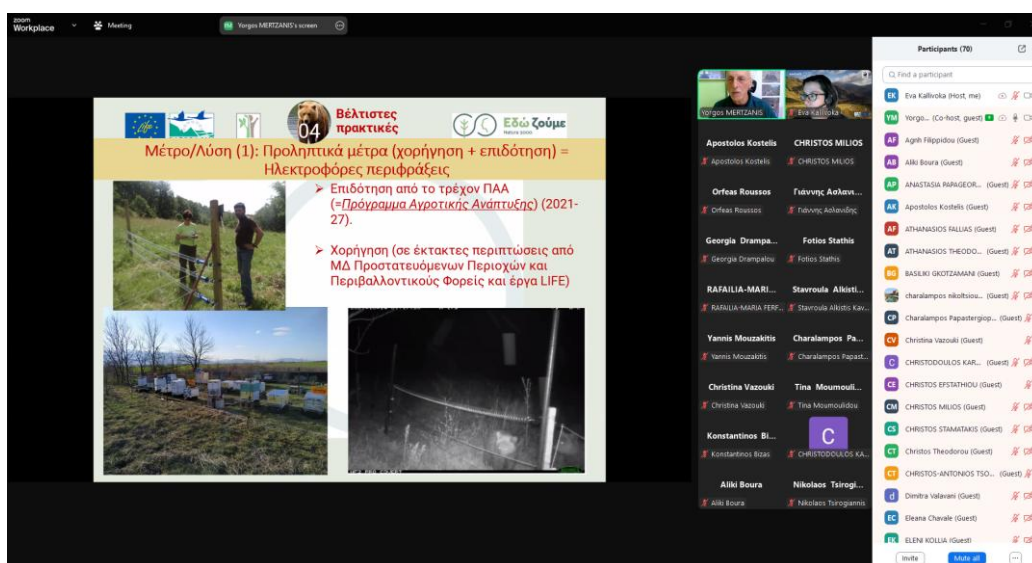


Figure 6: Screenshot from the webinar of April 2025

Πόσο ενδιαφέρον βρήκατε το περιεχόμενο του σεμιναρίου;
66 responses

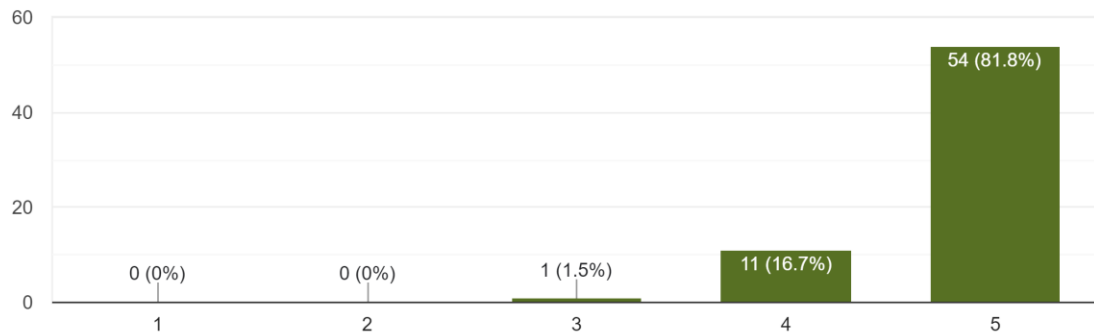


Figure 7: “How interesting did you find the seminar?”: Responses of participants on the evaluation questionnaire (Webinar July 2024)

Πόσο χρήσιμο θεωρείτε το περιεχόμενο του σεμιναρίου για την ενασχόληση σας με τις προστατευόμενες περιοχές (εργασία, αναψυχή κ.α)
67 responses

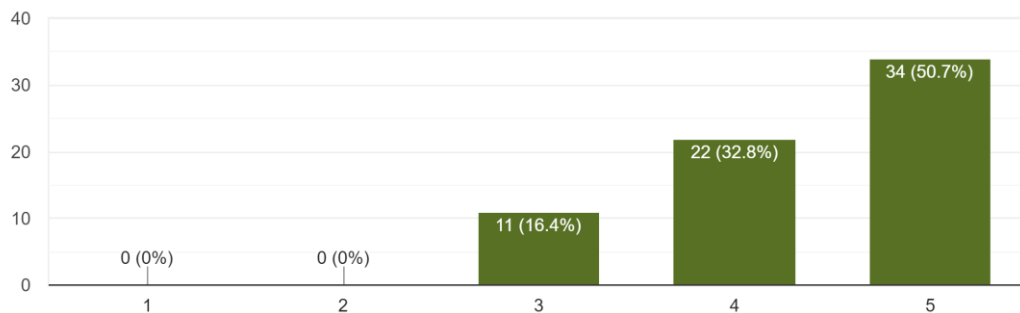


Figure 8: “How useful did you find the seminar in relation to your involvement with protected areas (work, recreation, etc.)?”: Responses of participants on the evaluation questionnaire (Webinar July 2024)

Θα συνιστούσατε σε έναν συνάδελφο να παρακολουθήσει αυτό το σεμινάριο;
67 responses

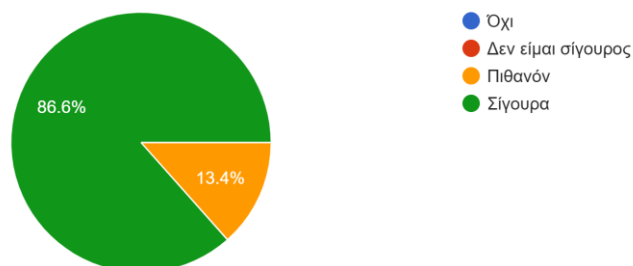


Figure 9: “Would you recommend a colleague to attend this seminar?”: Responses of participants on the evaluation questionnaire (Webinar July 2024)

The successful webinars were organised by personnel of the WWF Greece (Associated Beneficiary of the “LIFE IP4Natura”), with no cost for the LIFE ARCPROM project.

2.1.3 Seminars on the management of bears exposing a “habituated” behaviour or/and causing unusually frequent damage to agriculture in Italy

In Italy, the implementation of 2 seminars was foreseen. Specifically, a 2-day seminar had to be developed in the Gole del Sagittario Nature Reserve, a protected area that falls in the connection between the core central population of the Apennine brown bear and the Maiella National Park. However, MNP and WWF decided to review this plan to involve a higher number of protected areas and promote replicability in the rest of the Apennine brown bear range. In fact, a specific meeting to promote the replicability of the LIFE ARCPROM, with a specific focus on the management of problematic bears, was organized in the MNP headquarters in Sulmona, inviting 20 protected areas, 5 Regions, and the coordinating beneficiary of the LIFE BEAR-SMART CORRIDORS. A total of 26 subjects were thus invited, involving entities already interested in bear presence as well as the ones possibly interested in the future.

The agenda of the meeting (see figure 14, below) included presentations on the following issues:

- Stakeholder involvement
- The Bear Friendly label
- Involvement of volunteers
- The Bear Trail and the Bear Game
- Raising awareness activities
- Damage prevention and problematic bear management

This last issue was the main focus of the meeting; in fact, the whole afternoon was dedicated not only to the presentation of these arguments but also to the demonstration of the use of Critter Gitters, Pump Horns, and Pepper spray traps.



Figure 10: Staff members of protected areas, Regions, and the LIFE BEAR-SMART CORRIDORS attending the meeting held in Sulmona in December 2024 to promote the replicability of the Actions implemented during the LIFE ARCPROM.



Figure 11: MNP and WWF staff members presenting the actions implemented during the meeting held in Sulmona in December 2024 to promote the replicability of the Actions implemented during the LIFE ARCPROM.

The event (named: “ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE LIFE ARCPROM PROJECT AND THEIR POTENTIAL FOR REPLICABILITY IN THE RANGE OF THE APENNINE BROWN BEAR”) was held on December 12th, 2024, in the MNP headquarters in Sulmona, and a total of 24 people (1 with Zoom) from MNP, WWF, 6 other protected areas, the Molise Region and the LIFE Bear Smart Corridors project staff (represented by “Rewilding Apennines” and “Salviamo l’Orso” NGOs).



Figure 12: Session dedicated to the demonstration of the use of Pump Horns, Critter Gitter, and Pepper spray traps during the meeting held in Sulmona, December 2024, to promote the replicability of the Actions implemented.

In order to make the meeting an occasion to concretely promote the replication of the LIFE ARCPROM activities, at the end of the meeting, participants were invited to report on a board the actions considered as more interesting/feasible in their territory (Figure 4). In this way, the MNP/WWF staff could work with each organization, addressing specifically the actions they were more interested in.

	C1 Piattaforma	C6 Volontariato	C7 Prevenzione	C9 Deterrenti	C10 Bear Friendly	E5 Educ. Sentiero	E5 Gioco dell'orso	E2 Tovaglietta pub
PARCO NAZIONALE D'ABRUZZO								
LATIO E MOLISE								
RISERVA REG. GUARDIAFRESIA CAMPOCHI.						●	●	
PARCO NAZIONALE DEL GRAN SASSO E MONTI DELLA LAGA								
PARCO NAZIONALE MONTI SIBILLINI								
PARCO NATURALE REGIONALE DEI MONTI LUCRETILI								
PARCO NATURALE REGIONALE MONTI SIMBRUVINI		●	●	●		●	●	●
PARCO NATURALE REGIONALE SIRENTE VELINO		●	●	●				
PARCO REGIONALE DEL MATESE								
RISERVA NATURALE REGIONALE ABETINA DI ROSELLO			●		●	●	●	
RISERVA NATURALE REGIONALE CASCADE DEL VERDE								
RISERVA NATURALE REGIONALE DEL MONTE SALVINO								
RISERVA NATURALE REGIONALE GOLE DEL JAGITTARIO		●	●		●	●	●	●
RISERVA NATURALE REGIONALE GOLE DI SAN VENANZIO								
RISERVA NATURALE REGIONALE GROTTI DI WPPA								
RISERVA NATURALE REGIONALE LAGO DI POSTA FIBREND								
RISERVA NATURALE REGIONALE LAGO DI SAN DOMENICO E LAGO PIO								
RISERVA NATURALE REGIONALE MONTAGNE DELLA DUCHESSA			●	●		●	●	●
RISERVA NATURALE REGIONALE MONTE GENZANA ALTO GIZIO								
RISERVA NATURALE REGIONALE MONTE NAVAGNA E MONTE CERVIA								
RISERVA NATURALE REGIONALE SORGENTI DEL PESCARA								
RISERVA NATURALE REGIONALE ZONZOLO SCHIOPPO								
REGIONE LAZIO								
REGIONE MARCHE								
REGIONE MOLISE			●	●			●	
REGIONE UMBRIA								
LIFE BEAR-SMART CORRIDORS	●						●	

Figure 13: The board filled in by the different organizations that took part in the meeting held in Sulmona to identify the actions that piqued their interest in replication in their territory

The event was very successful and was followed by contacts with each single protected area/organization to share more details on the actions for which they showed interest. So far, one of the most important outcomes of the meeting is that the Sirente Velino Regional Park immediately proceeded to the purchase of the Critter Gitter devices, finding them an effective tool to manage a problematic bear roaming in their area.



ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE LIFE ARCPROM PROJECT AND THEIR POTENTIAL FOR REPLICABILITY IN THE RANGE OF THE APENNINE BROWN BEAR

Operational Headquarters of the Maiella National Park, Santo Spirito al Morrone Abbey, Via Badia, 28, Sulmona, 12/12/2024

10:00 – 10:30 Welcoming of participants and register of signatures.

10.30 – 10.50 The commitment of the Maiella National Park and WWF Italy in the protection of the Apennine brown bear (*Antonio Antonucci-MNP; Marco Galaverni-WWF*)

10.50 – 11.10 Stakeholder involvement: methods and strengths (*Anna Crimella-MNP attending from remote*)

11.10 – 11.30 The involvement of economic operators in bear conservation: the Bear Friendly label (*Antonio Pollutri-WWF; Giovanna Di Domenico-MNP*)

11.30 – 11.40: 10 minutes of debate

11:40 – 11:50 Coffee break offered by MNP

11.50 – 12.10 volunteers for the bear: the contribution of WWF short-term and long-term volunteers (*Marco Antonelli-WWF; Lucia Orecchini-WWF*)

12.10 – 12.30 The Bear Trail: planning, implementation and involvement of teachers and guides (*Giovanna Di Domenico-MNP; Lina Morzillo-WWF*)

12.30 – 12.40 The Bear Game (*Maria Peroni-MNP*)

12.40 – 12.50 Raising awareness activities (*Antonio Pollutri-WWF*)

12:50-13:00: 10 minutes of debate. 13:00 – 14:00 buffet offered by MNP

14:00 – 14:15: Prevention of damage to chicken coops: what strategies to implement (*Antonio Antonucci MNP; Giovanna Di Domenico-MNP*)

14:15 – 14:45: Experimental devices for deterring confident/problematic bears (*Antonio Antonucci MNP; Giovanna Di Domenico-MNP*)

14:45-15:30: debate, discussion and collection of interests on the LIFE ARCPROM activities by participants.

15:30- 16:00: Closing of the meeting

Figure 14: The programme of the Sulmona meeting

2.1.4 Special meetings with officers of the Green Fund, the Ministry of Environment/Forestry Service, and the Ministry of Citizen Protection

Five (5) meetings were organised with officers of the Green Fund, NECCA, and the Ministry of Environment/Forestry Service. In all meetings, the Project Manager, Spyros Psaroudas, represented the LIFE ARCPROM project.

- A first, preparatory meeting (informal) was organised immediately after the start of the project, on 8 October 2019. The Project Manager visited the premises of the Green Fund in Athens and informed the Director of the Green Fund, Mr. Giorgos Protopapas, of the project objectives and actions, and requested the Green Fund's financial support and cooperation.
- On 4 December 2019, a meeting similar to the aforementioned one was organised in Athens, between the LIFE ARCPROM Project Manager and the special consultant of the Minister of Environment, Dr. Yiannis Mitsopoulos.
- On 27 September 2021, a meeting was organised at the premises of the RMNP (Rhodope Mountain range National Park) in Paranesti, Drama, with staff members of the RMNP Management Unit and the General Director of NECCA. The meeting centred on issues related to the implementation and replication of project actions by NECCA.
- On 27 October 2022, a meeting organised at the premises of NECCA in Athens, between the LIFE ARCPROM Project Manager, the Managing Director (K. Triantis) and the General Director (G. Mitsopoulos) of NECCA. A Cooperation Agreement in the frame of the Project was discussed as well as the potential replication of project actions in other protected areas of the country, beyond the three National Parks in which the LIFE ARCPROM project actions were implemented.
- On 10 December 2024, the Project Manager visited the central premises of the Forestry Service (Directorate of Forest Management) where he presented to staff members of the Directorate the work with Local Platforms in the framework of Action C1 of the LIFE ARCPROM project and requested the participation of the Forestry Service/ Ministry for Environment in the National Platform on Coexistence of People with large Carnivores in Greece. The National Platform launched one week later, on 18 December 2024, with representation of the Forestry Service.

2.1.5 Seminars on the production of bear-friendly agricultural products and the adoption of bear-friendly practices by tourist holdings

The Bear Friendly label is an initiative designed to encourage local businesses and organizations to adopt practices that support bear conservation and coexistence.

Seminars in Italy

Meeting in Sulmona, December 2024

In Italy, one seminar specific to the replication of the Bear Friendly label was foreseen. The Bear Friendly project presentation was thus one of the subjects presented in the meeting held in Sulmona in December 2024 for promoting replication of actions and activities implemented by the LIFE ARCPROM project. The issue was addressed with a presentation entitled "Involvement of economic operators in bear conservation: The Bear Friendly Label". The presentation was made by Antonio Pollutri/WWF and Giovanna Di Domenico/MNP and was attended by *24 staff members* of other National and Nature Parks, Regional Authorities, and local NGOs members of the LIFE BEAR-SMART CORRIDORS (see par. 2.1.3, above).

Special meeting in Sibillini National Park

Additionally, since the Sibillini National Park (SNP) showed interest in the argument early in 2025, a specific meeting aimed at presenting the LIFE ARCPROM and focusing on the Bear-Friendly label was organized by MNP and WWF. The Director of the SNP, as well as members of the technical staff, attended the meeting that was held in the SNP headquarters in Visso on March 1st, 2025.

Seminars in Greece

UTH team successfully participated in two such events introducing the RESPECT label initiative.

Participation in a thematic event, Kalampaka, Trikala, Thessaly Region

UTH team presented the RESPECT Label at a regional-level thematic event organized by the Development Agency of the Municipality of Trikala (KENAKAP SA), held on 21 November 2024 in Kalampaka. 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. As estimated, the event had 50 attendants.

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.



Figure 15: Professor Charalambos Billinis presenting the objectives and scope of the Bear-Friendly ‘RESPECT’ Label



Figure 16: The event's Agenda

Participation in the Agricultural Conference "EPI GIS, V", Ilis, Peloponnese Region

UTH team took part in the Agricultural Conference "EPI GIS, V," held on May 28, 2025, at the Ilis Conference Center of Aldemar Olympian Village.

The Conference was successfully organized for the 5th time in the area and brought together representatives of the political leadership, local authorities, the agri-food sector, academic institutions, and producers from across Greece, fostering dialogue on the contemporary challenges and prospects of agriculture. The main objective of the event was to highlight good practices and innovative solutions for sustainable rural development, while promoting collaboration between farmers, scientists, and entrepreneurs. The estimated attendance is at least 350 people.

Within this context, the Rector of the University of Thessaly, Prof. Charalambos Billinis, Head of the UTH team presented the work carried out under the LIFE ARCPROM project and introduced the creation of the "RESPECT" label for the protection of wildlife and biodiversity in Greece. The presentation took the form of a live interview, conducted by a journalist who posed thought-provoking questions to Prof. Billinis. With enthusiasm, he outlined the objectives and achievements of the initiative, capturing the audience's attention and stimulating further interest. They all concluded that the RESPECT initiative illustrated the tangible impact of the project's research activities on nature and wildlife conservation, while contributing to the modernization, competitiveness, and sustainability of Greek agriculture.



Figure 17: Conference official opening - Prof. Charalambos Billinis, UTH Rector



Figure 18: Maria Spentzou, PhD Candidate, Department of Veterinary Medicine, University of Thessaly, Prof. Charalambos Billinis, Rector of the University of Thessaly, Professor, Department of Veterinary Medicine. Moderator: Giouli Iliopoulou, Journalist, Patris newspaper

In addition, an exhibition of the “RESPECT” labeled products was organized by the project team within the Conference venue. The exhibition facilitated the dissemination of the experience gained through the development and application of the label. The exhibition contributed to raising awareness of the label, while also highlighting the practical dimension and market potential of the Project’s outcomes. The previous presentation of the action generated significant interest among the audience, which directly created increased engagement with the project’s exhibition. Many participants visited the products exhibition, the “RESPECT” labeled products exhibition, seeking further information and exploring

opportunities for future collaboration, thus enhancing the visibility and overall outreach of the project's results.



Figure 19: RESPECT LABEL products exhibition, Panagiota Argyraki, UTH team member



Figure 20: RESPECT LABEL products exhibition at the Ilis Conference Center of Aldemar Olympic Village (near the ancient site of Olympia on the west coast of Peloponnese)

2.1.6 International Workshop for the transfer of best practices to neighbouring countries

The International Conference of the European project LIFE ARCPROM was successfully held in the last week of February 2025 (25-27 February) in the city of Larissa. A total of 185 scientists, representatives of environmental organisations, universities, and institutions from Greece, Italy, Spain, Albania, North Macedonia, and Bulgaria participated in the conference.

On Wednesday, 26 February, a special workshop organised by CALLISTO in the context of the LIFE ARCPROM International Conference “on the Establishment of a Network of organizations and experts working on Conservation of Large Carnivores in Southern Europe”. A total of 32 *persons* participated in the workshop, 18 of whom came from Balkan and other European countries, outside of Greece. Other participants in the Conference attended parts of the workshop and specific presentations, without remaining in the room where the workshop took place the entire time.

The main objective of the workshop, which was organised as a side event of the International Conference, was the exchange of knowledge and the transfer of experience, as well as good practices and lessons learned during the implementation of the LIFE ARCPROM project in Greece and Italy. Another objective was the establishment or strengthening of transboundary cooperation between public authorities, institutions, and NGOs on issues related to the bear-human coexistence in transboundary areas.

The Conference Organising Team decided to broaden the audience of this workshop to include participants from other countries in Southern Europe, who present situations that differ from country to country, but also cases that are similar to each other.

A brief overview of current projects and initiatives for the conservation of brown bear populations in Southern Europe preceded the discussion on networking. Participants also had the opportunity to attend other sessions of the Conference, in which the actions of the LIFE ARCPROM project were presented, issues addressed to practically improve the conditions of coexistence between humans and bears, the problems that were encountered, the solutions that were provided, the lessons learned and the experiences gained in the project areas, in four National Parks in Greece and Italy.



Figure 21: The panel of the experts who participated in the presentations during the International Workshop in the framework of the LIFE ARCPROM Final Conference, 25-27 February 2025, Larissa



Figure 22: Beyond the presentation of the LIFE ARCPROM actions, other LIFE and transboundary projects were presented to facilitate experience and knowledge exchange

The participants of the workshop found it helpful to establish a Network of organisations and experts working on the Conservation of Large Carnivores in Southern Europe. They agreed to sign a Memorandum

of Understanding (MoU) where they clarify that the Network will operate as a forum for exchanging knowledge and experience, transferring good practices, and engaging in dialogue on issues concerning its participants. It will also function as an informal body of cooperation, without being a legal entity, which encourages the development of collaborations among its members/nodes. It will not bind or represent its members to third parties and will not be bound or represented by one or more of its members.

For details, the presentations made during the Workshop, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that was finally agreed upon, please see Deliverable E3.3 “Minutes of the international workshop for transfer of best practices to neighbouring countries, including Memorandum of Cooperation”

2.2 Implementation of additional replication activities

2.2.1 Replication of the Sub-action C3.1 (“Operation of Anti-Poison Dog Units - ADUs)

Replication of the Sub-action C3.1 (“Operation of Anti-Poison Dog Units - ADUs) was facilitated by using the RMNP’s ADU and applying the protocol established in the framework of the project in four (4) incidents of illegal use of poisoned baits in areas outside the borders of the National Park: Ferres, Lekani, Isaia, and Messouni.

The incidents were dealt in collaboration with the competent authorities and has been an opportunity for transfer of the experience gained & lessons learned to staff members of the services involved, encouraging the replication of similar initiatives and activities successfully in other incidents or/and improving their performance.

Notice please four (4) technical meetings on mitigation of the illegal use of poison baits were organised by NECCA/ARCPROM, in four different towns, following the activities organised for replication. Participation in these technical meetings is presented in the following table”:

Location	Dates	Organization Represented	Participants	Total
Ferres, Evros	14-15 03.2024	Special Detection Unit for Poisoned Baits 06 Volvi	1	
		Society for the Protection of Thrace Biodiversity	1	
		Forest Directorate of Alexandroupolis	2	
		M.U. of Evros Delta and Dadia National Parks	2	
		Deputy Mayor of Ferres, Municipality of Alexandroupolis	2	8
Messouni -Aigeiros, Komotini	11-13 04.2024	M.U. of Nestos - Vistonida and Rhodope National Parks (former EPAMATH)	2	
		Forest Office of Iasmos	1	
		Forest Office of Komotini	1	
		Directorate of Rural Economy, Regional Unit of Rhodope	1	
		Hunters Association of Macedonia-Thrace	1	6
Lekani Nestou	21-26 02.2024	Forest Directorate of Kavala	2	
		Directorate of Rural Economy, Regional Unit of Kavala	1	
		Private Citizens	3	6
Erateino Kavalas	10-12 02.2024	Forest Directorate of Kavala	2	
		Directorate of Rural Economy, Regional Unit of Kavala	1	
		Private Citizens	1	4

Technical details of the management of each incident are given below:

1. **Poisoning incident near the village Erateino Kavala (10-12.02.2024)**

On February 10, 2024, the Rodopi Mountain Range National Park (RMNP) was alerted by the Kavala Forestry District Department about a possible poison bait found that morning near a rural road in the village of Erateino Kavala. The poison bait was a small lamb, which a livestock guarding dog had partially eaten. The lamb's carcass was discovered 180 meters from the dog's pen. According to the dog's owner, a livestock breeder, the dog began foaming at the mouth and died two hours later.

On February 12, 2024, the RMNP's Anti-Poison Dog Unit (ADU) visited the location indicated by the Forestry Service to investigate the area. However, the lamb's carcass was gone when the ADU arrived. During the 1 hour and 12-minute search, the ADU handler walked 1.6 kilometres, and the dog covered 1.2 kilometres. About 50 meters into the search, they found two pieces of the lamb's skin and its head. Next to the head was a dead Western Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), which had likely consumed parts of the poisoned lamb.

The Kavala Veterinarian Services were immediately informed. The poison baits and the dead bird were collected and stored in a freezer at the Kavala Forestry Service District Department, pending toxicological analysis. The ADU returned to the area on February 15 for a second investigation but found nothing else. The Forestry Service later informed the RMNP that no samples were taken from the dog for analysis. The dog's body was cremated at a nearby facility under the supervision of the Forestry Service.



Figure 23: The lamb that was used as a possible poison bait and the dead Western Marsh Harrier that was found afterwards

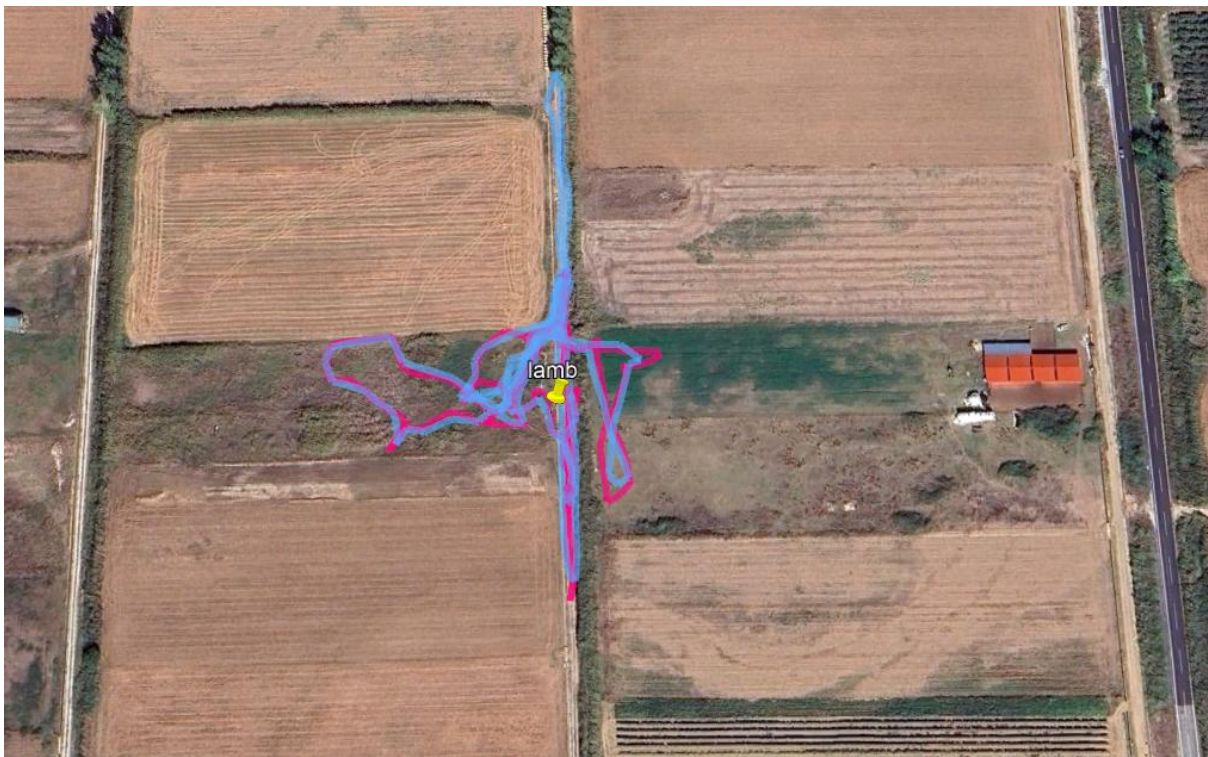


Figure 24: Incident of use of poisoned bait on 12/02/2024 in Erateino, Kavala. In blue, the route of the RMNP ADUs operator, and in magenta, the route of the dog

2. Poisoning Incident in Lekani Nestou (21-26.02.2024)

On February 21, 2024, the RMNP was informed by the Kavala Forestry Service about a potential poisoning incident in the Lekani area. A livestock breeder had reported that one of his dogs had died after eating from a cow carcass about 2 km from his pen. The dog died in the pen on the same day.

On Thursday 22-02-2024, RMNP's rangers visited the place and found the pelvis, the chest and two legs of the cow, but did not find the code identity of the animal to identify the owner. The next day, 23-02-2024, the place was visited by the Forestry Service. In this day, only the cow's chest was found. The Forestry Service took samples from the cow and the first dead dog (part of the tongue) to have a toxicological analysis of them and the rest were put for cremation.

On Thursday, February 22, 2024, RMNP rangers visited the site and discovered the cow's pelvis, chest, and two legs. However, they couldn't find any identification tags to trace the owner. The next day, February 23, the Forestry Service returned to the location, but only the cow's chest remained. They collected samples

from both the cow's remains and a piece of the dead dog's tongue for toxicological analysis. The rest of the remains were sent for cremation.

On February 26, 2024, the Anti-Poison Dog Unit (ADU) conducted a search of the area for more poison baits and affected animals. About 20 meters from the initial discovery, they found the cow's pelvis and a section of its spine. Further away, at about 60 meters, they located a piece of the animal's hide, and at a greater distance, the legs. All these remains were collected and stored.



Figure 25: The 2nd dead dog that was found, left and right one leg of the cow, possibly used as poison bait



Figure 26: Poisoned bait use incident on 21-26/02/2024 in Lekani Nestou. With blue the route of RMNP's ADUs handler and with magenta the dog's root

3. Poisoning Incident in Feres, Evros (14-15.03.2024)

In late March 2024, a joint operation by three Anti-Poison Dog Units (ADUs) responded to a major poisoning incident in the Ferres-Ardani area of Evros. The location is just a few kilometres from the Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Forest National Park and the "NOTIO DASIKO SYMPLEGMA EVROU" Natura 2000 site (GR2230008). Over a span of 10 days, the ADUs from the Society for the Protection of Biodiversity of Thrace (SPBT) and two from NECCA (RMNP's ADU and the Central Macedonia's ADU) located and collected 47 potentially poisoned animals.

Most of the animals were in an advanced state of decay, but some were fresher, suggesting that poisoned carcasses had been left in the area for a prolonged period, creating a continuous source of poison for other

animals. On the final day of the search, an Egyptian vulture, a strictly protected bird species in Greece, was spotted flying over the area. It would likely have become a victim if the team hadn't removed the carcasses in the previous days.

The Alexandroupolis Forestry Service lead the criminal investigation, working with the Evros Directorate of Agricultural Economy and Veterinary Medicine, which sent the samples for toxicological analysis as required by law.

The RMNP's/LIFE ARCPROM ADU played a crucial role in the search, finding and collecting five dead animals (one fox, one jackal, one common buzzard, one dog, and parts of an unknown animal) and a vase containing unknown, possibly poisonous, residues. The joint effort also allowed the three ADUs to exchange methods and techniques, with the LIFE ARCPROM project team sharing effective practices and real-time troubleshooting strategies.

The initial report came from the SPBT, which alerted the Management Unit of Evros Delta and Dadia National Parks. That unit then informed the Management Unit of Nestos-Vistonida & Rodopi National Park, as well as the Management Unit of Central Macedonia Protected Areas of NECCA.



Figure 27: Left, a dead Western Marsh Harrier and a fox and right the 3 ADUs that participated in the research

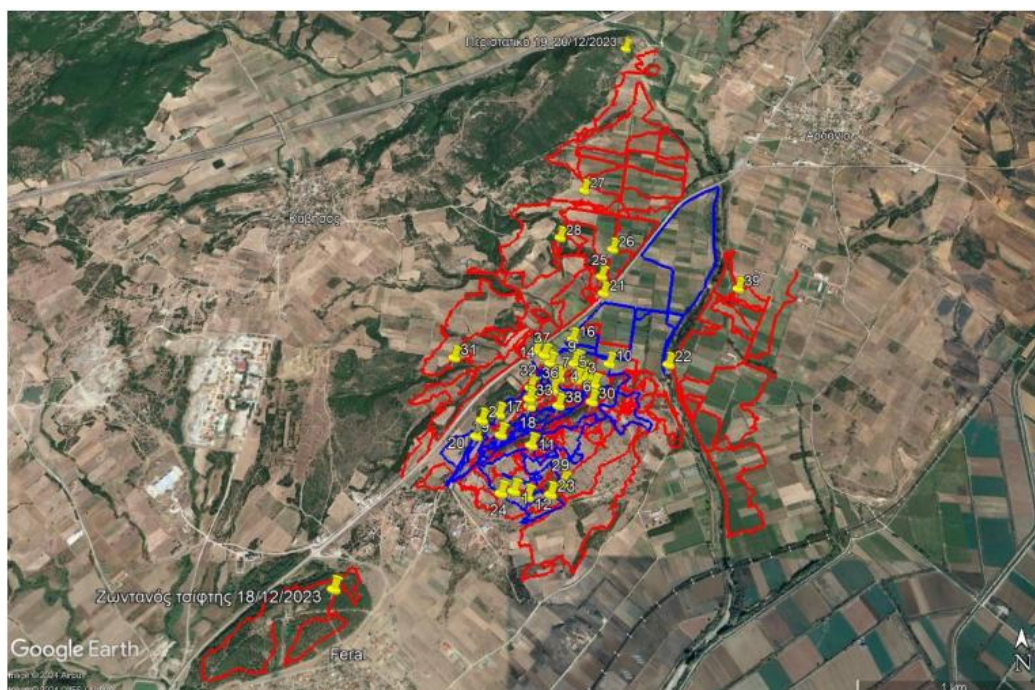


Figure 28: Map of the locations of the finds as a whole and patrols of ADUs (red lines = ADU of NGO SPBT and blue lines = ADU of NECCA). The map was created by Ms. Ela Kret, handler of the ADU of the NGO SPBT

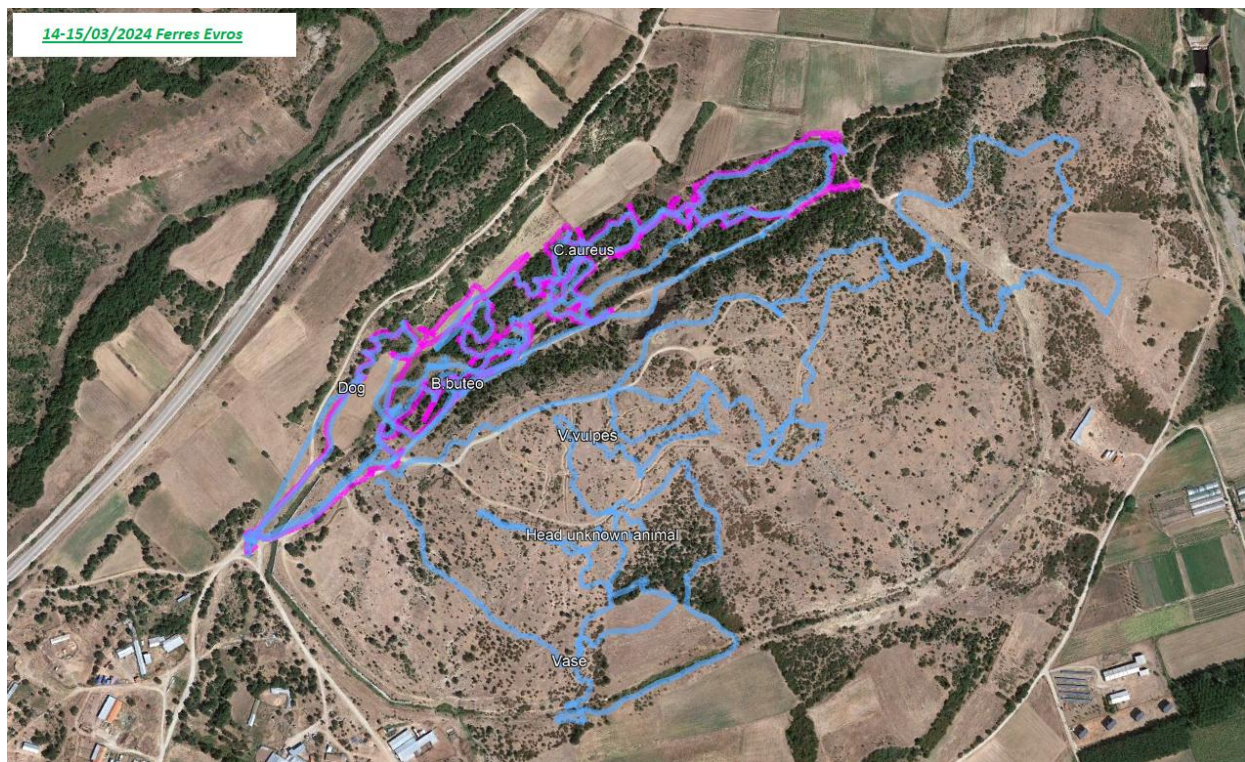


Figure 29: The map with the routes and the findings of RMNP's ADU in Ferres 14-15/06/2024 (Blue lines the route of the handler and with purple the route of the dog)

4. Poisoning Incident in Messouni-Aigeiros, Komotini (11-13.04.2024)

On April 10, 2024, a possible poisoning incident was reported in the rural area near the villages of Messouni and Aigeiros, Komotini.

The next day, April 11, the Management Unit (MU) of Nestos - Vistonida and Rodopi National Parks received a tip from a private citizen. The citizen reported that while they were walking with their dog, they found two dead animals—a raptor and a hedgehog. The dog began foaming at the mouth and trembling shortly after, showing clear signs of poisoning. Fortunately, the owner's quick actions saved the dog.

Later that same day, MU personnel and employees from the Iasmos Forestry Department visited the site. In coordination with the Forestry Department's Hunting Officer, they collected the two dead animals: a Western Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) and a Romanian Hedgehog (*Erinaceus roumanicus*). Both were stored in the MU's freezer. It's important to note that the Western Marsh Harrier is a protected and vulnerable species in Greece.

An autopsy of the animals provided strong evidence of poisoning, and the corresponding protocol was immediately activated. On April 12, our RMNP's Anti-Poison Dog Unit (ADU) arrived to search the area.

During the search, the ADU made two key discoveries:

- Approximately 180 meters northwest of the initial finding, they located two sardines covered in a white powder.
- About 723 meters northwest, they found a dead Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*). The fox showed signs that it was likely a nursing mother.

The findings were handed over to the Iasmos Forestry District Department for further action. The ADU continued the search the next day, April 13, with officials from the Komotini Forestry Service, covering a large portion of the area but finding no additional carcasses or baits. The fox and sardines were subsequently stored in the Komotini Hunting Club freezer.



Figure 30: Top photos: the dead hedgehog and Western Marsh Harrier found near the road of a rural area. Middle photos: the animals stored in the freezer. Bottom photos: The sardines, the possible bait used, sprinkled with white powder and the dead fox, with signs that it was breastfeeding. The fox's young are doomed to die also



Figure 31: The ADU routes and findings for all three days from the 10-13/04/2024 Messouni Komotini's possible poisoning incident (Blue lines the route of the handler and with purple the route of the dog)

2.2.2 Replication of the Sub-action C3.2 ("Production & dissemination of Anti-Poison First Aid Kits")

The replication of this action was achieved very quickly, almost immediately after the start of the LIFE ARCPROM project, as the experience gained in the LIFE ARCPROM project by the associated beneficiary University of Thessaly (UTH) was utilised in the implementation of a similar action within the framework of the LIFE20 NAT/NL/001107 project (LIFE Bear Smart Corridors - "Enhancing the viability of Brown Bears in Central Italy and Greece through the development of coexistence corridors").

Specifically, the Concrete Conservation Actions of the LIFE Bear Smart Corridors (LBSC) project included Action C.7: "Produce and disseminate 400 anti-poisoning first aid kits to public agencies and farmers to address poisoning incidents to livestock guarding dogs". Due to the experience already gained within the framework of Action C3.2 of the LIFE ARCPROM project and the University's previous collaboration with specific veterinary medicine suppliers, it was possible to both improve the kit's design and achieve resource savings and a reduction in the final procurement cost per kit.

Thus, the anti-poisoning first aid kits produced and distributed by the LBSC project beneficiaries included medications for immediate response in cases of snake bites, acute allergy shock, and heat shock, as well as a protective aluminium blanket in each kit.

Furthermore, due to the exhaustive market research conducted in the LIFE ARCPROM project, it was possible to procure the appropriate pharmaceutical substances at a more favourable price and produce 600 anti-poisoning first aid kits instead of the initially planned 400 within the framework of the LBSC project.

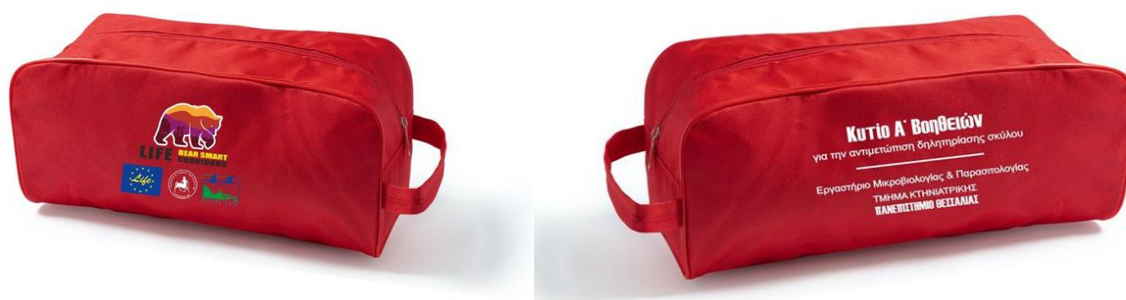


Figure 31: The design and production of anti-poisoning first aid kits by the LBSC project beneficiaries in Greece, replicated action C3.2 of the LIFE ARCPROM project and utilized the experience gained in the context of this project.

2.2.3 Replication of the Action C4 (“Operation and demonstration of a Karelian Bear-Dogs (KBDs) Unit”)

As explained in the Deliverable of the Action C4 “Technical report on the KBD’s operation in cases of bear-human conflict situations and demonstration sessions”, the pilot KBD (Karelian Bear Dog) unit in Greece has not yet been directly involved in a hard release or confrontation with a bear. Nevertheless, its use in human-bear conflicts has shown positive results. The single Greek KBD unit, which covers a wide area, has been instrumental in helping personnel gain experience and find ways to mitigate conflicts.

Action C4 was originally designed to enable at least three demonstrations of the operation of the first KBD unit in Greece. However, its creation enabled several replication activities to be organized, outside the three Parks, which constituted the three sub-areas of the project in Greece. Detailed information and photographs are included in the Deliverable of Action C4; however, it was deemed appropriate to briefly mention the replication activities in this Deliverable as well:

Replication cases

1. Chalkidiki/Thessaloniki (09/06/2023): The unit was deployed after a male bear, originating from the eastern population, was sighted far from its known habitat. The bear was causing damage to beehives and cherry orchards. While the dogs' tracking abilities were limited by the bear's long-distance movements, the incident showed the public's positive response to the dogs. It highlighted the need for better equipment and the fact that dogs are a helpful tool, but not a foolproof solution.
2. Krania, Mt Tzoumerka (21/06/23): A subadult bear was frequently seen in a village. The KBDs were used to track the bear, leading handlers to a resting spot above the village. This incident reinforced the importance of trusting the dogs and highlighted how stray dogs can interfere with the KBDs' work. It also showed that the dogs could identify a track that could be used for a hard release of the bear, although the local forestry department did not pursue this option. High temperatures were also noted as a limiting factor.



Figure 32: The subadult bear who was approaching and entering the village of Krania in Aspropotamos. The bear was seen even on a balcony or feeding at garbage

3. Metamorphosis, Ioannina (27/06/23): A female bear with two cubs was repeatedly entering properties in a village. The KBD unit tracked the bear's movements. Pyrotechnics were used to deter the bear, but this incident revealed one of the KBDs' fears of loud noises, leading to its substitution.
4. Anthochori, Metsovo (10/08/23): A bear was attracted to a village by garbage. A KBD helped quickly locate a remote area where the bear was carrying and eating the garbage. This incident

demonstrated how KBDs can save significant time and effort in identifying the source of a conflict. It also highlighted the problem of increased garbage during the holiday season and the subsequent instructions given to locals on proper waste management.

5. Egnatia Highway, Metsovo (17/08/23): The KBD unit was deployed after a bear was seen on the highway. The dog identified where the bear was entering and exiting, revealing a low fence as the cause. As a result, a letter was sent to the highway's headquarters, which led to the installation of a new, higher fence.
6. Drosochori (29/03/2024): The KBD unit was used to track a bear that was repeatedly damaging hen houses. The dogs led the team to a site where dead animals were being discarded, which was a food source for the bear. The dogs' work helped identify the root cause of the conflict and improve locals' attitudes towards bears. It also showed that the KBD unit's presence provided a sense of relief and safety to the community.



Figure 33: The damage in one of the henhouses (left), the pawprints on a henhouse door (middle), and Athena discovering the dead animals dump site (right)

Finally, it is also worth mentioning that the project Associated Beneficiaries CALLISTO, NECCA, MNP and UTH, cooperated with the Coordination Core Group of the Project LIFE20 NAT/NL/001107 (LIFE Bear Smart Corridors), to organise a special demonstration session of the KBD Unit, which was held on 14/3/2024, as a side event of the staff meeting of the project LIFE Bear Smart Corridors, in Kalampaka, Greece.

2.2.4 Replication of the Actions C5 (Operation, equipment and capacity building of Bear Emergency Teams), and C9 (Installation of special aversive means in hot-spots of bear-human interference)

One of the Action E3 Milestones was the replication of actions for bears exposing a “habituated” behaviour or/and causing unusually frequent damages on agriculture, in at least three (3) areas outside the project area, by 31/12/2024.

Given that CALLISTO is supporting the operation of the officially institutionalized Bear Emergency’s Teams, operating under the coordination of the local district Departments of the Forestry Service, the LIFE ARCPROM project had the opportunity to organise several activities to ensure that the experience and knowledge gained from the implementation of the project are disseminated more widely and that the solutions given to specific problems or threats would be reproduced and adopted by similar bodies (Parks, Forestry Service, other conservation actors, local and regional authorities, etc.).

Between 2021 and 2024, CALLISTO participated in a total of at least 118 incidents that required intervention by the Bear Emergency Team in areas outside the three Greek Parks where the LIFE ARCPROM

project was implemented in Greece. In many of these, there was an opportunity to organize replication activities. Below are five illustrative examples.

2021

Systematic appearances of a bear or bears in the mountainous area of Mount Pangaion throughout the period from May to October 2021. This was an unprecedented appearance of a bear in the Pangaion mountain range after many decades of the species' absence from this particular area.

The incident is a typical case of an attempted recolonization of an area by the brown bear. The monitoring of this phenomenon's evolution was carried out by members of the LIFE ARCPROM project's Bear Emergency Team, which included the Management Body of the Rhodope Mountain Range National Park and Callisto. This provided an opportunity to transfer knowledge and scientific monitoring techniques to the Kavala Forest Service and the 6th Hunting Federation of Macedonia, which participated in the development and implementation of the relevant operational plan. This plan included:

- Providing instructions to residents for proper management of household waste and the use of preventive measures such as electric fences.
- Providing instructions to local hunters on appropriate responses in case of a bear sighting.
- Issuing a detailed informational press release by the Directorate of Forests of Kavala.
- Continuing to monitor the phenomenon with the assistance of all involved bodies.



Figure 34: Green dots – bear sightings in Mount Pangqion.

There was also a similar need to transfer experience and demonstrate bear monitoring techniques to the Management Body of the Axios and Thermaikos Delta Protected Areas in the case of an extremely rare bear sighting in the Axios Delta area, which is not a suitable habitat for the species.

The phenomenon was monitored by Callisto, in collaboration with the National Park's Management Body and the Thessaloniki Forest Service. Two technical meetings were held, and a joint press release was issued. Three IR cameras were placed at potential crossing points, and a local workshop was organized on November 4, 2021, to inform residents, with speakers from CALLISTO and the Management Body.

The systematic monitoring of the cameras by the Management Body and CALLISTO did not show any new evidence of the bear's presence/residence in the area. Nor were any other incidents of damage reported. It is most likely that the bear withdrew from the area and returned to its original location.



Figure 35: Bear bio-sign in Delta Axios area.

2022

In one of the incidents during 2022, it was necessary to capture, anesthetize, and relocate a "problem" animal: A bear approached the city of Kastoria (Prophet Elias peninsula).

The bear was captured by CALLISTO's personnel on July 23, 2022. It was then anesthetized and transported by a vehicle from the Kastoria Forest Service to a forested area in the Gramos mountain range. The bear was reintroduced into the new area using the hard release method, which involves using pyrotechnic deterrents from a special kit to reinforce the negative stimulus for the animal.



Figure 36: Capture and relocation of the bear in Krepeni, Kastoria, accompanied by scare-and-deterrence measures by the Bear Emergency Team.

During 2023, an incident of particular difficulty was managed in collaboration with the Forest Service and the Management Unit of Protected Areas of Central Macedonia of NECCA. The difficulty arose from the bear's large radius of movement over a 4-month period and the unprecedented and novel area of its appearance (Halkidiki and Thessaloniki Regional Units).

This incident involved the most members of CALLISTO's Bear Emergency Team and utilized all available resources for its management.

Specifically:

1. Jointly drafting and releasing a press release to inform the area's residents.
2. Systematically monitoring all bear sightings based on eyewitness accounts and damage incidents (involving the collaboration of the Forest Services, NECCA, CALLISTO, residents, and producers).
3. Systematically monitoring the bear's movements by installing a network of 10 special cameras with remote sensing capabilities.
4. Systematically monitoring with IR cameras in certain apiaries where damage had occurred.
5. Providing electric fences to the beekeepers with the most severe damage.
6. Attempting to capture and radio-tag the animal for its relocation to the parent population (the area of the Vrontou-Lailias mountain range).
7. Collecting biological samples for the genetic identification of the bear (which was confirmed to be a male).



Figure 37: Total bear sightings, May-June 2023. Red dots: Halkidiki Regional Unit - Green dots: Thessaloniki Regional Unit.

From a communication standpoint and due to its unique nature, the incident received significant publicity throughout its management, with the story being reproduced by 47 Mass Media and Social Media outlets.



Figure 38: Damage to an apiary, a screenshot from a video taken by the special Infra-Red cameras placed in the area
2024

The total number of intervention incidents for the year 2024 amounts to fifty-one (51). Compared to 2023, the number of incidents requiring intervention by the IRP/CALLISTO for 2024 increased by ~36%.

In one of the 2024 incidents, there was an opportunity for a demonstration-replication activity with the Management Unit of Mount Olympus National Park (NECCA). Specifically, a bear was reported to have approached a small farm with beehives, stabled domestic animals, and a few fruit trees just outside a village in a wooded area, without causing any damage. The owner initially notified the local Forest Service, which then contacted Callisto.

Given that the area is within the boundaries of the Mount Olympus National Park Management Unit, a staff member from the Park also participated in the Bear Emergency Team.

An on-site inspection was carried out, and special deterrents with alarms (Citter-gitter) as well as 2 IR cameras were placed at the most critical points around the farm's perimeter to record the operation of the deterrents and their effect on any potential bear approach.

The aforementioned deterrents operated for 50 days. Following a second visit/inspection and a review of the data from the IR cameras and the owner's testimony, no new bear approach was observed in the farm area during the entire intervening period.



Figure 39: Placement of a Citter-Gitter (right) and placement of a special IR camera (left).

2.2.5 Special meeting in MNP's Headquarters, Sulmoma

On 12 December 2024, MNP and WWF organised at the Operational Headquarters of the Maiella National Park, Sulmona, a meeting to promote the replication of the LIFE ARCPROM actions in other protected areas where bears are already present as well as the ones that could be interested by bear presence in the next future.

The event (named: "ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE LIFE ARCPROM PROJECT AND THEIR POTENTIAL FOR REPLICABILITY IN THE RANGE OF THE APENNINE BROWN BEAR") was attended by *24 people* (1 with Zoom) from MNP, WWF, 6 other protected areas, the Molise Region and the LIFE Bear Smart Corridors project staff (represented by Rewilding Apennines and Salviamo l'Orso).

Please see below (figure 22) the programme of the meeting, as well as (figure 23) the poster where the attendants reported the actions that attracted the most their interest.

The event was very successful and was followed by contacts with each single protected area to share more details on the actions for which they showed interest.

2.2.6 Promotion of replication and transfer of LIFE ARCPROM's activities in other European countries through a new LIFE project proposal

Following an invitation from the WWF Greece in a WWF Europe meeting in Cluj-Napoca, Romania (17-19/3/2025), the LIFE ARCPROM Project Manager, Sp. Psaroudas, and the Human Dimension Expert of CALLISTO, Dr. T. Hovardas, participated in the meeting to present LIFE ARCPROM Replicability Plan and to exchange knowledge and experience acquired during the implementation period of the project.

Participants included staff members of several National and Regional WWF offices (Croatia, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, and Ukraine), who were preparing a new LIFE Nature project proposal on similar issues. The presentation of the LIFE ARCPROM Replicability Plan was attended by *31 persons* (including the WWF staff members who participated in the meeting remotely).



Figure 40: The Replicability Plan of the LIFE ARCPROM project was presented to the WWF staff members who participated in the meeting. An electronic copy of the Plan was disseminated to all participants

The meeting was an excellent opportunity to ensure that the experience and knowledge gained from the implementation of the proposal would be disseminated more widely and that the solutions given to specific problems or threats will be reproduced and adopted by similar bodies in other regions or countries of the European Union.



Figure 41: Dr. T. Hovardas presenting the results and experience from the stakeholder consultation and involvement actions (C1 and D5) of the LIFE ARCPROM project

The acronym of the project, which was submitted to CINEA under the LIFE Call for Proposals 2025, is LIFE L'ARCA, while its full title is: "Protecting grey wolves and brown bears in European landscapes: Concrete actions for lasting coexistence and ecological resilience". Several actions that were inspired by the LIFE ARCPROM project have been included in this proposal.

2.2.7 Replication activity in the framework of the 6th Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Platform Meeting

Experts and government officials from across the region gathered between 19 and 22 May 2025, in Ioannina for the annual conference of the Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Large Carnivore Platform (#DiBaPi) for the management of large carnivores, co-hosted by the Greece's General Secretariat for Forests under the Ministry of Environment and Energy.

The meeting brought together government and stakeholder representatives from the 10 DiBaPi Parties to address shared challenges in managing bears, wolves, and lynx across the region. Discussions focused on practical cooperation, and exploring long-term strategies to ensure the coexistence of humans and large carnivores.



Figure 42: Group photo of the participants in the 6th Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Platform Meeting

Participants agreed on a series of joint actions aimed at improving coexistence between people and large carnivores. Key topics included:

- Strengthening protection for livestock
- Improving cross-border habitat quality and connectivity
- Addressing the impacts of climate change
- Supporting rapid-response wildlife teams (intervention teams)
- Improving data sharing and use of standardised monitoring
- Encouraging stakeholder participation

The Ioannina meeting is part of a broader effort to create a sustainable framework for managing large carnivore populations in the region. By linking stakeholders and governments, the #DiBaPi platform aims to build trust and encourage open exchange on critical issues, discussing potential solutions and ensuring a balanced approach to wildlife conservation and peoples' needs.

The meeting also featured a practical field visit organized by the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (NECCA), in cooperation with Callisto NGO, where participants had the opportunity to visit sites where LIFE ARCPROM project actions were implemented and to see the work made in the framework of the project.

The site visit included locations where bear-proof garbage bins and electric fences were installed to prevent damage to beekeeping, farming, and livestock operations. The visit also featured demonstrations for livestock farmers who were given Livestock Guarding Dogs to prevent damage to their herds.

Additionally, a demonstration was held to showcase the equipment used by the Bear Emergency Teams, including alarms and other deterrent devices used to scare away bears that approach villages and farms.



Figure 43: Demonstration of the equipment used by the LIFE ARCPROM Bear Emergency Teams

Finally, a demonstration was given on how the "Poison Bait Detection Dog Units" and "Karelian Bear Dogs" operate. The Karelian dogs are specifically trained to deter bears that have become habituated to humans and enter populated areas.

In the field visit participated *more than 100 hundred* staff members of governmental, non-governmental, and stakeholder organisations from 12 countries.

Similar to the meeting in Cluj-Napoca, Romania (see 2.2.4 above), the field visit to the North Pindos National Park, held as part of the 6th Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Platform Meeting, was a valuable opportunity. It allowed for the wider dissemination of knowledge and experience gained from the project's implementation. This ensured that the solutions developed to address specific problems and threats can be replicated and adopted by other governmental and non-governmental organisations across the Balkan region.

2.2.8 Capacity Building for Data Collection through Interviews

Local community engagement proved vital to the success of the LIFE ARCPROM project. Livestock owners, farmers, beekeepers, and other stakeholders not only provided valuable information (e.g., Action A1) but also played an active role in driving change through their participation in collaborative processes under Action C1. Interviews emerged as an effective tool for building connections with local communities and enhancing their involvement in conservation efforts.

However, conducting interviews—especially in the context of human-wildlife conflict—presents specific challenges and requires refined skills. Throughout the LIFE ARCPROM project, Dr. M. Psaralexi and Dr. G. Chatzinakos from Callisto, alongside personnel from NECCA, further developed their interviewing techniques within the project's study areas (see Figure 44, below).



Figure 44: Cattle grazing in the meadows of the Great Prespa Lake at Psarades.

To support continued capacity building, a workshop was held from Friday, April 4th, to Saturday, April 5th. This workshop was organized by the aforementioned researchers in collaboration with NECCA and targeted E. Theodosiadis and E. Kollia—both researchers under the Co-creating Co-existence HORIZON project—who will be conducting interviews with extensive livestock raisers in the respective project’s study area.

The workshop/training covered the following modules:

1. Introduction to Pastoralism and Rural Livelihoods

Trainers offered a comprehensive overview of pastoralism in Greece, outlining common practices in breeding, grazing, resource management, and depredation prevention. They also discussed the socio-economic challenges and opportunities tied to extensive livestock raising.

2. Interviewing and Communication Techniques

Practical tips were shared on how to initiate conversations with livestock raisers, build rapport, maintain engagement, and use effective body language to ensure interviews remain productive and respectful.

3. Questionnaire Familiarization and Testing

Understanding the survey tool is essential for successful data collection. The trainees reviewed the questionnaire thoroughly, clarified doubts with the trainers, and practiced its application to ensure fluency in its use (Figure 45).

4. Demonstration by Experienced Interviewers

A mock interview was conducted with livestock raiser E. Repas, a trusted community member (Figure 46). This live demonstration helped the trainees observe the real-time application of the training principles.

5. Trainee Practice Sessions

To consolidate learning, both trainees conducted mock interviews with livestock raisers N. Kakarantzas and D. Christianopoulou (Figure 47). Trainers provided guidance as needed, allowing trainees to apply their new skills in a realistic setting.



Figure 45 (left): G. Chatzinakos and E. Theodosiadis going over the example questionnaire together.

Figure 46 (middle): G. Chatzinakos performing a mock interview with E. Repas, cattle owner, as a demonstration for the trainees.

Figure 47 (right): E. Theodosiadis conducting a mock interview with N. Kakarantzas

This training was an important step in ensuring quality data collection and strengthening collaboration between research teams and rural communities involved in human-wildlife coexistence efforts. Having this capacity-building workshop with experienced LIFE ARCPROM personnel was especially valuable, as it ensured the transfer of practical knowledge, field-tested approaches, and strong community engagement practices to the next generation of researchers.

