



# LIFE ARCPROM



## LIFE18 NAT/GR/000768

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

### ACTION D3

## Final Monitoring and Evaluation Report regarding Action C.10 (D3.2)



June 2025



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## *Suggested citation*

Action D 3; Final Monitoring and Evaluation Report regarding action C.10 under the LIFE18 NAT/GR/768 ARCPROM.

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## SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the effectiveness of Action C.10 of the LIFE ARCPROM project, which aimed to protect the habitat of the Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos*) in Greece and the Apennine (Marsican) Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos marsicanus*) in Italy, while highlighting the added value of products and services produced/provided in areas with bear presence. Within this framework, two environmental labels were designed and piloted: in Italy, the ““Bear Friendly”” label was established and implemented in the Maiella National Park (MNP), and in Greece, the “RESPECT – Wildlife & Biodiversity Protection Label” was established and implemented.

The ““Bear Friendly”” label aimed to recognize both the installation of preventive measures to prevent bear-related damage and the broader adoption of biodiversity-friendly production practices (e.g., organic cultivation, reduced use of plant protection products, cultivation of native varieties). By 2025, the label had been awarded to 27 primary-sector producers (16 beekeepers, 10 farmers, and one dual-activity enterprise). Participation rates were notable: 45% of beekeepers and 34% of farmers operating within MNP joined—figures exceeding comparable initiatives such as LIFE DINALP BEAR and LIFE WOLFALPS EU. To date, more than 70 labelled products are available, and production is distributed across 21 of the park’s 39 municipalities. The spatial distribution of beneficiaries aligns with areas of bear presence and high-conflict zones, thereby strengthening the effectiveness of the label. A survey conducted in early 2025 recorded high satisfaction (88.2%) and minimal perceived financial burden (94.1%). While 41.2% of producers reported increased customer interest and another 41.2% remained cautious, nearly half reported moderate to substantial business growth and valued the recognition of their environmental commitment. All producers expressed their intention to renew and further develop the label, even with their own financial contribution, proposing marketing actions, events, producer networking, stronger public outreach, and measures to ensure economic sustainability.

In Greece, the “RESPECT – Wildlife & Biodiversity Protection” label was designed and implemented in all the three National Parks participated in the project. Its scope soon expanded beyond the brown bear to encompass broader biodiversity and wildlife protection. By the end of Action C.10, the label had been awarded to 23 enterprises active in the agri-food sector, hospitality, and ecotourism. Its impact was assessed through structured interviews with beneficiary producers and thematic questionnaires completed by consumers/visitors to the three National Parks. The interviews indicated a significant improvement in market position for labelled products (94.5% of enterprises considered the label a competitive advantage, and 77.8% reported higher customer selection/satisfaction). Consumer questionnaires confirmed that the label motivated increased purchases from certified businesses; in addition, 67% made repeat purchases and 53% recommended the company to others.

Overall, the findings mentioned above indicate that the two pilots under Action C.10 enhanced the environmental identity of the participating National Parks and yielded direct, unambiguous, and quantifiable economic benefits for producers and entrepreneurs who adopted best-practice measures to conserve Brown Bear populations and, more broadly, to protect wildlife and the environment.

## ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Σκοπός της παρούσας έκθεσης είναι η αξιολόγηση της αποτελεσματικότητας της Δράσης C.10 του έργου, η οποία είχε ως στόχο την προστασία του ενδιαιτήματος της Καφέ Αρκούδας (*Ursus arctos*) στην Ελλάδα και της αρκούδας των Απέννινων (*Ursus arctos marsicanus*) στην Ιταλία, αναδεικνύοντας την προστιθέμενη αξία των προϊόντων/ υπηρεσιών που παράγονται/ παρέχονται σε περιοχές με παρουσία αρκούδων. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, δύο περιβαλλοντικά σήματα σχεδιάστηκαν και εφαρμόστηκαν πιλοτικά. Στην Ιταλία, ιδρύθηκε και εφαρμόστηκε στο Εθνικό Πάρκο Maiella το σήμα «“Bear Friendly”», ενώ στην Ελλάδα ιδρύθηκε και εφαρμόστηκε το σήμα «RESPECT – Wildlife & Biodiversity Protection Label».

Στόχος του σήματος «“Bear Friendly”» ήταν να επιβραβεύσει την εγκατάσταση προληπτικών μέτρων για την αποφυγή ζημιών που οφείλονται σε αρκούδες, καθώς και την γενικότερη εφαρμογή πρακτικών παραγωγής φιλικών προς τη βιοποικιλότητα (π.χ. βιολογική καλλιέργεια, περιορισμένη χρήση φυτοπροστατευτικών, καλλιέργεια αυτόχθονων ποικιλιών, κ.α.). Έως το έτος 2025, το σήμα αποδόθηκε σε 27 παραγωγούς του πρωτογενούς τομέα (16 μελισσοκόμους, 10 αγρότες και μία επιχείρηση διπλής κατεύθυνσης). Αξίζει να αναφερθεί στη δράση εντάχθηκαν το 45% των μελισσοκόμων και το 34% των αγροτών που δραστηριοποιούνται εντός, ποσοστά που ξεπερνούν παρόμοιες πρωτοβουλίες, όπως τα LIFE DINALP BEAR και LIFE WOLFALPS EU. Σήμερα, διατίθενται ήδη περισσότερα από 70 προϊόντα με την ειδική σήμανση, ενώ η παραγωγή κατανέμεται σε 21 από τους 39 δήμους του Maiella NP. Η χωρική κατανομή των δικαιούχων του Σήματος συμβαδίζει με την παρουσία της αρκούδας και με τις ζώνες υψηλού κινδύνου σύγκρουσης, ενισχύοντας την αποτελεσματικότητα του σήματος. Από τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας που διεξήχθη στις αρχές του έτους 2025 καταγράφηκε από τους δικαιούχους του σήματος υψηλή ικανοποίηση (88,2%) και ελάχιστη απορρέουσα οικονομική επιβάρυνση (94,1%). Το 41,2% των παραγωγών ανέφερε αύξηση του ενδιαφέροντος των πελατών, ενώ το 41,2% διατήρησε επιφυλακτική στάση. Ωστόσο, σχεδόν οι μισοί παραγωγοί δήλωσαν από μέτρια έως ουσιαστική επιχειρηματική ανάπτυξη και εκτίμησαν την αναγνώριση της περιβαλλοντικής τους δέσμευσης. Χαρακτηριστικό είναι πως όλοι οι παραγωγοί εξέφρασαν πρόθεση ανανέωσης και περαιτέρω ανάπτυξης του σήματος, ακόμη και με ίδια οικονομική συμβολή, προτείνοντας την υλοποίηση δράσεων μάρκετινγκ, διοργάνωση εκδηλώσεων, δικτύωση παραγωγών, εντονότερη δημόσια ενημέρωση και διασφάλιση οικονομικής βιωσιμότητας.

Στην Ελλάδα, το σήμα «RESPECT – Wildlife & Biodiversity Protection» σχεδιάστηκε και εφαρμόστηκε στα τρία Εθνικά Πάρκα που συμμετείχαν πρόγραμμα. Μάλιστα, σύντομα η εφαρμογή του σήματος επεκτάθηκε πέρα από την καφέ αρκούδα και πλέον αναφέρεται στη προστασία της βιοποικιλότητας και της άγριας ζωής. Μέχρι και τη λήξη της δράσης C.10., το σήμα αποδόθηκε σε συνολικά 23 επιχειρήσεις, με δραστηριοποιούταν στον αγροδιατροφικό τομέα, τη φιλοξενία και τον οικοτουρισμό. Η επίδραση του σήματος αποτιμήθηκε μέσω δομημένων συνεντεύξεων των δικαιούχων παραγωγών και θεματικών ερωτηματολογίων που απαντήθηκαν από τους καταναλωτές/ επισκέπτες των τριών Εθνικών Πάρκων. Τα ευρήματα των συνεντεύξεων ανέδειξαν σημαντική βελτίωση της θέσης στην αγορά των προϊόντων που έφεραν το σήμα (ποσοστό 94,5% των επιχειρήσεων θεωρεί το σήμα ανταγωνιστικό πλεονέκτημα και το 77,8% αναφέρει υψηλότερη επιλογή/ικανοποίηση πελατών). Αντίστοιχα, τα ερωτηματολόγια των καταναλωτών επιβεβαίωσαν πως το σήμα υπήρξε κίνητρο αύξησης των αγορών από τις πιστοποιημένες επιχειρήσεις. Επιπρόσθετα, το 67% καταναλωτών επανέλαβες τις αγορές του και το 53% σύστησε την επιχείρηση σε τρίτους.

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψιν τα παραπάνω, καθίσταται σαφές πως οι δύο πιλοτικές εφαρμογές της Δράσης C.10 οδήγησαν στην ενίσχυση της περιβαλλοντικής ταυτότητας των περιοχών εφαρμογής και προσέφεραν σαφή και μετρήσιμα οικονομικά οφέλη στους παραγωγούς που επέλεξαν τις βέλτιστες πρακτικές για την προστασία των αρκούδων και του περιβάλλοντος γενικότερα.

## RIASSUNTO

Lo scopo della presente relazione è valutare l'efficacia dell'Azione C.10 del progetto LIFE ARCPROM, volta a tutelare l'habitat dell'orso bruno (*Ursus arctos*) in Grecia e dell'orso bruno marsicano (*Ursus arctos marsicanus*) in Italia, valorizzando al contempo il valore aggiunto dei prodotti e dei servizi realizzati o erogati in aree con presenza di orsi. In tale quadro sono stati progettati e sperimentati due marchi ambientali: in Italia il marchio ““Bear Friendly”” (BF), istituito e implementato nel Parco Nazionale della Maiella (PNM), e in Grecia il marchio “RESPECT – Wildlife & Biodiversity Protection Label”.

Il marchio BF ha riconosciuto sia l'installazione di misure preventive per ridurre i danni causati dagli orsi sia l'adozione di pratiche produttive favorevoli alla biodiversità (ad es. agricoltura biologica, riduzione dell'uso di fitofarmaci, coltivazione di varietà autoctone). Entro il 2025, 27 operatori del settore primario (16 apicoltori, 10 agricoltori, 1 impresa con attività mista) hanno ottenuto il marchio. I tassi di adesione sono risultati rilevanti: ha partecipato il 45% degli apicoltori e il 34% degli agricoltori operanti all'interno del PNM—percentuali superiori a iniziative analoghe quali LIFE DINALP BEAR e LIFE WOLFALPS EU. Ad oggi sono disponibili oltre 70 prodotti marchiati, con una distribuzione della produzione in 21 dei 39 comuni del parco. La distribuzione spaziale dei beneficiari è coerente con le aree di presenza dell'orso e con le zone ad alto conflitto, rafforzando l'efficacia del marchio. Un'indagine condotta a inizio 2025 ha rilevato un'elevata soddisfazione (88,2%) e un onere finanziario percepito minimo (94,1%). Pur rilevando che il 41,2% dei produttori ha segnalato maggiore interesse dei clienti e un altro 41,2% è rimasto cauto, quasi la metà ha riferito una crescita aziendale da moderata a significativa e ha apprezzato il riconoscimento del proprio impegno ambientale. Tutti i produttori hanno espresso l'intenzione di rinnovare e sviluppare ulteriormente il marchio—anche con contributo economico proprio—proponendo azioni di marketing, eventi, networking tra produttori, un rafforzamento dell'informazione al pubblico e misure per garantire la sostenibilità economica.

In Grecia, il marchio RESPECT è stato progettato e implementato nei tre Parchi Nazionali partecipanti al progetto, ampliando presto il proprio perimetro oltre l'orso bruno per includere più in generale la tutela della biodiversità e della fauna selvatica. Alla conclusione dell'Azione C.10, il marchio è stato conferito a 23 imprese attive nei settori agroalimentare, dell'ospitalità e dell'ecoturismo. L'impatto è stato valutato mediante interviste strutturate ai beneficiari e questionari tematici compilati da consumatori/visitatori dei tre Parchi Nazionali. Le interviste hanno indicato un miglioramento significativo del posizionamento di mercato dei prodotti marchiati (il 94,5% delle imprese ha considerato il marchio un vantaggio competitivo; il 77,8% ha riportato una maggiore scelta/soddisfazione dei clienti). I questionari ai consumatori hanno confermato tali evidenze: il marchio ha motivato un incremento degli acquisti presso le imprese certificate; inoltre, il 67% ha effettuato acquisti ripetuti e il 53% ha raccomandato l'impresa ad altri.

Nel complesso, tali risultati indicano che le due sperimentazioni dell'Azione C.10 hanno rafforzato l'identità ambientale dei Parchi Nazionali coinvolti e generato benefici economici diretti, chiari e misurabili per i produttori e gli imprenditori che hanno adottato misure di best practice per la conservazione delle popolazioni di orso bruno e, più in generale, per la tutela della fauna e dell'ambiente.

# Greece

## Introduction

Biodiversity losses and the increased degradation of natural ecosystems have made environmental responsibility an increasingly urgent priority across all sectors. In this vein, product and service eco-labels have emerged as effective instruments that encourage more sustainable choices by both producers and consumers. Certified products are gaining traction among consumers who value transparency and environmental integrity, while companies benefit from enhanced credibility, stronger market differentiation, and alignment with sustainability goals.

Under the LIFE ARCPROM project, an eco-label entitled "RESPECT – Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection Label" was developed. This innovative certification scheme was designed to promote coexistence between humans and the Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) in areas where human–wildlife interactions are frequent. The label was piloted in three Greek National Parks—Northern Pindos, Rhodope Mountain Range, and Prespa—which are home to significant bear populations and valuable ecosystems. Although the label was initially focused on Brown Bear species protection, with a primary emphasis on bear products and services that directly supported bear conservation, its scope soon broadened to encompass wider biodiversity and habitat protection objectives, increasing its relevance across sectors such as agriculture, food, tourism, and hospitality.

The "RESPECT" Label was based on six core sustainability principles: efficient use of natural resources, waste reduction, habitat protection, restricted use of harmful chemicals, prevention of wildlife disturbance, and the promotion of environmental awareness. The enrolled businesses undergo a structured certification process that includes a self-assessment, a review of documentation, and an on-site audit. Upon successful completion, they are awarded a three-year certificate and granted the right to use the RESPECT logo in their product packaging and communications.

This report aims to assess the real-world experience of businesses that have adopted the "RESPECT" Label. Focusing on companies within the three National Parks, the evaluation explores how the label has influenced their environmental practices, product value, external communication, and overall competitiveness. It also considers motivations for joining the scheme, challenges encountered during implementation, and suggestions for improvement.

## Methodology

### Label Beneficiaries

Participation in the label evaluation process was one of the essential requirements for the granting and use of the "RESPECT" Label. Accordingly, all 23 label beneficiaries provided the data needed to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was conducted in the form of an interview, which took place following an on-site visit by UTH staff to each company's premises. This approach ensured not only full participation but also high-quality, context-rich responses.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, distributed to all businesses that had obtained RESPECT certification. The questionnaire was developed based on internationally recognised certification frameworks and academic studies on sustainable business practices. The questionnaire used was designed

to include both closed and open-ended questions. Closed questions were chosen to measure quantitative variables, such as participants' attitudes towards environmental awareness, competitiveness or economic performance. Furthermore, open questions were aimed at gathering more detailed information about participants' views and experiences with the label and eliciting suggestions for improving its implementation.

The questionnaire was divided into three main sections as follows:

### **Section 1: Impact of the RESPECT**

This section included questions to assess the impact of RESPECT in five key areas: Environmental Awareness, Quality, Cost, Competition and Business Promotion/Advertising. The questions were formulated using a 5-point Likert scale that allowed participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with specific statements.

Environmental awareness: Questions focused on the adoption of environmentally friendly practices and the label's contribution to protecting biodiversity and wildlife.

Quality: The questions analysed whether the label improves the company's products or services, influences the choice of suppliers and increases customer satisfaction.

Cost: The impact of implementing the label's requirements on overall costs, operational efficiency, and labour was investigated.

Competition: The label was assessed for its ability to offer a competitive advantage and enhance the company's market position.

Sales promotion/advertising: It was analysed whether the label improves the company's reputation, contributes to better public relations and has an impact on financial performance.

### **Section 2: Performance of the label**

This section contains closed-ended questions designed to capture the impact of RESPECT on specific company performance indicators. Therefore, grant holders were asked to indicate the percentage changes in customers, sales, costs and website visitors after receiving the label. They were also asked whether the companies had entered new markets, established new partnerships or selected suppliers that use environmentally friendly practices. These questions were structured as quantitative choices, allowing for an accurate measurement of changes since the label was gained.

### **Section 3: General business information**

In this section, operational data was collected to outline the profile of the participating companies. Companies were asked to provide their name, industry, years in operation and time elapsed since receiving the label RESPECT. This information was necessary for comparing results between different sectors and stages of the company's development. The research population consisted of all 23 "RESPECT" Label beneficiaries, comprising entrepreneurs from the agriculture, food industry, tourism, and leisure sectors. Data collection was performed through on-site interviews with the entrepreneurs. In parallel, consumer research was conducted among park visitors who had purchased products carrying the "RESPECT" Label, aiming to explore their perceptions, satisfaction, and purchasing behavior related to the label. Following data collection, variables were identified and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 29). Initially, descriptive statistics were generated to summarize the characteristics of the examined variables. Subsequently, the dataset derived from the questionnaires was systematically processed to enable further statistical analysis.

To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach's alpha, an internal consistency index, was applied, which is one of the most frequently used methods for assessing the internal reliability of measurement scales. This index evaluates the degree of systematic correlation between individual questions that measure the same conceptual construct. Cronbach's alpha values (Table 1) were all above 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency and supporting the convergent validity of the measurement.

Furthermore, the content validity of the questionnaire was ensured through its design, which was based on previous research and widely used scales (e.g., the Likert scale for measuring attitudes and perceptions). Additionally, the linguistic clarity and conceptual completeness of the questions were verified by supervising researchers. In addition, external validity was strengthened by the targeted selection of the sample, which consisted of companies directly involved in implementing the “RESPECT” Label, thus ensuring the representativeness and generalizability of the results to similar population contexts.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
<b>Environmental Awareness</b>	0.831
<b>Quality – Cost</b>	0.711
<b>Competitiveness</b>	0.732
<b>Promoting &amp; Advertisement</b>	0.814
<b>Label's Performance</b>	0.769

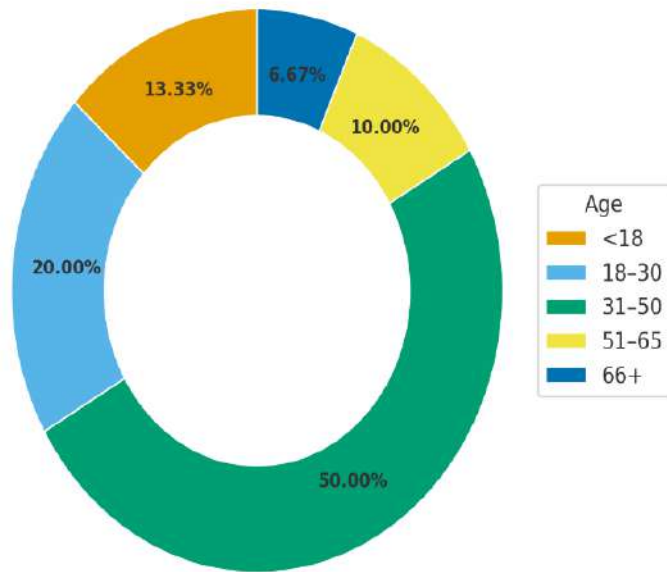
**Table 1.** Cronbach's Alpha

## **Customers**

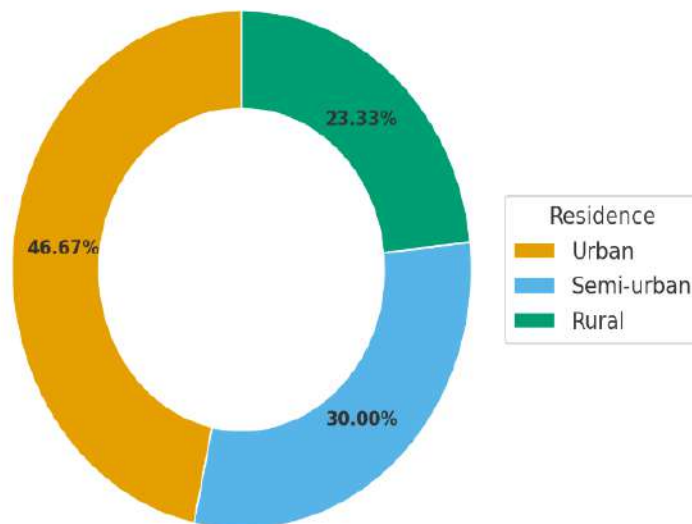
Consumer views of the “RESPECT” Label were assessed with a brief, closed-ended questionnaire administered on site at points of sale or service carrying the label; participation was entirely voluntary and did not require a prior purchase. Participation was strictly anonymous, and all responses were collected and analysed in aggregate. In total, 90 questionnaires were completed—30 in each participating National Park.

For sample description, the study recorded three core demographic characteristics—age, gender, and area of residence—to contextualise subsequent analyses. Approximately 50% of participants were aged 31–50, positioning this cohort as the principal locus of evaluation and purchase decisions; those under 30 accounted for 33%, a group often receptive to environmental labelling yet typically constrained by lower purchasing power; respondents over 50 were comparatively under-represented, suggesting lower exposure or engagement with the label. Women comprised >70% of the sample, indicating greater participation and/or responsiveness to environmental cues; communication could therefore leverage this core segment while developing distinct messaging to improve male engagement. In terms of residence, the sample was broadly balanced (~47% urban, 53% non-urban), showing that the “RESPECT” Label reached beyond metropolitan markets and pointing to opportunities to decentralise information and distribution. The modal participant profile was a woman aged 31–50 living in an urban or semi-urban setting. Strategically, these demographics supported prioritising this core segment, alongside tailored outreach to men, older age groups, and rural households. For interpretation, the sample composition—likely influenced by the evaluation setting (national park visitors/contexts)—should be considered when generalising results.

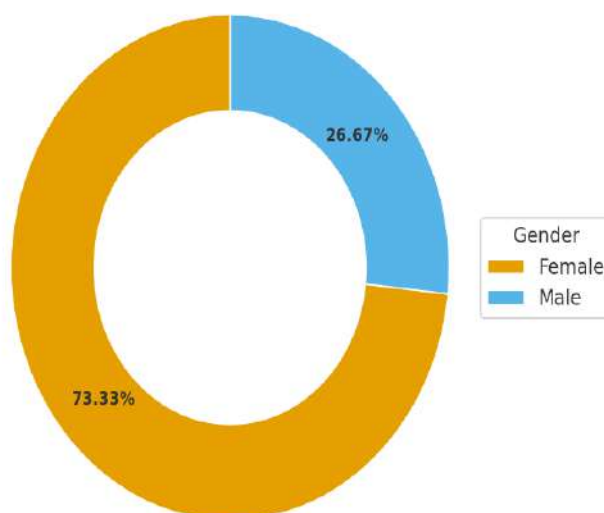
Age distribution of respondents (RESPECT study)



Area of residence of respondents (RESPECT study)



## Gender distribution of respondents (RESPECT study)



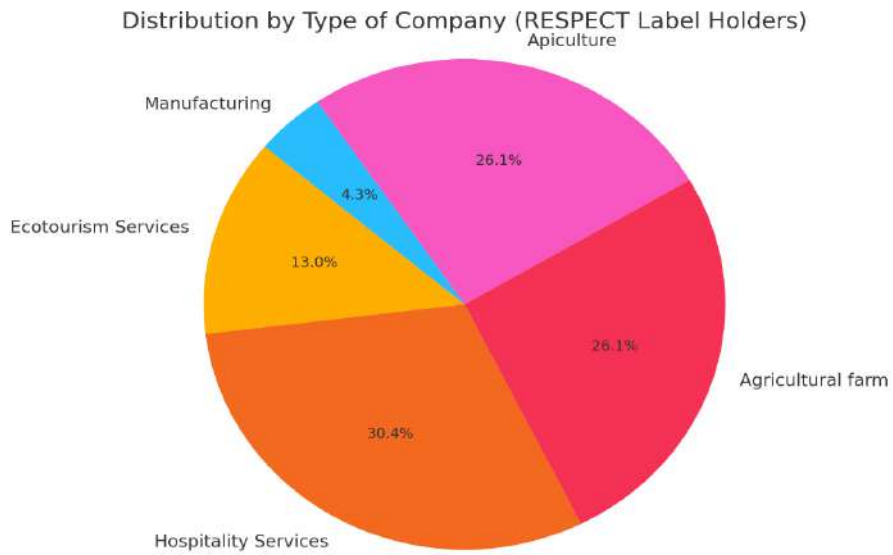
**Figure 1.** Demographics

## Results

### Label Beneficiaries

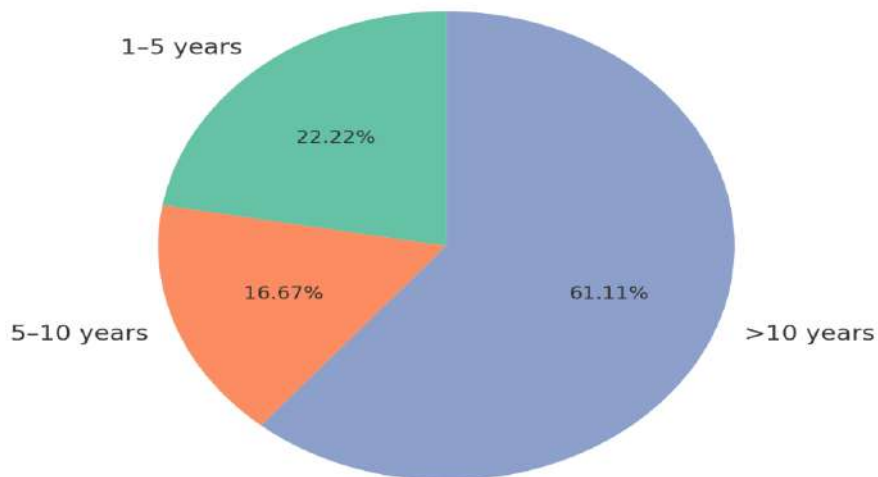
To facilitate analyses, beneficiaries were categorized based on their sector of economic activity. It was already known that most participating companies operated within the primary production sector, frequently combining both agricultural and food industries, highlighting the solid alignment between the “RESPECT” Label and sustainability-oriented food production. The hospitality sector, which was also well-represented in all three National Parks, suggests that tourism-related businesses recognize the value of the “RESPECT” Label in enhancing their eco-friendly image. Manufacturing companies closely related to natural resources, as well as those offering tourism services beyond the hospitality category, were also represented. A small share of 5.56% corresponded to companies in other economic sectors (see Figure 2), indicating that the label is also gradually expanding into less typical areas.

Regarding the years of operation of each “RESPECT” Label beneficiary, most label owners have been operating for more than ten years, while companies operating between one and five years account for 22.22%. This distribution highlighted that both well-established and relatively new companies were aware of the human-wildlife coexistence and seek to increase their credibility through eco-labelling.



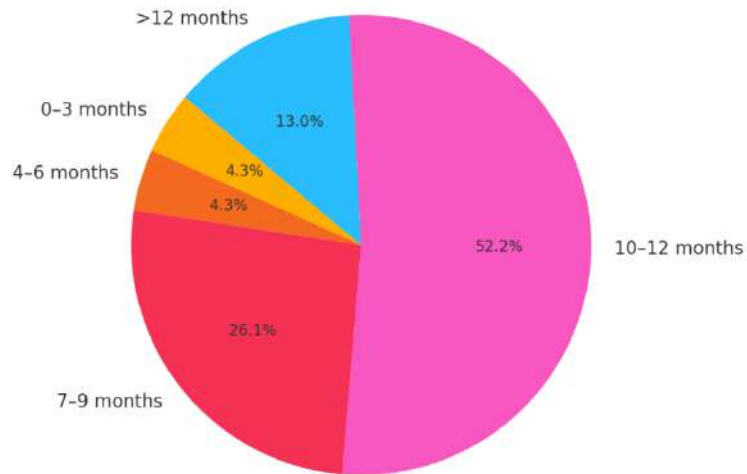
**Figure 2.** *Company's Sector*

Operating Years of RESPECT Label Holders



**Figure 3.** *Companies' Operating Years*

Duration of RESPECT Label Ownership (as of June 2025)



**Figure 4.** Time since “RESPECT” Label awarded

The data collected through the questionnaires indicated that the “RESPECT” Label was perceived as a significant contributor to companies’ environmental orientation. The variable concerning ‘Environmental Awareness’ received a high mean score ( $M = 8.00$ ,  $SD = 1.85$ ), indicating broad alignment among respondents that the label reinforces their environmental identity. Almost one out of three beneficiaries strongly agreed and one out of three agreed that bearing the “RESPECT” Label demonstrates their company’s clear ecological commitment. Regarding the implementation of eco-friendly practices, 44.4% strongly agreed and 27.8% agreed, suggesting that the label not only confirmed existing practices but also encourages their further development in compliance with the sustainable guidelines provided during the RESPECT granting process.

Further, respondents also revealed that the label had a considerable impact on quality-related aspects of their business operation. This variable recorded the highest average score among all dimensions ( $M = 17.44$ ,  $SD = 3.82$ ), indicating that the label had contributed to improvements in product and service quality, internal processes, and supplier selection. Specifically, 11.1% strongly agreed and 44.4% agreed that the quality of their products and services had improved following certification. These perceptions were also supported by customer-related outcomes, with 44.4% agreeing and 33.3% strongly agreeing that customer selection and satisfaction were increased. Interestingly, 66.7% of companies strongly disagreed and 22.2% disagreed that the label resulted in increased costs, indicating that the implementation was not viewed as financially demanding.

Beyond the product or services improvement, competitiveness was also a crucial aspect of the “RESPECT” Label, as most businesses consider the scheme a strategic asset. The corresponding variable had a high mean score ( $M = 11.39$ ,  $SD = 2.35$ ), indicating that the label contributes to a stronger market position. Most of respondents—55.6% strongly agreed and 38.9% agreed—believed that certification had enhanced differentiate their business and improved their market presence. These results suggest that the label is not only seen as a sustainability tool but also as a factor of competitive advantage, linking biodiversity protection efforts with added financial value.

Promotion and external visibility were also positively evaluated. The relevant variable had a mean score of 18.11 ( $SD = 3.29$ ), indicating that the label plays a meaningful role in enhancing public image and reputation. Most of the respondents (55.6%) strongly agreed that the label improved their company’s image,

while 44.4% confirmed a positive impact on their reputation. Furthermore, 61.1% strongly agreed that the label strengthened their public relations, demonstrating that it is perceived as a valuable communication and branding resource.

The final variable, related to label performance and business impact, received the lowest mean score ( $M = 7.50$ ,  $SD = 1.72$ ), indicating that more moderate but still positive expectations were met. While only 11.1% strongly agreed and 33.3% agreed that the label led to immediate improvements in business performance, indirect benefits were reported. A total of 44.4% of respondents stated that their customer base grew by 7-11% following certification, and two out of 23 confirmed the establishment of new partnerships. These results indicated that the “RESPECT” Label is already contributing to business development, with further impact expected to unfold over time.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
<i>Environmental Awareness</i>	61.1%	38.9%	-
<i>Adoption Green Practices</i>	72.2%	22.2%	5.6%
<i>Product Quality</i>	55.6%	33.3%	5.6%
<i>Supplier Choice</i>	44.4%	33.3%	22.2%
<i>Cost Increase</i>	0.0%	11.1%	88.9%
<i>Workload Increase</i>	5.6%	27.8%	66.7%
<i>Customer Satisfaction</i>	77.8%	16.7%	5.6%
<i>Efficiency Increase</i>	27.8%	55.6%	16.7%
<i>Competitive Advantage</i>	94.5%	5.6%	-
<i>Customer Retention</i>	38.9%	33.3%	27.8%
<i>Market Position</i>	72.2%	22.2%	5.6%
<i>Brand Image</i>	83.3%	16.7%	-
<i>Reputation</i>	77.8%	22.2%	-
<i>Public Relations</i>	88.9%	5.6%	5.6%
<i>Economic Performance</i>	44.4%	38.9%	16.7%
<i>Customer Growth</i>	55.6%	33.3%	11.1%

**Table 2.** Perceived Impact of the “RESPECT” Label on Key Business Dimensions

Following data gathering, a correlation analysis was conducted to analyze the existence of linear relationships between the variables used to assess the impact of the “RESPECT” label. Among others, the Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was selected as the variables were continuous and the normality assumption was sufficiently met.

The Pearson correlation coefficient measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables, ranging from -1 to +1. Values close to +1 indicate a strong positive correlation, values close to -1 indicate a strong negative correlation, and values around 0 reflect a weak or no linear relationship (Field, 2018). The statistical significance of each correlation was assessed using the  $p$ -value, which indicates the probability that the observed relationship could have arisen by chance. For this study, correlations were considered statistically significant if  $p < 0.05$ , meaning that there is less than a 5% chance that the result is due to random variation.

Initially, the correlations among all individual questionnaire variables were analyzed to pinpoint the most critical relationships among the factors influenced by the implementation of the label. This analysis revealed several statistically significant correlations ( $p < 0.05$ ), summarized in Table 3.

The variable “*Environmental Awareness*” showed a powerful positive correlation with “*Customer satisfaction*”, which indicates that companies with a higher level of environmental awareness, as a result of implementing the “RESPECT” requirements, also have higher customer satisfaction. Moreover, considerable correlations are observed between “*Environmental Awareness*” and “*Product Quality*”, “*Public Relations*”, “*Competitive Advantage*”, “*Market Position*” and “*Economic Performance*”. All the above correlations support the idea that introducing the “RESPECT” label can enhance a company’s environmental awareness and, consequently, positively impact its market position and financial performance.

<b>Variable 1</b>	<b>Variable 2</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<i>Environmental Awareness</i>	Adoption of Green Practices	0.663	0.019
	Product Quality	0.776	0.003
	Customer Satisfaction	0.868	<0.001
	Public Relations	0.726	0.008
	Competitive Advantage	0.818	0.001
	Market Position	0.600	0.039
	Economic Performance	0.645	0.024
<i>Product Quality</i>	<i>Customer Satisfaction</i>	0.710	0.010
	Public Relations	0.614	0.034
<i>Customer Satisfaction</i>	Public Relations	0.629	0.029
	Competitive Advantage	0.957	<0.001
	Economic Performance	0.721	0.008
<i>Public Relations</i>	Economic Performance	0.679	0.015

<i>Competitive Advantage</i>	Economic Performance	0.715	0.009
	Market Position	0.866	<0.001
<i>Market Position</i>	Economic Performance	0.850	<0.001

**Table 3:** Correlation Matrix Between Key Business Impact Variables Related to the “RESPECT” Label

Similarly, “*Product Quality*” was significantly correlated with “*Customer Satisfaction*” and “*Public Relations*”, a fact that emphasises the role of the label in improving product quality and communication with the public. In addition to its correlation with “*Environmental Awareness*” and “*Product Quality*”, “*Customer Satisfaction*” also showed a strong correlation with “*Competitive Advantage*” and “*Economic Performance*”. Both of the above observations clearly identified the “RESPECT” Label’s role in strengthening companies’ competitiveness.

The variable “*Competitive advantage*” also showed significant correlations with both “*Market position*” and “*Economic performance*”, which confirms that the improvement of a company’s competitive profile through the quality label is associated with better economic results and a better market position. Furthermore, these results suggest that while the “RESPECT” label appears to improve reputation, market position and perceived quality, it does not necessarily affect costs or workload.

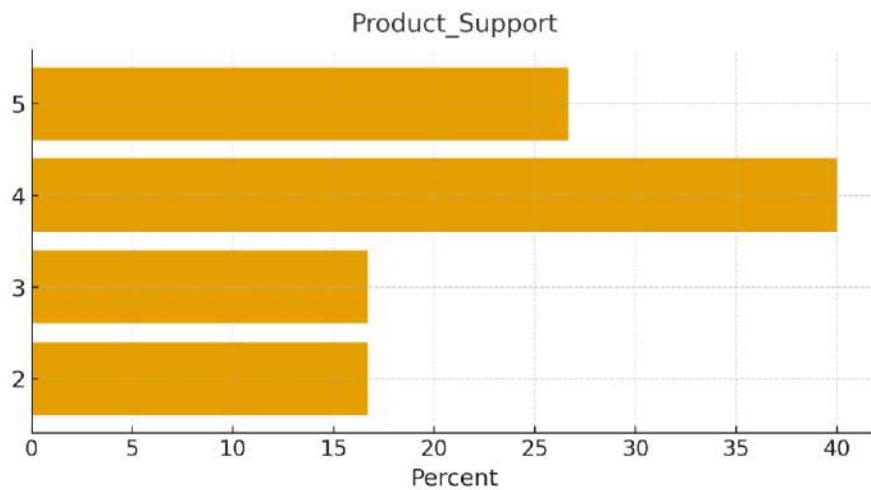
“*Public relations*” also played an important role and was positively correlated with “*Product quality*”, “*Customer satisfaction*” and “*Economic performance*” These correlations suggest that the “RESPECT” label can be utilized as a communication and engagement tool to enhance the company’s public image.

Finally, there was a significant correlation between “*Market position*” and “*Economic performance*”, which supports the view that market differentiation achieved through the use of the label is associated with better financial results.

Overall, the results support the conclusion that the implementation of the “RESPECT” label not only affects individual areas, but is part of a comprehensive strategy that includes environmental responsibility, quality improvement and active communication management and ultimately leads to a strengthening of the company's competitive position.

## Results – Customers

When asked about products and services that support wildlife and biodiversity protection, respondents expressed strong approval: 26.7% were “very positive” and 40.0% “positive,” so nearly 70% placed their views in the top two categories. Very few selected strong disagreements; roughly one-third were neutral or mildly negative, indicating hesitation rather than rejection. Reported purchasing frequency did not fully match these attitudes: answers ranged from “occasionally” to “often,” with fewer “always,” pointing to an attitude–behaviour gap. Strategically, shifting neutral respondents (“3 – neither agree nor disagree”) into the positive categories (“4 – agree” and “5 – strongly agree”)—through clearer messaging, proof of environmental impact, and better availability—could meaningfully expand the loyal customer base.

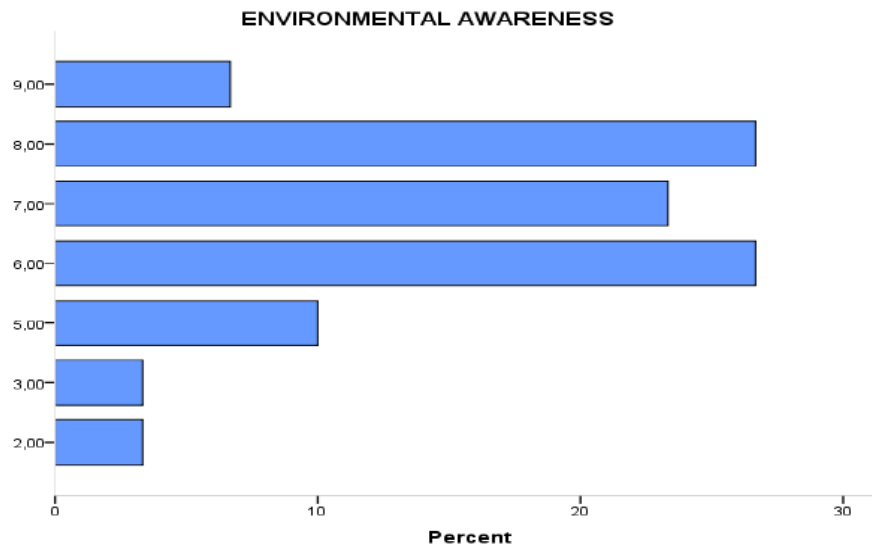


**Figure 5.** Preference for products that support wildlife and biodiversity protection

- Environmental Awareness

According to our results, the “RESPECT” Label had a significant influence on respondents' environmental consciousness. Many participants believed it had increased their understanding of ecological issues and motivated them to support environmentally friendly products. Respondents viewed the label as an inspiring tool, reflecting their perception that it enhanced their environmental awareness. Approximately 50% of participants rated it highly (4 or 5 on a scale), indicating that RESPECT had a positive impact on their personal ecological awareness. In contrast, approximately 30% gave a neutral score (3), suggesting some uncertainty in associating the label with their individual changes. Less than 20% assigned low ratings (1 for "strongly disagree" or 2 for "disagree"), but their feedback is still important.

Regarding whether the “RESPECT” Label encouraged the customers to support products/services based on wildlife and biodiversity criteria, the results showed that the "RESPECT" Label had a notable motivational impact. Positive ratings (4 or 5) accounted for about 46% while negative evaluations (1 or 2) reached 30%, highlighting a need for more transparent communication about RESPECT's objectives and role. The relatively high number of neutral responses (3, neither agree nor disagree) indicates that there is still an opportunity to engage further and motivate consumers.

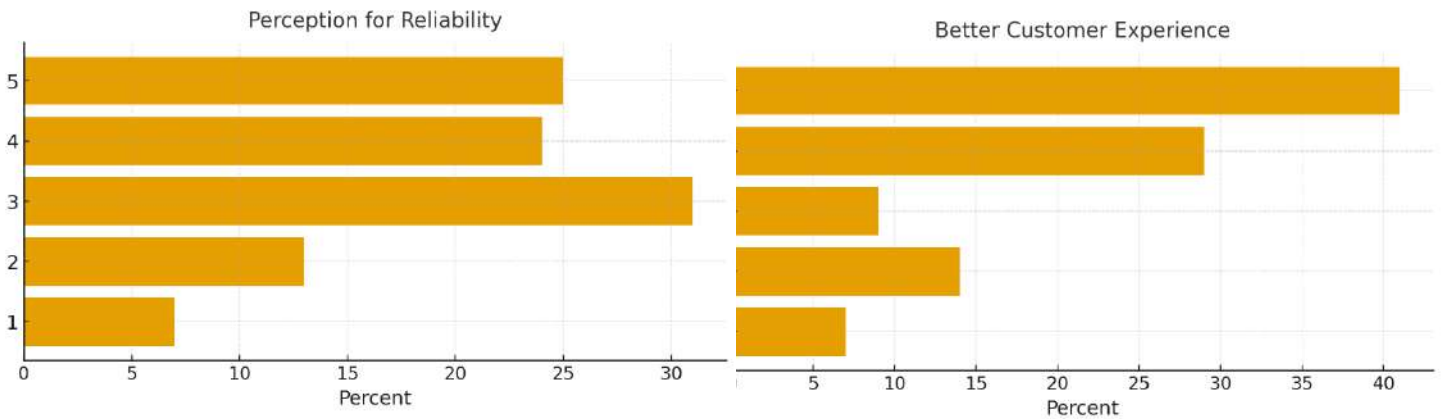
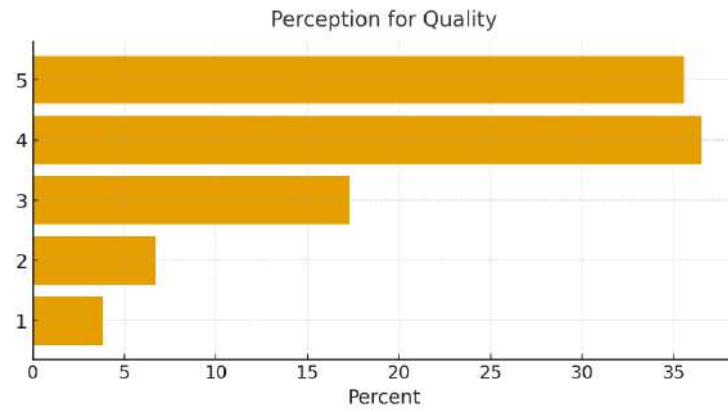


**Figure 6.** *Environmental Awareness. Distribution of summed scores (2–10) from both 5-point Likert questions.*

- Quality

The study evaluated consumers' perceptions of the “RESPECT” Label across three dimensions—product quality, reliability, and customer experience—and found an overall favourable profile with systematic variation between dimensions. For quality, 73% of respondents rated RESPECT-labelled products as high quality, with responses concentrated in the top Likert categories and few negative ratings, indicating that the label's quality signal had been internalised and operated as a point-of-sale heuristic. Perceived reliability was positive but more muted: most ratings ranged from neutral to strongly agree, about 30% were neutral, and roughly 22% were negative—higher than in the quality dimension—suggesting limited awareness of the label's criteria and assurance mechanisms or uncertainty about their consistency. Credibility could be strengthened through concise on-pack criteria, QR-linked summaries of third-party audits, periodic publication of verification results, and the use of credible testimonials. The customer experience showed the most potent effect, with nearly 70% selecting 'agree' or 'strongly agree', implying that the label shaped not only beliefs about product content but also affected the purchase process (easier choice, greater perceived safety, and confidence) and, ultimately, the overall shopping experience.

In summary, consumers tended to regard RESPECT-labelled products as premium and trustworthy, associating the label with superior service. However, converting favourable attitudes into consistent purchasing would require more visible, verifiable evidence of reliability and more transparent multi-channel communication.

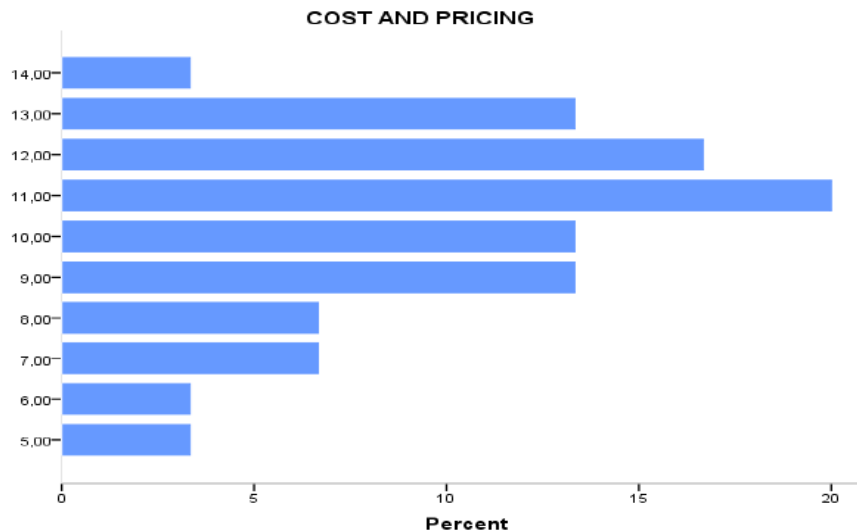


**Figure 7. Quality/ Reliability/ Customer Experience**

- Cost and Pricing

Most of respondents judged RESPECT-labelled products to be relatively expensive, which placed the label in a premium price tier. Although the brand enjoyed a positive image on other dimensions (e.g., quality, experience), price salience remained high. The responses’ distribution showed a sizeable modal share at “3 – neither agree nor disagree,” indicating a neutral segment whose views likely depended on purchasing power, product category, and situational factors at the point of sale.

Willingness to pay results were nonetheless encouraging. More than half of consumers expressed a positive willingness to pay more, and the overall distribution was right-skewed toward levels 3–5, with limited negative ratings. When asked whether the price was justified by the environmental values the products embodied, agreement and strong agreement predominated. However, nearly 25% remained neutral and roughly 20% were unsure, suggesting that the value proposition required further substantiation.

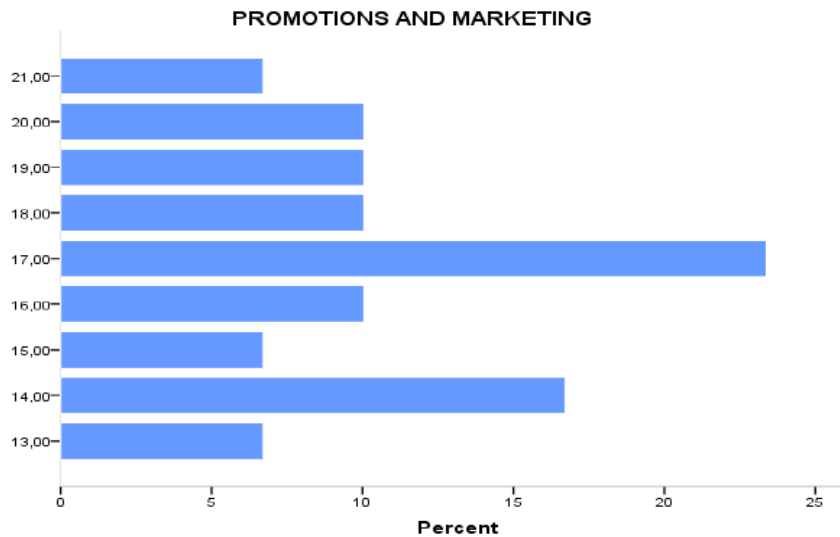


**Figure 8.** Distribution of responses across a 5-point Likert scale pooled across the 3 Cost & Pricing questions

- Marketing

- This section examined five communication variables for the “RESPECT” label—recognition, image enhancement, need for information, suitability of promotion methods, and perceived prestige—and found broadly positive but uneven results. More than 50% of respondents recognised the label (many having encountered it through advertising or informational materials), yet 23% (disagree + strongly disagree) indicated that a sizable segment did not feel connected to the brand. The label’s presence was judged to enhance the image of associated products and companies, with most respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing; however, a notable share selected “3 – neither agree nor disagree,” signalling hesitation or a weak link between the label and commercial value. The demand for information was pronounced: 75% (mainly at levels 3 and 4) stated that more detail about RESPECT was needed, implying that current communication had not saturated the market. Promotion methods were generally viewed as appropriate, though again a high neutral share suggested scope for optimisation. Perceived prestige was an asset—over 50% regarded RESPECT as prestigious—yet the 15% who chose “1 – strongly disagree” was nontrivial and pointed to potential misperceptions that required management.

- Undoubtedly, our findings positioned RESPECT as a promising “green” brand with substantial commercial potential, provided communication deepened both reach and credibility. The study indicated that recognition and image effects were already in place but would have benefited from clearer, more accessible information and storytelling. Addressing the prestige detractors—by clarifying what the label certifies and how—appeared essential to mitigate negative priors and reinforce RESPECT’s value proposition.



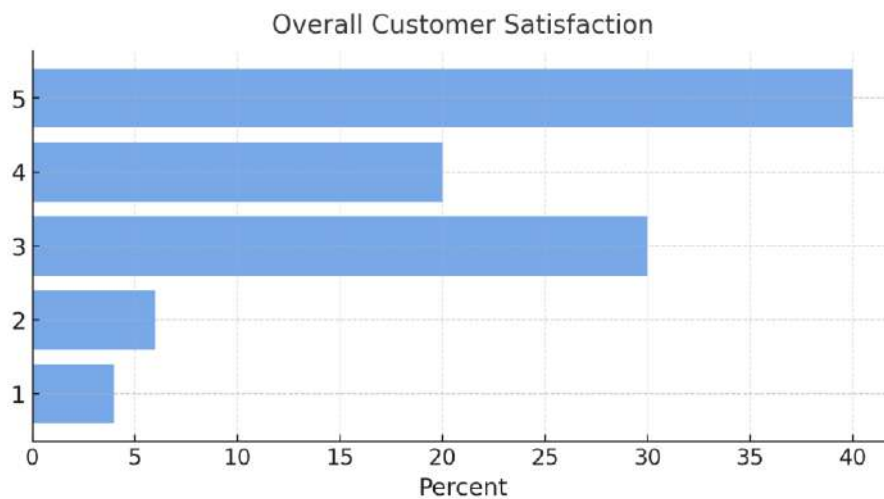
**Figure 9.** Distribution of responses on a 5-point Likert scale, pooled across the five Marketing & Communication items

- Consumers' Behavioural Response

The study assessed four post-exposure behavioural outcomes associated with the “RESPECT” Label—increased purchasing from the same company, repeat patronage, recommendation to others, and attitude change—and found sizable effects that extended beyond transactions to social diffusion. Specifically, 70% reported buying more from firms carrying the label, 67% returned to the same company, and 53% recommended it to others, indicating heightened trust, loyalty, and meaningful word-of-mouth. Moreover, 80% reported a shift in their attitudes toward environmental issues, suggesting spillovers from market responses to broader pro-environmental awareness and social responsibility.

Overall Satisfaction

Reported satisfaction with RESPECT-labelled products was substantively positive yet heterogeneous. A majority (~60%) declared being satisfied or very satisfied, while 30% selected the neutral midpoint and 10% expressed dissatisfaction. This distribution indicates a solid base of endorsement alongside a sizable ambivalent segment whose evaluations are likely sensitive to information and experience effects. The neutrality suggests incomplete familiarity or low involvement; targeted evidence displays (concise on-pack criteria, audit summaries) and repeated exposure are plausible levers for conversion. The dissatisfied minority warrants focused root-cause analysis—category-specific quality checks, implementation-fidelity audits, and service remediation—to align realised performance with the label’s promise.



**Figure 10.** Overall customer satisfaction

## Conclusions

The present study assessed and highlighted the positive impact of RESPECT on various dimensions of the business performance of the label beneficiaries. The findings confirmed that the label enhanced environmental awareness, product and service quality, communication strategies, and competitiveness, all without introducing significant financial burdens.

Despite the relatively short period since its implementation, RESPECT beneficiaries consistently reported that the label strengthens their ecological identity and aligns with increasing customer expectations for sustainability and human-wildlife coexistence. Furthermore, early improvements in quality and internal processes suggest that RESPECT serves as a strategic asset rather than a mere compliance mechanism. Additionally, it supports a stronger public image and more effective external communication, reinforcing brand credibility and stakeholder trust.

Although immediate financial returns remain mild to modest, upward trends in partnerships, customer growth, and market differentiation suggest substantial long-term value. Overall, the “RESPECT” Label emerges as a meaningful and forward-looking tool that helps companies embed sustainability into their core strategy, delivering reputational, operational, and competitive advantages that support sustainable business development.

## Challenges and Solutions in Implementing the “RESPECT” Label

The “RESPECT” Label's establishment and pilot implementation under the LIFE ARCPROM project faced several considerable challenges, beginning with external delays and continuing with on-the-ground complexities. The COVID-19 pandemic had a direct impact on the timeline of the project, particularly by delaying the completion of Action A3, which involved preparatory research and tool development. Noteworthy is that during the pandemic, no in-person meetings could be conducted (workshops and stakeholder consultations) due to imposed travel restrictions and public health measures. As a result, the

subsequent implementation of Action C.10—focused on pilot launching and evaluating the “RESPECT” Label—was also delayed. To address this, UTH revised the internal schedule, reallocated staff time, and condensed activities where necessary, ensuring the action could be completed within the project's overall timeframe.

A second major challenge arose from the geographic scope of implementation. While the “Bear Friendly” label was initially intended to be piloted in just one National Park in Greece, strong interest from local stakeholders led to its expansion across all three National Parks (Prespa, Northern Pindos, and Rhodope). This decision significantly increased the number of activities, field visits, and required workshops. Consequently, operational costs multiplied, particularly in terms of staff travel, accommodation, logistics, and communication. UTH responded by redistributing funds from less resource-intensive actions, cutting non-essential costs, and increasing its co-financing contribution to absorb the unexpected expenses.

Other significant difficulties in implementing the label were the limited economic activity and the small pool of eligible businesses in certain regions—most notably Prespa— which UTH addressed by broadening outreach across the wider National Park area and engaging producers individually to secure adequate participation. Many owners, especially those in rural or isolated locations, struggled to attend in-person workshops due to heavy workloads. UTH responded by offering flexible one-to-one meetings at times and places convenient to participants. In parallel, some older producers found the online application platform challenging, so UTH provided simplified step-by-step guides and personalised phone/email support. A further obstacle was initial scepticism: some producers perceived RESPECT as just another bureaucratic accreditation or feared future fees for holding the label. UTH tackled this early by clearly communicating that RESPECT is a non-commercial, voluntary, and permanently free-of-charge certification, and that the University's role is strictly supportive.

Beekeepers - a key target group of the action- posed another unique challenge. Due to the nature of their work, they frequently travel across Greece to move their hives, making it hard for them to attend sessions or respond promptly. UTH handled this by providing extended deadlines, customized communication, and support adapted to their mobile lifestyle.

Finally, it is worth noting that several producers are hesitant to provide sample products for promotional purposes. Due to their generally small-scale production, many were reluctant to allocate even small quantities for outreach activities. This challenge was addressed through dedicated funding from the project, which covered the purchase of the “RESPECT” Label-bearing products directly from the producers. These products were then used in events, media campaigns, and promotional material aimed at familiarizing the public with the “RESPECT” Label and strengthening its visibility and credibility.

Overall, through strategic planning, flexibility, and direct engagement, UTH managed to successfully overcome all these challenges, ensuring the effective pilot implementation of the “RESPECT” Label in three National Parks and laying the groundwork for its future expansion.

## Future Steps

To enhance the effectiveness and commercial potential of the “RESPECT” Label, the following marketing strategy directions are proposed:

- Strengthening public information and education by creating multimedia materials (videos, articles, microsites) that highlight the environmental values of the brand and its contribution to the preservation of biodiversity.
- Dissemination of communication through multi-channel campaigns, including social media, retail points, informational events, and collaborations with local organizations.

- Elevate the brand's premium image by emphasizing storytelling, designing sustainable and fashionable packaging, and forming strategic collaborations with branded companies or eco-friendly designers.
- Build a loyal consumer audience through reward programs, referral systems, and sharing stories of consumers who have changed their lifestyles in favour of RESPECT.
- Develop institutional and corporate partnerships to position RESPECT as a certification for organizations committed to social and environmental responsibility.
- Regularly assess performance by gathering data, measuring satisfaction, and analyzing consumer behavior to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

This strategy is designed not only to increase RESPECT's commercial appeal but also to position it as a model of responsible consumption with durable social and environmental benefits. Building on the successful completion of LIFE ARCPROM activities and the positive results of the pilot phase, the UTH team will continue to support and develop RESPECT as an independent sustainability and engagement tool. In particular, UTH commits to ensuring the label's continuity, institutional anchoring, and operational evolution through (i) dedicated internal resources, (ii) integration with current and future LIFE or similar EU-funded projects, and (iii) strategic partnerships at national and regional levels.

Building on the above, UTH has drafted a specific roadmap which outlines the key strategic steps to be taken over the next five years.

#### **Year 1: Post-LIFE Transition and Institutional Anchoring**

The priority is to secure the institutional and operational foundation of RESPECT in the post-LIFE ARCPROM period. Key objectives during this phase include:

- ✓ Establishing an autonomous and transparent governance structure, including a scientific advisory board and stakeholder engagement mechanisms.
- ✓ Adjusting and reforming internal procedures, decision-making protocols, and evaluation criteria based on feedback from the pilot implementation, under LIFE ARCPROM.
- ✓ Continuing and further enhancing the label's visibility and legitimacy through a targeted communication campaign aimed at businesses, consumers, and stakeholders.
- ✓ Refining the certification tools and methodology, incorporating lessons learned from the LIFE project.

As part of the broader effort to consolidate the RESPECT community and ensure long-term legitimacy, the UTH will also establish an annual in-person RESPECT holders meeting. This yearly, in-person gathering will bring together:

- “RESPECT” Label holders, to share their experiences, best practices, and challenges in implementing biodiversity-friendly practices
- Consumer representatives, NGOs, and public institutions involved in environmental and biodiversity management will contribute insights, feedback, and policy perspectives.
- A broader community of practice committed to the advancement of sustainable, nature-conscious entrepreneurship.

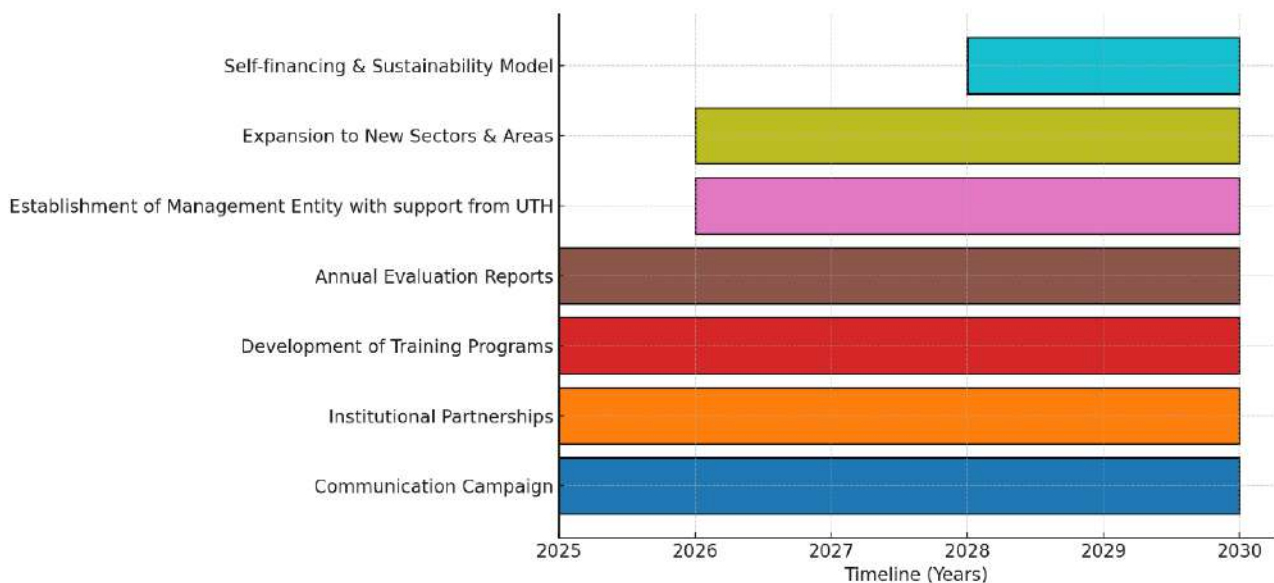
Also, during the meeting, UTH will host a short recognition ceremony to highlight businesses that have made outstanding contributions to the label's visibility and impact. These RESPECT "- related awards will honor initiatives that stand out in biodiversity protection, sustainable innovation, and public engagement.

### Years 2–3: Operational Expansion and Strategic Consolidation

Building on the institutional setup, the second phase focuses on the geographical and sectoral expansion of the “RESPECT” Label and the consolidation of its strategic framework. Key actions include:

- ❖ Expanding the label to additional regions and economic sectors, especially those with a strong interaction with wildlife and biodiversity conservation practices.
- ❖ Launching tailored training programs for businesses, consultants, and local authorities, using blended and experiential learning methodologies.
- ❖ Strengthening collaboration with public bodies and institutional partners through formal agreements that support policy integration of RESPECT.
- ❖ Publishing annual reports to foster transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.
- ❖ Establishing a yearly meeting of all the RESPECT beneficiaries

**Chronological Implementation of RESPECT Label Strategic Steps (2025–2030)**



**Figure 11. Strategic Implementation Timeline for the “RESPECT” Label (2025–2030)**

### Years 4–5: Financial Autonomy and Ecosystem Integration

By the end of the five years, the “RESPECT” Label is expected to operate as a financially sustainable, widely recognized certification system. Strategic priorities for this maturity phase include:

- Adoption of a self-financing model, supported by income streams from training, consulting services, partnerships, sponsorships, and selective membership contributions.
- Participation in national and international exhibitions, awareness campaigns, and the development of a Consumer Trust Index to further enhance recognition and acceptance.
- Integration and alignment with other eco-labels and certification networks (e.g., EU Eco-label), reinforcing credibility and compatibility.
- Establishment of the "Wildlife RESPECT Awards" to publicly recognize and celebrate outstanding biodiversity and wildlife stewardship by businesses.

This final phase will mark the market maturity and institutional legitimacy of the “RESPECT” Label.

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Estimated due date</b>
At least 20 out of the 23 pilot businesses maintain active	End of 2025
Establishment of the Scientific Advisory Board	End of 2025
Organization of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Annual “RESPECT” Label Beneficiaries Meeting & Award Ceremony.	Feb 2026
“RESPECT” Label expanded to at least 2 new regions (e.g. Southern Pindos and Central Macedonia).	May 2026
Training program launched with at least 50 participants.	June 2026
A minimum of 10 new businesses certified under the expanded label.	Sep 2026
Total of 40 certified businesses across 5+ regions.	End of 2026
Organization of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Annual “RESPECT” Label Beneficiaries Meeting & Award Ceremony.	Feb 2027
At least 2 thematic RESPECT workshops held per year.	End of 2027
Total of 50 certified businesses across 5+ regions.	End of 2027
Positive feedback from at least 75% of certified businesses in satisfaction survey.	End of 2028
Organization of the 4 <sup>th</sup> Annual “RESPECT” Label Beneficiaries Meeting & Award Ceremony.	Feb 2028
Minimum of 60 certified businesses active across 7+ regions	End of 2028
Organization of the 5 <sup>th</sup> Annual “RESPECT” Label Beneficiaries Meeting & Award Ceremony.	Feb 2029
Financial self-sufficiency achieved through at least 3 income streams.	End of 2029

**Table 4.** Key Milestones and Estimated Completion Dates for the “RESPECT” Label (2025–2030)

## Introduction

Action D3 aims at monitoring the impact of Action C10 “Bear Friendly” labelling in products and services”. This objective can be declined in a short term impact and a long term impact with the first one mainly related to data concerning the “Bear Friendly” producers and their attitude, and the second one related to the economic implications of a “Bear Friendly” label in a territory.

In MNP, the first “Bear Friendly” producers were awarded on December 2022 making the “Bear Friendly” label a relatively young tool in the economic framework of the territory. As stated in the project proposal, it would be hard to assess the economic impact of Action C10 being the “Bear Friendly” label establishment a brand new task in MNP and having it been active in the territory for just 2.5 years by now. This report will thus be focused on the assessment of Action C10 impact in the short term, evaluating the following variables:

- number of producers awarded and number of “Bear Friendly” products
- spatial distribution of producers
- producers’ attitude and expectations
- bear conservation issues addressed

The above mentioned variables will be analysed also in light of the other information acquired in the frame of the LIFE ARCPROM like bear distribution (Actions A2-D7), human-bear conflict risk (Action A1) and, finally, a possible long term impact of the “Bear Friendly” label establishment will be evaluated using available information on the Advertising Value Equivalent of the Apennine brown bear in MNP quantified in the frame of Action A3.

## Number of producers awarded and number of “Bear Friendly” products

Producers potentially interested by the “Bear Friendly” label granting are beekeepers and agricultural farmers that accomplish specific criteria and operate inside the Area of Interest (AOI) individuated in the frame of Action A3 (both reported in the final document of criteria to grant the “Bear Friendly” label in MNP available here <https://www.parcomajella.it/i-criteri-per-la-concessione-del-marchio-bear-friendly.htm>). In order to facilitate the participation of producers, WWF and MNP drafted a list of potential beneficiaries through the consultation of official databases (e.g. the regional database of apiculture activity), the collaboration with other entities (e.g. personnel in charge of managing the organic label auditing) and the collaboration with category associations (e.g. FAI – Italian Apicultures Federation). This list, used to contact producers and invite them to the meetings, included 42 apicultures and 35 agricultural farmers potentially interested. Thirty-eight out of 42 beekeepers (90%) and 32 out of 35 agricultural farmers (91%) immediately showed interest in the “Bear Friendly” project. In 2022 14 beekeepers and 6 agricultural farmers were granted with the “Bear Friendly” label; in 2023 2 additional beekeepers, 4 additional agricultural farmers and 1 beekeeper/agricultural farmer were granted making a total of 16 beekeepers, 10 agricultural farmers and 1 beekeeper/agricultural farmer. Considering that one producer is both beekeeper

and agricultural farmer and was thus included in both the lists of producers potentially interested, we can say that 17 out of 42 beekeepers potentially interested and 11 out of 35 agricultural farmers potentially interested actually joined the project. This means that 40% of the beekeepers and 31% of the agricultural farmers reached by our invitation actually joined the “Bear Friendly” project. If we calculate the percentage only including the number of producers that actually showed interest in the project since the very beginning, we can say that 45% of the beekeepers (17 out of 38) and 34% of the agricultural farmers (11 out of 32) actually joined the “Bear Friendly” project.



**Figure 12.** The 27 “Bear Friendly” producers granted in the frame of Action C10 in the Maiella National Park

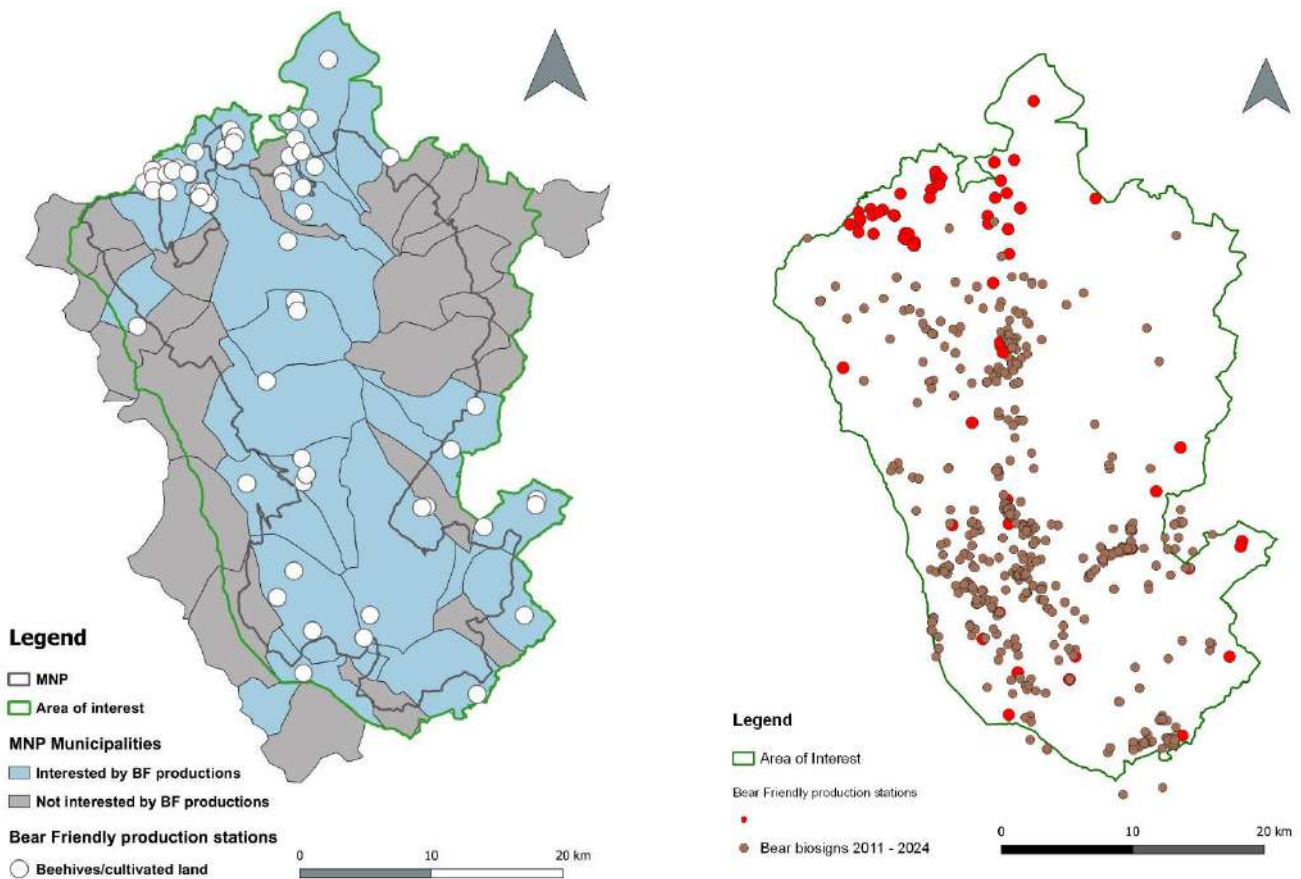
Assessing the representativeness of the above reported numbers and percentages in an objective and absolute way is quite challenging as there are no available data in the literature to be used for a comparison and there are no comparable experiences implemented so far in the Apennine context. In the frame of the projects LIFE DINALP BEAR (LIFE13 NAT/SI/550, 2014-2019) and LIFE WOLFALPS EU (LIFE18 NAT/IT/972, 2019-2024) similar activities were implemented respectively to promote human-bear and human-wolf coexistence. Both projects included in their “Bear Friendly” and “Ecoesistenza” labels several stakeholders including not only products but also services (e.g. tourist guides) and handcraft-related activities. However, considering only the beekeepers and agricultural farmers involved in the LIFE DINALP BEAR and the producers of the products labelled as “prodotti ecoesistenti” in the LIFE WOLFALPS EU, we can see that a total of 31 beekeepers and 12 agricultural farmers were involved in Slovenia and Croatia (LIFE DINALP BEAR, “Bear Friendly” map for tourism [https://dinalpbear.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Bear-Friendly\\_Zemljevid\\_B2\\_web.pdf](https://dinalpbear.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Bear-Friendly_Zemljevid_B2_web.pdf)) while 5 producers (23 products) were involved in Italy (LIFE WOLFALPS EU, Layman’s Report and <https://ecoesistenza.it/>). Considering that both the LIFE DINALP BEAR and the LIFE WOLFALPS EU worked in a way bigger area than the Maiella NP (respectively Slovenia/Croatia and Italy/France/Austria/Slovenia) we can see that the numbers reached in MNP are more than satisfying and must be considered a huge result of Action C10.

Putting aside the comparison with other projects and looking at the absolute numbers, percentages reached with Action C10 (45% and 35% of beekeepers and agricultural farmers granted) result in 1 beekeeper every 2.2 and 1 farmer every 2.9 being a “Bear Friendly” producer, both indicators of a high impact in the territory. In addition to the number of producers, the number of “Bear Friendly” products also bolsters this last statement. More than 70 “Bear Friendly” products are available in the stores of MNP (see also deliverable C10.4) and the surrounding areas, providing a diversified offer able to reach different marketing branches thus resulting in more buyers potentially reachable with at least 1 “Bear Friendly” product.

## Spatial Distribution of Producers

The 27 “Bear Friendly” producers have their production stations (beehives or cultivated land) in 21 of the 39 municipalities (54%) included in the AOI with Bolognano (PE), Lettomanoppello (PE), Roccamorice (PE) and San Valentino in Abruzzo Citeriore (PE) being the municipalities with the highest number of production stations. A total of 66 production stations are present (36 beehives and 30 cultivated land) for a mean of 2.4 stations/producer and 3.1 stations/interested municipality.

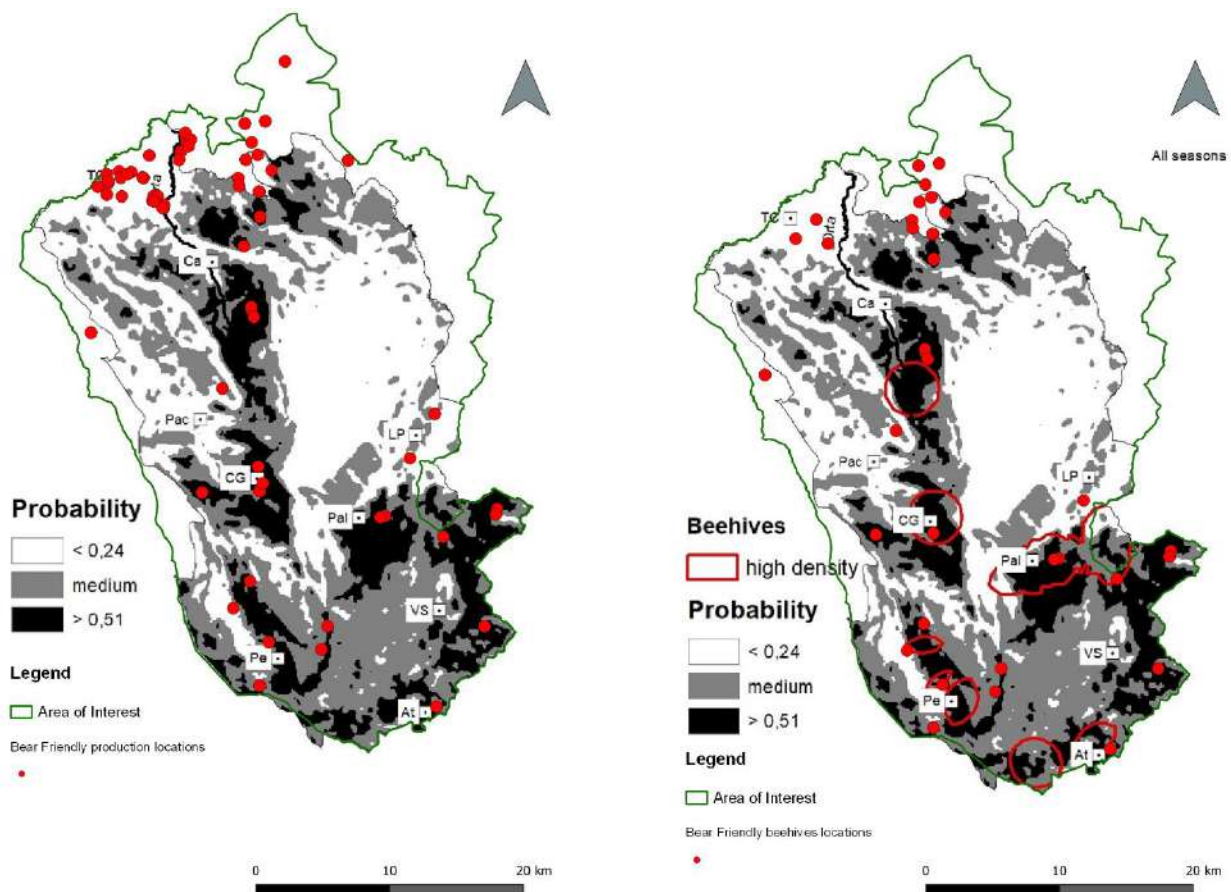
The 21 interested municipalities are not clustered but spread in the whole AOI resulting in the presence of “Bear Friendly” productions from north to south. The less-represented portion of the AOI is the NE part: this is an area mostly occupied by the Maiella massif, thus not suitable for beekeeping nor for agricultural activity. The “hole” in the NE part of the AOI, coincides with an area of low number of bear presence signs, in fact bear distribution is also affected by the Maiella massif. However, it is important to report that the lack of production stations does not imply the lack of “Bear Friendly” producers. In fact, especially for beehives, production location and producer location can be different (e.g. a “Bear Friendly” beekeeper from Guardiagrele in the NE of the Park has the production stations in Pescocostanzo in the S portion of the Park). In fact, taking into consideration both the “Bear Friendly” production stations and the “Bear Friendly” producers locations, the number of municipalities involved raises to 26, 23 included in the AOI (the ones reported in Figure 13 plus Guardiagrele and Pratola Peligna in the provinces of Chieti and L’Aquila) and 3 outside the AOI (Pescara, Tornareccio and Orsogna in the provinces of Pescara and Chieti). This situation is the result of the fact that the spatial criterion to grant the “Bear Friendly” label is the *production* in the AOI, not the presence of the producer headquarters in the AOI. This allowed the inclusion of all the stakeholders that operate in the AOI regardless of their living location and this, in turn, resulted in the inclusion of more stakeholders and in a spatial impact of the “Bear Friendly” label even beyond the AOI boundary.



**Figure 13.** *Left: distribution of the “Bear Friendly” production stations (i.e. locations of beehives and cultivated lands) in the 39 municipalities included in the Area of Interest of Action C10; right: distribution of the “Bear Friendly” production stations and distribution of the bear biosigns detected from 2011 to 2024.*

The distribution of the “Bear Friendly” production stations is consistent with the bear distribution. This datum implies that the visibility of the label in the territory is maximized as well as the positive impact of the “Bear Friendly” practices on the bear population. The spatial distribution of “Bear Friendly” productions/producers is thus optimal from both the marketing point of view and the bear conservation point of view.

Comparing spatial distribution of production locations with the distribution of the human-bear conflict risk map estimated in the frame of Action A1, we can see a general overlap of the production locations with the high-risk-probability areas. Twenty out of 66 (33%) “Bear Friendly” productions are present in the high-conflict-risk areas near to Caramanico Terme, Campo di Giove, Palena, Pescocostanzo and Ateleta (respectively Ca, CG, Pal, Pe and At in Figure 14) and, specifically, 17 out of 36 (47%) beehives fall into the high-risk of beehive damage areas (Figure 14 right). This spatial pattern suggests that the producers involved have a key role in bear conservation and by implementing the “Bear Friendly” good practices in critical areas they are concretely reducing human-bear conflict in MNP.



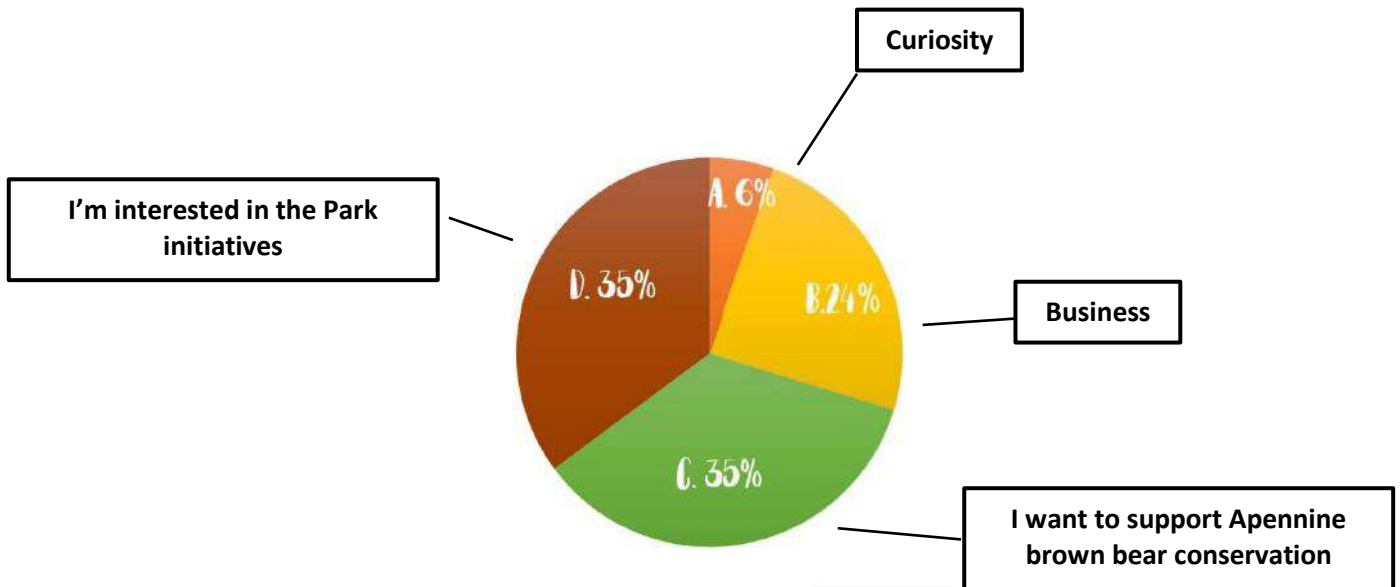
**Figure 14.** Distribution of all the “Bear Friendly” productions (left) and of the beehives only (right) as compared with the human-bear conflict risk distribution map (left) and the beehive-specific risk map (right) estimated in the frame of Action A1.

## Producers Attitude and Expectations

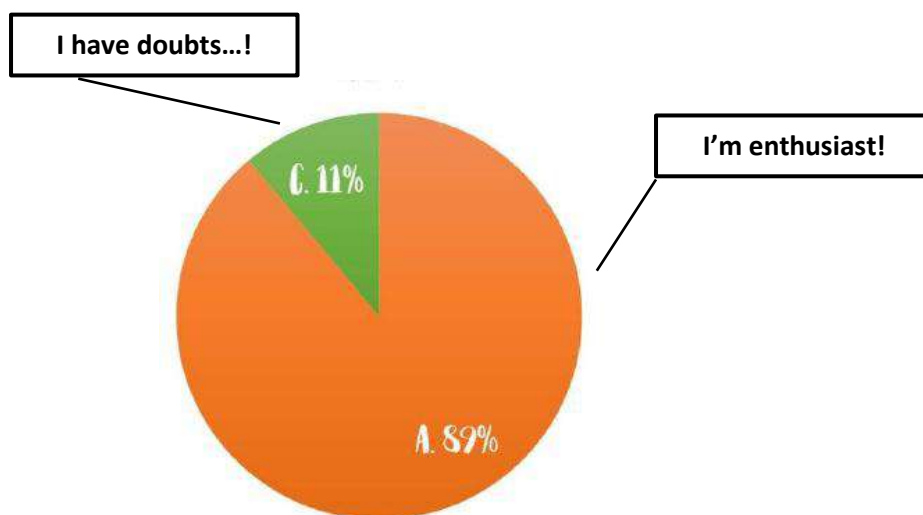
Assessing the effects of the “Bear Friendly” label in the MNP market, as already reported in this document, would be very challenging considering that it is a brand-new activity in MNP and in general in the Apennine context. However, in order to quantify the impact of the “Bear Friendly” label in the producers’ activity, questionnaires were drafted and administrated to producers. A first questionnaire was administrated in November 9<sup>th</sup> 2021 during the very first meeting aimed at introducing the “Bear Friendly” project to the potential beneficiaries. After introducing the LIFE ARCPROM projects and the scope/objectives of the “Bear Friendly” label, participants were asked to fill-in the questionnaire and results were analysed in real time and discussed together with them.

Six questions with multiple choice answers were administrated to the 20 producers participating to the meeting and the analysis of the answers resulted in the following output:

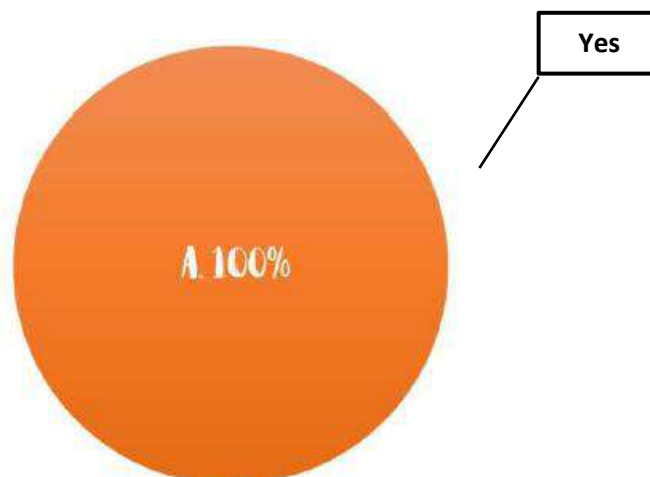
Question 1: Why did you decide to participate to this meeting?



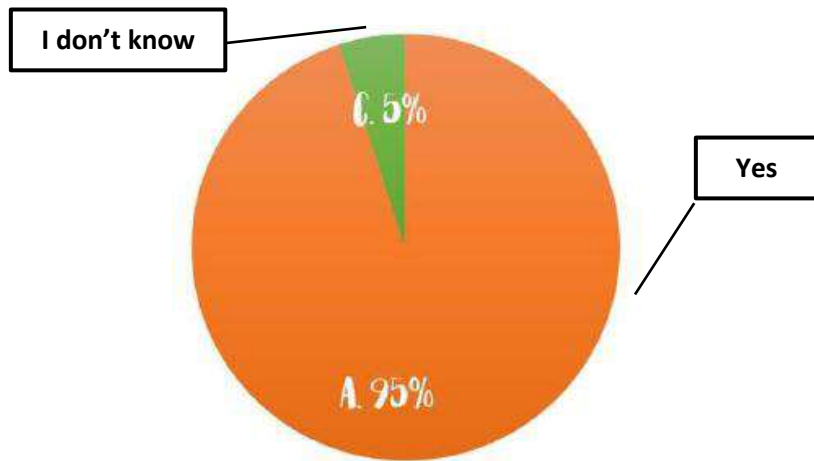
Question 2: Now that you know about the "Bear Friendly" project what's your opinion?



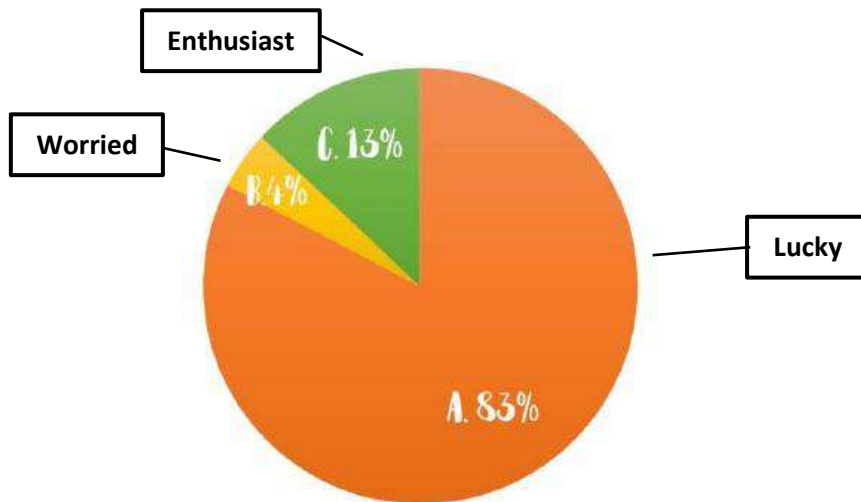
Question 3: Do you see in this project an opportunity for your activity?



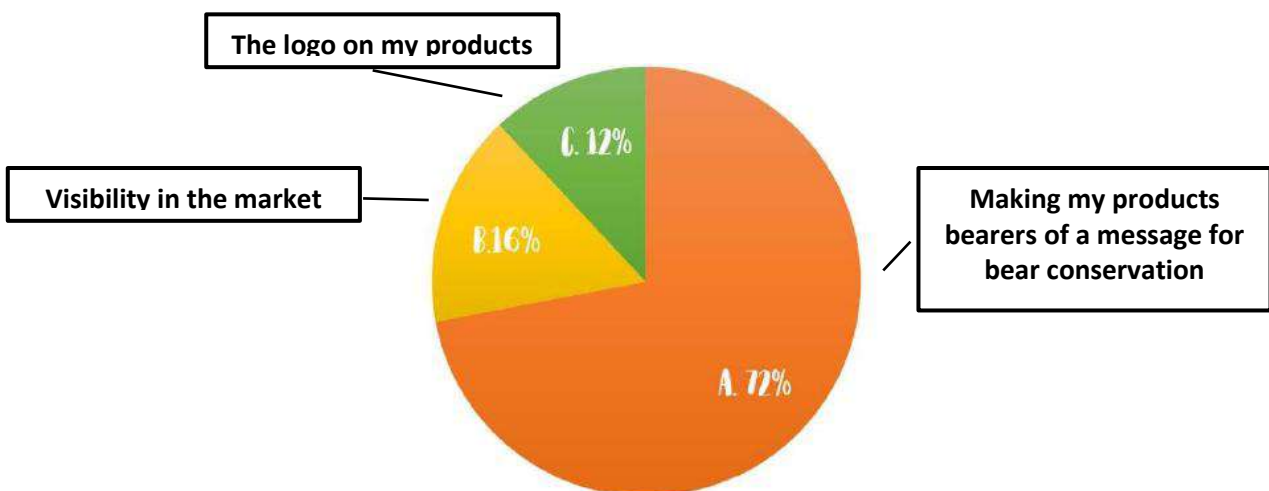
Question 4: Do you think that this project is useful for the Apennine brown bear conservation in MNP?



Question 5: How do you feel about the fact that you share the territory with bears?



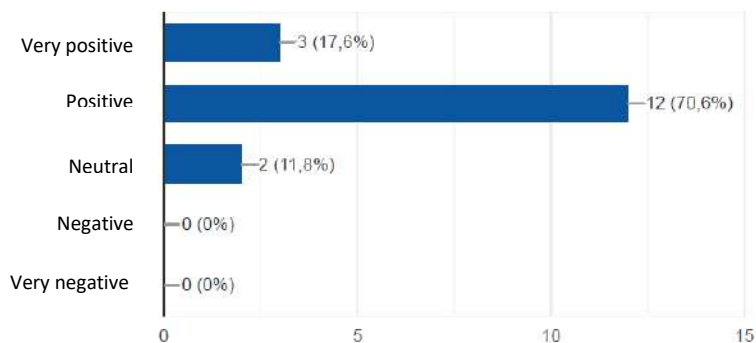
Question 6: Which part of this project is more appealing to you?



A second more in-depth questionnaire aimed at assessing producers' perceptions at the end of Action C10 was administrated in spring 2025 (see Annex III). A total of 16 questions were administrated concerning 4 main issues: *i)* satisfaction *ii)* market impact and business growth *iii)* effectiveness of support tools *iv)* future perspectives and collaboration. Seventeen producers out of 27 (63%) sent their feedback and generated the following outcome:

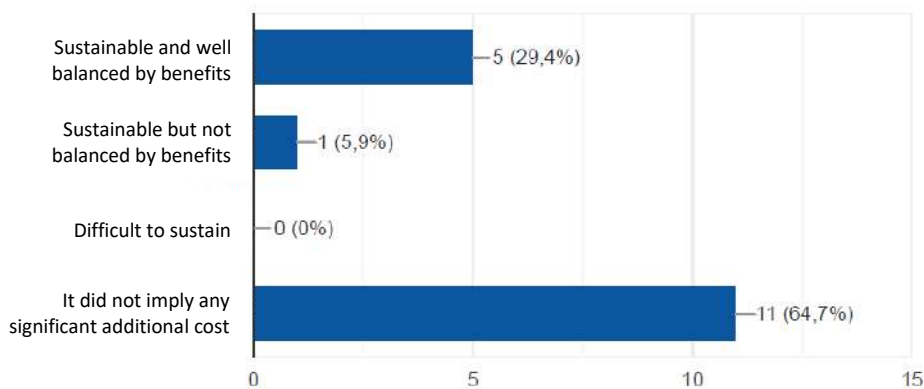
i) satisfaction

*How do you rate your experience with the “Bear Friendly” label?*



88.2% of producers rate their experience positively (17.6% very positive, 70.6% positive)

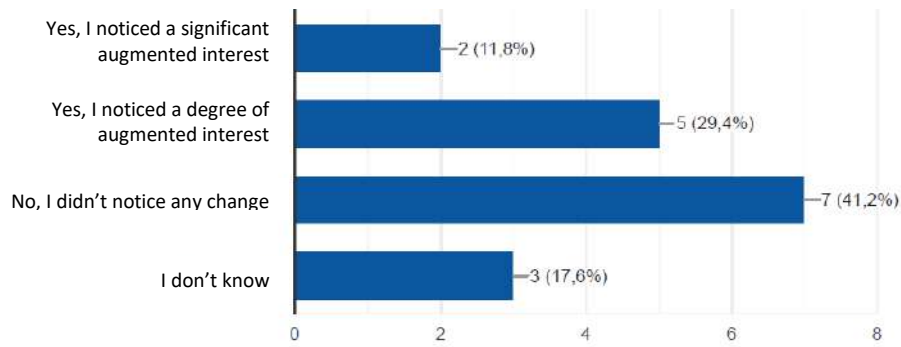
*How do you evaluate the economic commitment implied by the “Bear Friendly” label?*



94.1% of producers did not entail a significant economic commitment-

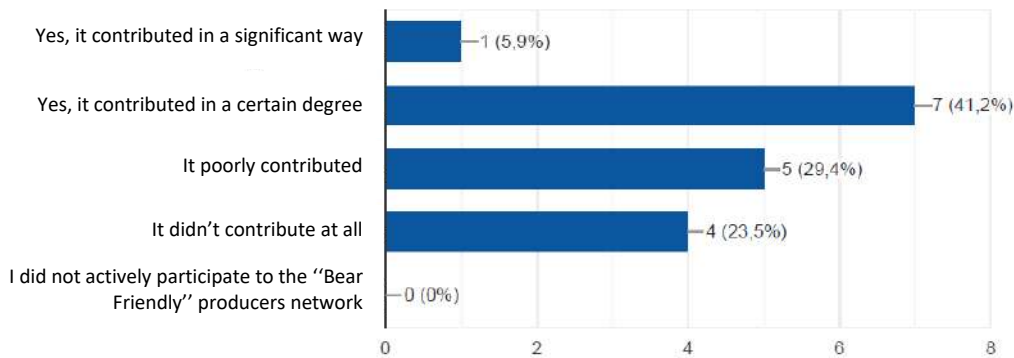
ii) market impact and business growth

*Did you notice an augmented interest of customers determined by the “Bear Friendly” label?*



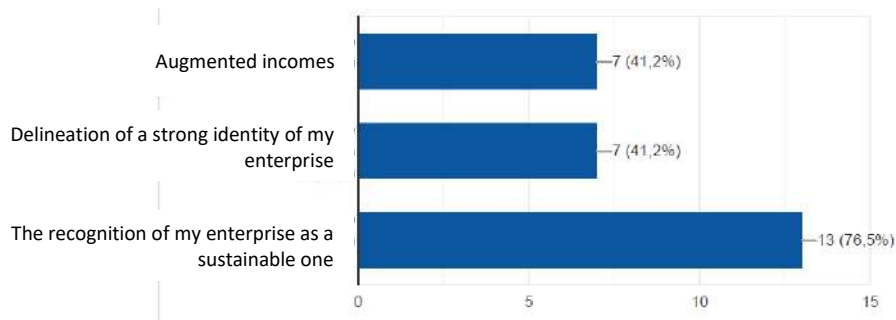
41.2% of producers reported an increase in consumer interest but 41.2% also reported that the “Bear Friendly” label did not influence customer interest.

*Did the participation to the “Bear Friendly” producers network contribute to the business growth of your activity?*



47.1% of manufacturers noted a moderate or significant contribution to their business growth

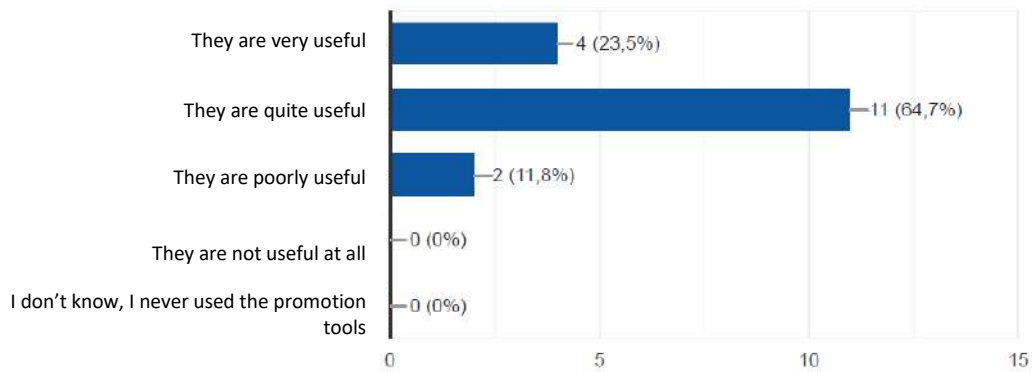
*What kind of benefit do you expect to receive the most from the “Bear Friendly” label?*



76.5% consider recognition of commitment to sustainability as the main expected benefit.

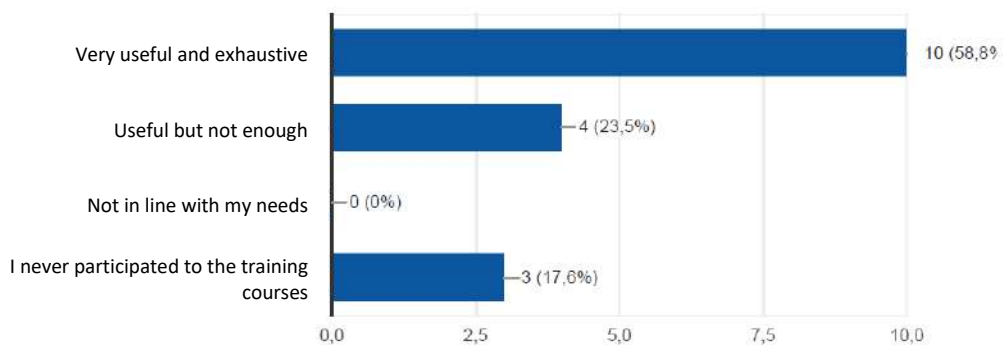
iii) effectiveness of support tools

*How do you rate the the promotional tools (roll-ups, t-shirts, stickers etc.) provided by the Park?*



88.2% of producers found the material provided by the Park useful.

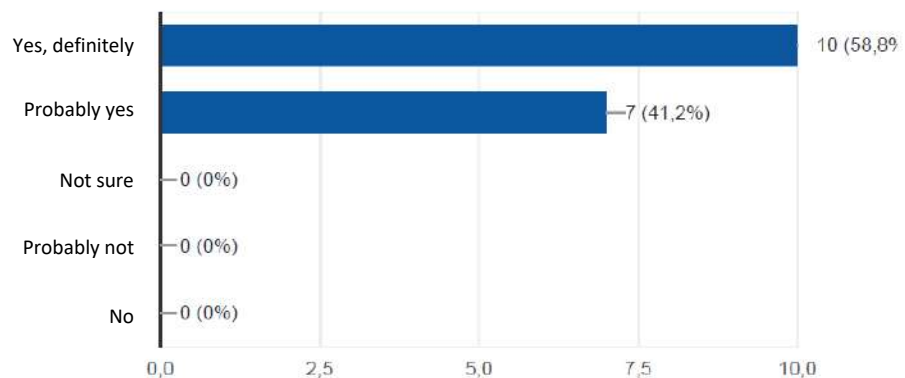
*How do you rate the training workshops and seminars organized by MNP and WWF?*



58.8% of producers rated the training received during the workshops as very useful and exhaustive and 23.5% evaluated it as useful but not enough.

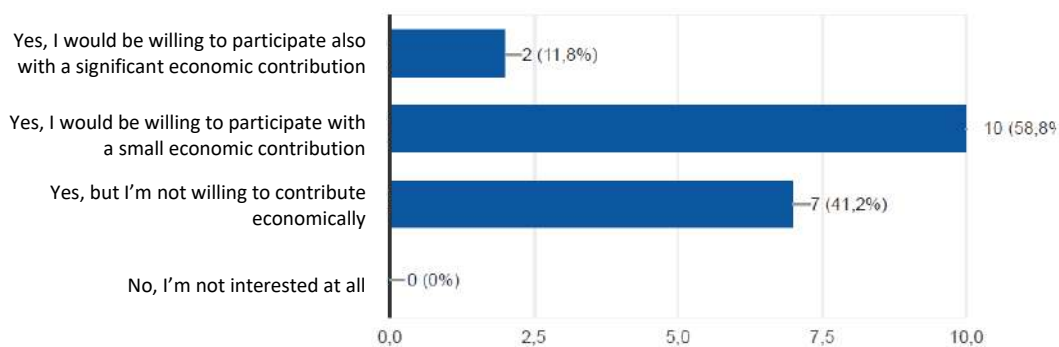
iv) future perspectives and collaboration

*Will you renew your participation in the “Bear Friendly” project when the current convention will expire?*



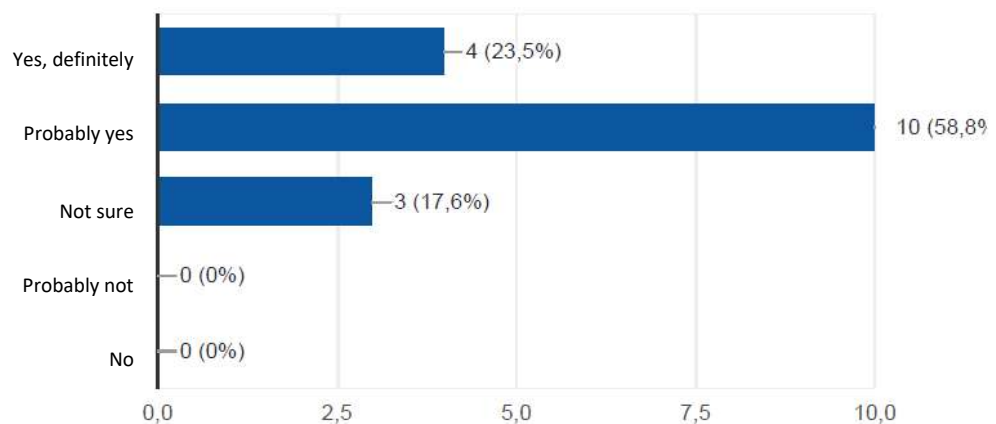
100% of producers intend to renew their membership.

*Would you be willing to participate to future initiative of the “Bear Friendly” network also providing an economic contribution?*



64.7% are willing to participate in further initiatives with a financial contribution.

*Are you willing to collaborate to favour the access of new subjects (products and services) in the “Bear Friendly” Network?*



82.3% are willing to collaborate to involve other subjects.

Beyond the above-reported results, additional insights on producer’s attitude and expectations are provided by the issues reported in the open question *“Basing on your experience, would you suggest any action to improve the “Bear Friendly” producers network in order to augment the efficacy of the bear conservation strategy and to augment the economic advantages for your activity?”* (n.16 see Annex I). Results show that several recurring themes have been suggested by producers to improve the “Bear Friendly” system:

Marketing and promotion

- Greater dissemination of the label and the values it represents
- Persist with social media advertising campaigns
- Promotion of products in all the points of sale and locations of the Park

Events and Networking

- Participation in dedicated events to publicize not only the products but also the commitment to protecting the territory
- Organization of meetings in various municipalities to present the project
- Participation in local and national fairs

- Meetings with operators from other Parks and Reserves who have implemented similar projects

#### Collaboration and supply chain

- Creation of new projects in the network
- Creating a shared point of sale for all the “Bear Friendly” products
- Greater integration between producers to create synergies

#### Awareness and education

- Raising public awareness of the importance of bear conservation
- Educational initiatives for local communities, schools and tourists
- Valorisation of the territory as the home of the bear and a business card for the products

#### Economic sustainability

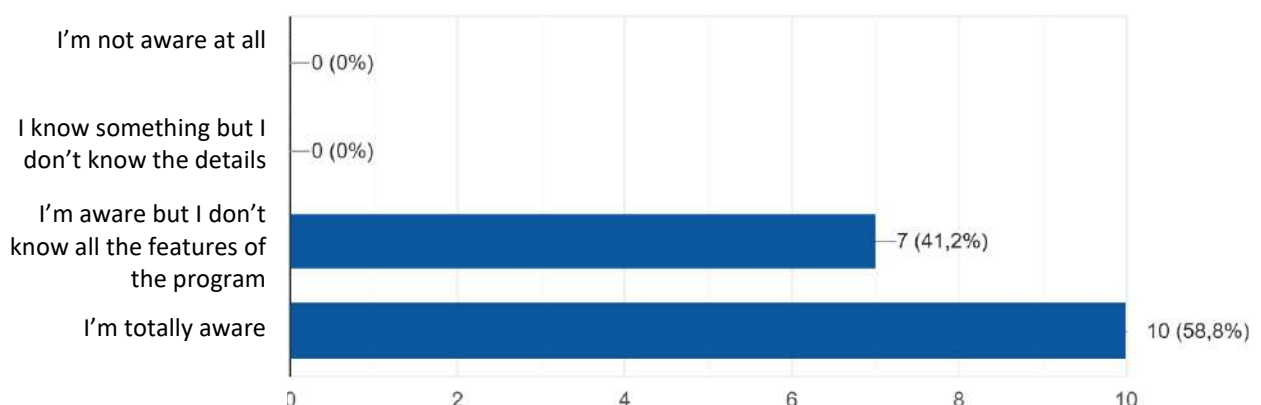
- Need for an economic return, even minimal, to ensure the continuity of membership
- Valorisation of products as a symbol of quality and biodiversity

#### Strategic Recommendations for “Bear Friendly” labeling

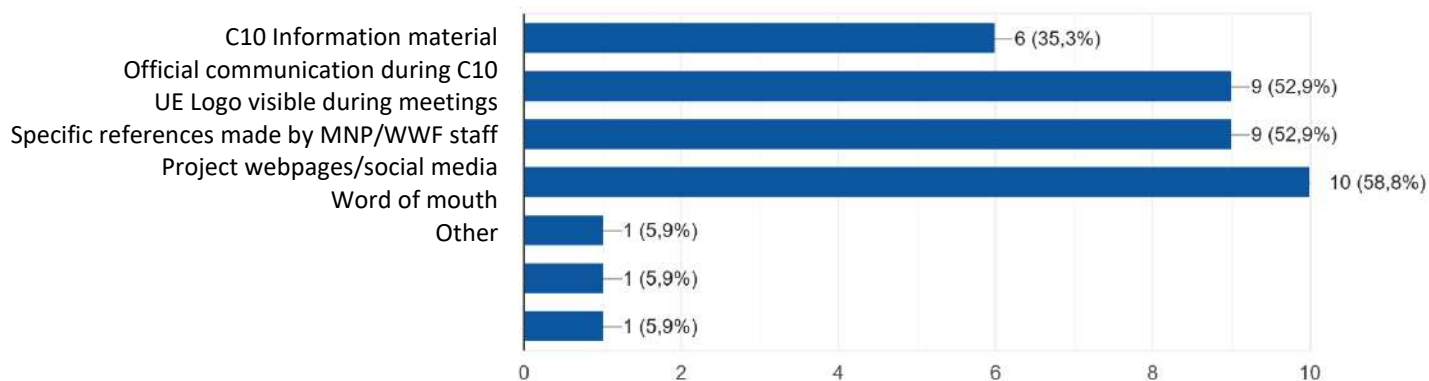
- Strengthen label promotion: Invest in more impactful marketing campaigns, using digital channels and social media to increase label visibility.
- Create an integrated sales system: Develop a shared sales system and/or an e-commerce platform dedicated to “Bear Friendly” products.
- Organize networking events: Facilitate the exchange of experiences between producers and with operators from other Parks who have implemented similar projects.
- Expand educational activities: Strengthen awareness-raising initiatives aimed at local communities, schools and tourists, to raise awareness of the importance of bear conservation.
- Develop a monitoring system: Implement tools to measure the real economic impact of the brand on producers' activities.
- Exploring new forms of collaboration: Promote the creation of small supply chains within the label to generate synergies between producers.

Last but not least, the awareness of the context in which the “Bear Friendly” label was developed was also investigated through the administration of two questions:

*To what extent are you aware that the action you are participating in is part of a larger project funded by a specific European Union program?*



*If you are aware, where did you obtain this information?*



The majority of producers (58.8%) are fully aware that the action is part of a larger project funded by the European Union, while 41.2% are fairly aware of it but do not know all its aspects. This information was obtained mainly through:

- Explicit presentations by organizers (58.8%)
- Official communications received during the action (52.9%)
- EU logo and references visible during meetings (52.9%)
- Information material distributed for the action (35.3%)

Results of the survey on producers attitude can be summarized using the following key indicators:

Indicator	Value
Overall satisfaction rate	88,2%
Expected renewal rate	100,0%
Rate of willingness to collaborate in the future	82,3%
Perception of economic commitment as sustainable	94,1%
Perception of positive impact on business growth	47,1%
Willingness to contribute financially to future initiatives	64,7%

## Bear Conservation Issues Addressed

In order to comprehensively assess the impact of Action C10, it is crucial to evaluate its contribution in the achievement of the general goal of improving bear conservation. The “Bear Friendly” label developed in the frame of the LIFE ARCPROM awards two main features of the producers:

- their commitment in reducing human-bear conflict through protection from damages
- their contribution in preserving the bear habitat through the implementation of biodiversity-respectful practices (organic productions, low use of plant protection products, cultivation of local varieties, breeding of the autochthonous bee etc.)

While the first feature is the one commonly awarded in the projects addressing large carnivore-human coexistence, the second feature represents a new approach introduced with the LIFE ARCPROM. For the first time practices that help preserve the environment, and consequently the bear habitat, have been considered important to favour bear conservation. This innovative approach produced two important outcomes: *i*) improved producers involvement and enthusiasm and *ii*) augmented the positive impact of the Action on bear conservation.

Producers that implement biodiversity-respectful practices felt enthusiast to (finally) see their effort recognized and to (finally) be considered as important actors of the environmental protection and, specifically, of bear protection.

The choice to introduce the “habitat approach” in the “Bear Friendly” granting procedure non only gave a huge added value to Action C10 but also was a key choice that significantly augmented Action C10 positive impact on bear conservation.

## Final Evaluations

The monitoring activities conducted under Action D3 provide a comprehensive overview of the short-term impacts of Action C10, which introduced the “Bear Friendly” labelling initiative within the Maiella National Park (MNP) as part of the LIFE ARCPROM project. Despite being a relatively new initiative—having only been active since December 2022—the “Bear Friendly” label has already demonstrated significant achievements in producer engagement, spatial outreach, public awareness, and bear conservation efforts.

From a quantitative standpoint, the results are particularly encouraging. Out of the 77 producers initially identified as potential participants (42 beekeepers and 35 agricultural farmers), 69 expressed immediate interest, and ultimately, 27 producers (16 beekeepers, 10 farmers, and 1 with dual roles) were awarded the “Bear Friendly” label. This equates to 40% of potentially interested beekeepers and 31% of farmers actively joining the initiative, percentages that rise to 45% and 34% respectively when considering only those who initially expressed interest. These figures, although difficult to benchmark due to the novelty of such initiatives in the Apennine context, compare favorably with similar projects such as LIFE DINALP BEAR and LIFE WOLFALPS EU, both of which operated in much larger geographic and demographic areas. This suggests that Action C10 has had a disproportionately strong engagement in MNP relative to its territorial size, signaling a high level of local relevance and acceptance.

Spatial analysis further supports this conclusion. The 27 “Bear Friendly” producers have established 66 production sites across 21 of the 39 municipalities in the Area of Interest (AOI) ensuring a geographically balanced distribution. Including producer residence locations, the number of municipalities involved rises to 26—23 within and 3 outside the AOI—highlighting the label’s capacity to extend its influence beyond official boundaries. The location of these production stations aligns well with both bear distribution and areas of high human-bear conflict, meaning the label is not only visible across the region but strategically implemented where conservation needs are most urgent. For example, 47% of “Bear Friendly” beehives are located in high-risk zones for bear-related damage, underscoring the producers’ role in directly mitigating conflict and promoting coexistence.

Qualitative feedback from producers, gathered through a dedicated questionnaire, reinforces the positive outcomes of Action C10. The majority of respondents (88.2%) rated their experience with the “Bear Friendly” label as positive or very positive, and 94.1% reported no significant economic burden associated with participation. While opinions on market impact were mixed—41.2% reported increased customer interest, and the same percentage observed no significant change—nearly half (47.1%) acknowledged a moderate to significant contribution of the initiative to their business growth. Importantly, 76.5% valued the recognition of their sustainability efforts as the primary benefit, reflecting a shift in perception that links responsible production to environmental stewardship.

Moreover, the support provided by the Park and WWF was well received. Promotional materials were deemed useful by 88.2% of producers, while 82.3% expressed a willingness to help expand the network. Workshops and seminars were also valued, though there is room for improvement in content depth and outreach. Notably, all respondents indicated their intention to renew participation, and 64.7% expressed willingness to contribute financially to future initiatives—an uncommon and powerful indication of ownership and long-term commitment.

The open-ended feedback revealed valuable insights for future development. Producers suggested increased investment in marketing and visibility, greater integration through a shared sales platform, enhanced networking opportunities, educational initiatives targeting both locals and tourists, and improved economic sustainability of the label. These suggestions highlight a strong desire not just to participate, but to help shape the future trajectory of the “Bear Friendly” initiative in ways that balance ecological, economic, and social goals.

A key innovation of Action C10, and arguably its most transformative aspect, is the adoption of a dual-criteria approach to labelling: not only are producers recognized for implementing conflict mitigation measures, but also for their contributions to habitat preservation through biodiversity-friendly practices. This “habitat approach,” introduced for the first time with the “Bear Friendly” label in LIFE ARCPROM, significantly increased producer engagement and added meaningful conservation value to the initiative. Producers who have long employed sustainable, organic, and traditional methods expressed satisfaction at finally having their efforts recognized as integral to bear conservation. This recognition not only fostered enthusiasm but also reinforced the link between environmental practices and species protection.

In summary, while it remains too early to draw conclusions on the long-term economic impacts of the “Bear Friendly” label, the short-term indicators are extremely positive. Action C10 has successfully mobilized a critical mass of stakeholders, implemented the label across a wide and ecologically relevant area, fostered strong community engagement, and introduced innovative conservation criteria that enhance both human-wildlife coexistence and environmental quality. The foundations laid by this action, including producer trust, spatial coverage, and institutional support, are robust and scalable, making the “Bear Friendly” initiative a promising tool for long-term sustainability in MNP and a potential model for replication in other protected areas across the Apennines and Europe in general.

The success of Action C10, however, is not only a great result of the LIFE ARCPROM but is also a starting point for the establishment of a bigger and bigger “Bear Friendly” producers’ network that will include in the future more stakeholder categories. In order to use the experience gained in the frame of Action C10 to bolster and strengthen the “Bear Friendly” label in the future, a SWOT analysis has been produced and will be used in the years to come to drive the continuation of the “Bear Friendly” project.

## **ANNEXES**

I Impact Assessment of the “RESPECT” Label on Certified Enterprises (Greece)

II Customers’ Questionnaire – “RESPECT” Label (Greece)

III SWOT Analysis of the “Bear Friendly” Label in Maiella National Park (Italy)

IV Questionnaire Administrated in 2025 to Assess Producers Attitude and Expectations (Italy)

## ANNEX I Impact Assessment of the “RESPECT” Label on Certified Enterprises



Below is a questionnaire addressed to businesses that have been awarded the "RESPECT" label for the protection of wildlife and biodiversity.

The aim of this questionnaire is to assess the label’s impact, the difficulties faced by businesses, and the benefits and advantages that have resulted from receiving the label.

All responses will be analyzed in aggregate form and will never be used individually. There are no right or wrong answers, only those that best reflect your experience.

### Section A: Impact of the Label

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5.

1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly Agree

Question	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Environmental Awareness</b>					
The implementation of the RESPECT requirements has helped your business select actions that support biodiversity and wildlife protection.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The implementation of the RESPECT requirements has contributed to the general adoption of green practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Quality</b>					
The implementation of the RESPECT requirements improved the quality of your products/services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The “RESPECT” Label supports the process of selecting suppliers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Question	1	2	3	4	5
The "RESPECT" Label has contributed to customer satisfaction.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Cost</b>					
The implementation of the RESPECT requirements has increased overall costs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The implementation of the RESPECT requirements has improved efficiency.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The implementation of the RESPECT requirements has increased workload and working time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Competitiveness</b>					
The "RESPECT" Label is a competitive advantage for your business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The "RESPECT" Label has reduced customer loss to competitors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The competitive position of your business has steadily improved since receiving the "RESPECT" Label.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Promotion / Advertising</b>					
By acquiring the "RESPECT" Label, the business presents a prestigious and attractive image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The "RESPECT" Label has improved your business's reputation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The "RESPECT" Label serves as a public relations tool for your business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The promotion of the "RESPECT" Label has improved the business's financial performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The acquisition of the "RESPECT" Label led to an increase in the customer base.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Section B: "RESPECT" Label Performance

1. By what percentage did your customer base increase after receiving the "RESPECT" Label?

0-20%  21-40%  41-60%  61-80%  81-100%

2. By what percentage did your sales increase after receiving the "RESPECT" Label?

0-20%  21-40%  41-60%  61-80%  81-100%

3. **By what percentage did your costs increase after receiving the “RESPECT” Label?**

0-20%  21-40%  41-60%  61-80%  81-100%

4. **By what percentage did your website traffic increase after receiving the “RESPECT” Label?**

0-20%  21-40%  41-60%  61-80%  81-100%

5. **Did you enter a new market after receiving the “RESPECT” Label?**

Yes  No

If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. **Did you establish new partnerships after receiving the “RESPECT” Label?**

Yes  No

If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. **Did you choose new suppliers who apply green practices?**

Yes  No

If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Section C: General Business Information

**Business Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Business Sector:**

- Agri-food
- Hospitality services (hotels)
- Manufacturing
- Tourism
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**How long has your business been operating?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1–5 years
- 5–10 years
- More than 10 years

**When were you awarded the “RESPECT” Label for wildlife and biodiversity protection?**

- Less than 6 months ago
- 6 months – 1 year ago
- 1–2 years ago
- More than 2 years ago

---

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!**



## ANNEX II Customers' questionnaire – “RESPECT” Label



The objective of the survey is to explore consumer perceptions and experiences regarding products and services that carry the “RESPECT” label.

The “RESPECT” label is awarded to entrepreneurs that adopt wildlife- and biodiversity-friendly practices, such as habitat protection, reduction of disturbance to wild species, and the use of environmentally responsible materials.

All responses will be analysed in aggregate and will remain strictly anonymous, with no individual responses reported separately. There are no right or wrong answers- only those that best reflect your personal views.

---

**Are you familiar with the “RESPECT” Label?**

Yes  No

**Have you purchased a product or service that has been awarded the “RESPECT” Label?**

Yes  No

---

### Section A: Introduction for Wildlife-friendly Products/ Services

**1. How positively do you view the availability of products or services that support wildlife protection?**

- Very positively
- Positively
- Neutrally
- Negatively

- Very negatively

**2. How frequently do you purchase such products or services?**

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

**Section B: Support Factors**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements, using a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Environmental Awareness</b>					
The "RESPECT" Label has increased your environmental awareness.	1	2	3	4	5
The "RESPECT" Label motivates you to support environmentally responsible products and services.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Product/ Service Quality</b>					
RESPECT-labelled products or services are of high quality.	1	2	3	4	5
The "RESPECT" Label indicates your reliability.	1	2	3	4	5
The "RESPECT" Label enhances your overall customer experience.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Cost and Pricing</b>					
RESPECT-labeled products tend to be more expensive than equivalent unlabeled products.	1	2	3	4	5
You are willing to pay a premium price for such products or services.	1	2	3	4	5
You believe their price is justified by the environmental values they represent.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Promotion and Communication</b>					
You have encountered promotional content or media coverage about the "RESPECT" Label.	1	2	3	4	5
The presence of the label enhances the image of the product or business.	1	2	3	4	5

You would like to receive more information about such label-awarded schemes.	1	2	3	4	5
The "RESPECT" Label uses appropriate communication and promotional tools.	1	2	3	4	5
You consider the "RESPECT" Label to be a reputable and credible green certification.	1	2	3	4	5

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### Section C: Customer Support/ Behavioural Impact

**Following your exposure to the "RESPECT" Label, have you: (select all that apply)**

- Increased your purchases from the same business
- Recommended the product/service to others
- Repeatedly selected the same business
- Changed your attitude or behaviours regarding environmental issues

**Overall, how satisfied are you with RESPECT-labelled products or services?**

- Very satisfied
  - Satisfied
  - Neutral
  - Dissatisfied
  - Very dissatisfied
- 

### Section D: Demographic Information

**Age:**

<18  18-30  31-50  51-65  66+

**Gender:**

Male  Female  Other / Prefer not to disclose

**Area of residence:**

Urban  Semi-urban  Rural

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**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.**

## ANNEX III Swot Analysis of the “Bear Friendly” Label in MNP

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High Stakeholder Engagement:</b> Strong participation from local producers (28 awarded the label, representing 40% of interested beekeepers and 31% of interested farmers).</li> <li>• <b>Positive Perception:</b> Over 88% of producers reported a positive or very positive experience with the label; strong appreciation for Park and WWF support.</li> <li>• <b>Conflict Mitigation:</b> A significant portion of labelled producers (especially beekeepers) are located in high-conflict bear zones, directly contributing to human-wildlife coexistence.</li> <li>• <b>Geographical Coverage:</b> The label reaches 21 municipalities in the AOI, covering 54% of the territory, with strategic placement aligned with bear presence and risk areas.</li> <li>• <b>Dual Criteria Approach:</b> Innovative integration of both conflict mitigation and habitat preservation (biodiversity-friendly practices) increases ecological value and producer inclusivity.</li> <li>• <b>Reputational Benefits:</b> Producers appreciate the recognition of their sustainable practices, even in absence of strong short-term market effects.</li> <li>• <b>Producer Willingness to Continue:</b> 100% of surveyed producers plan to renew their participation, and nearly 65% are open to financial contributions for future developments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Limited Market Impact (So Far):</b> Only 41.2% of producers observed increased customer interest; the label's economic value is not yet clearly perceived.</li> <li>• <b>Early-Stage Initiative:</b> The label has been operational for less than two years, so label awareness and recognition remain limited.</li> <li>• <b>Need for Better Promotion:</b> Producers cited insufficient visibility and marketing as a key area needing improvement.</li> <li>• <b>Inconsistent Communication:</b> Some dissatisfaction with technical aspects of the workshops and lack of a unified sales or communications platform.</li> <li>• <b>Economic Sustainability Not Yet Secured:</b> Financial models for long-term self-sufficiency (e.g. producer membership fees, market returns) remain underdeveloped.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Growing Demand for Ethical Labels:</b> Consumers increasingly seek out environmentally responsible and socially sustainable products.</li> <li>• <b>Tourism Synergy:</b> Maiella is a tourism-rich area; the label could be integrated with ecotourism and regional branding efforts (e.g. agritourism, nature trails).</li> <li>• <b>EU &amp; National Policy Alignment:</b> The label aligns with the EU Green Deal, Biodiversity Strategy, and Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) objectives—potential funding/support avenues.</li> <li>• <b>Replication Potential:</b> The model could be scaled or replicated in other protected areas in Italy and beyond, especially in regions with human-large carnivore conflict.</li> <li>• <b>Partnership Expansion:</b> Potential to build collaborations with retailers, restaurants, and other services-providers to enhance label visibility and distribution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Economic Instability:</b> Inflation, market volatility, or other economic shocks could reduce consumer willingness to pay a premium for labelled products.</li> <li>• <b>Label Fatigue:</b> Growing number of eco-labels in the market may dilute consumer trust or interest unless differentiation is clear and strongly communicated.</li> <li>• <b>Policy or Administrative Changes:</b> Shifts in funding priorities, leadership, or policy frameworks at the local, national, or EU level may jeopardize long-term continuity.</li> </ul>

# ANNEX IV Questionnaire Administrated in 2025 to Assess Producers Attitude and Expectations

23/06/25, 09:36

Questionario per Produttori con Etichetta "Bear Friendly"

## *Questionario per Produttori con Etichetta "Bear Friendly"*

Gentile produttore, il presente questionario ha l'obiettivo di raccogliere l'esperienza con la certificazione "Bear Friendly", la disponibilità a proseguire il percorso intrapreso e forme di sua evoluzione. Le tue risposte ci aiuteranno a migliorare il sistema e pianificare le attività future. Facciamo presente che il questionario è anonimo, i dati saranno utilizzati esclusivamente allo scopo illustrato e tu verrai messo al corrente dei risultati del sondaggio.

*\* Indica una domanda obbligatoria*

*Passa alla domanda 1. Passa alla domanda 1.*

### DOMANDE GENERALI

*per tutti i produttori Bear Friendly*

1. 1. Come valuti complessivamente la tua esperienza con il marchio "Bear Friendly"? \*

*Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.*

- Molto positiva
- Positiva
- Neutra
- Negativa
- Molto negativa

2. 2. Ritieni che l'adozione delle pratiche richieste dal marchio "Bear Friendly" abbiano comportato un impegno economico: \*

*Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.*

- Sostenibile e ben proporzionato ai benefici
- Sostenibile ma sproporzionato rispetto ai benefici
- Difficilmente sostenibile
- Non ha comportato costi aggiuntivi significativi

3. 3. Hai riscontrato un aumento dell'interesse verso i tuoi prodotti da parte dei consumatori grazie al marchio "Bear Friendly"?

*Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.*

- Sì, in modo significativo
- Sì, in modo moderato
- No, nessun cambiamento
- Non saprei valutare

4. 4. Quanto è stato utile il materiale promozionale (roll-up, targhe, adesivi, ecc.) fornito dal Parco per comunicare il valore del marchio "Bear Friendly"?

*Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.*

- Molto utile
- Abbastanza utile
- Poco utile
- Per nulla utile
- Non ho utilizzato il materiale

5. 5. Come valuti la formazione ricevuta durante i workshop organizzati dal Parco e da WWF?

*Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.*

- Molto utile ed esaustiva
- Utile ma non sufficiente
- Poco rilevante per le mie esigenze
- Non ho partecipato ai workshop

6. 6. In che misura la partecipazione alla rete dei produttori "Bear Friendly" ha contribuito alla crescita della tua attività? \*

*Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.*

- Ha contribuito significativamente
- Ha contribuito moderatamente
- Ha contribuito poco
- Non ha contribuito
- Non ho partecipato attivamente alla rete

7. 7. Che tipo di vantaggio avresti voluto maggiormente trarre dall'acquisizione del marchio Bear Friendly? \*

*Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.*

- Aumento del fatturato derivante dalla vendita dei prodotti con il marchio Bear Friendly
- Definizione di una più forte identità distintiva della mia azienda
- Il riconoscimento dell'impegno della mia azienda per la sostenibilità e il rispetto del territorio

8. 8. In che misura sei consapevole che l'azione a cui partecipi fa parte di un progetto più ampio finanziato da un apposito Programma dell'Unione Europea? \*

*Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.*

- Non sono a conoscenza che l'azione è parte di un progetto finanziato dall'UE
- Sono vagamente consapevole del finanziamento UE e non conosco i dettagli del progetto più ampio
- Sono abbastanza consapevole che l'azione fa parte di un progetto UE, ma non ne conosco tutti gli aspetti
- Sono pienamente consapevole che l'azione fa parte di un progetto più ampio finanziato dall'UE e ne comprendo il contesto generale

9. 9. Se sei consapevole che l'azione fa parte di un progetto finanziato dall'Unione Europea, attraverso quali canali hai ottenuto questa informazione? \*

*Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.*

- Materiale informativo distribuito per l'azione (brochure, volantini, poster)
- Comunicazioni ufficiali ricevute durante l'azione (email, lettere, inviti)
- Logo UE e altri riferimenti visibili durante gli incontri
- Presentazione e/o menzione esplicita durante l'azione da parte degli organizzatori
- Pagine web dell'azione o canali social
- Passaparola da altri partecipanti o colleghi
- Altro: \_\_\_\_\_

#### DOMANDE SPECIFICHE PER GLI APICOLTORI

10. 10. (Solo per apicoltori) Quanto è stato impegnativo adeguare le tue strutture con i sistemi di prevenzione dei danni da orso raccomandati dal Parco? \*

*Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.*

- Molto impegnativo
- Moderatamente impegnativo
- Poco impegnativo
- Non è stato necessario adeguare le strutture

#### DOMANDE SPECIFICHE PER GLI AGRICOLTORI

11. 11. (Solo per agricoltori) A quale/i tipologia/e di sostenibilità tra quelle previste dal regolamento la tua azienda appartiene? \*

*Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.*

- Agricoltura biologica
- Coltivazione di varietà locali
- Riduzione dell'uso di prodotti fitosanitari
- Prodotti con denominazione protetta (DOP, IGP, ecc.)
- Sistema di gestione ambientale certificato
- Adesione a tecniche di produzione migliorative

### PROSPETTIVE FUTURE

12. 12. Intenderesti rinnovare l'adesione al marchio "Bear Friendly" al termine del periodo di validità attuale? \*

*Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.*

- Sì, certamente
- Probabilmente sì
- Sono indeciso
- Probabilmente no
- No

13. 13. Saresti disposto a partecipare a ulteriori iniziative di promozione collettiva del marchio "Bear Friendly", anche con un piccolo contributo economico? \*

*Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.*

- Sì, anche con un contributo economico significativo
- Sì, con un piccolo contributo economico
- Sì, ma solo se non richiede contributi economici
- No, non sono interessato

14. 14. Saresti disposto a collaborare per l'ingresso di altri produttori di beni e/o servizi nella rete del marchio "Bear Friendly" anche ai fini della creazione di piccole filiere interne al marchio? \*

*Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.*

- Sì, certamente  
 Probabilmente sì  
 Sono indeciso  
 Probabilmente no  
 No

15. 15. Intenderesti aumentare il tuo impegno per la valorizzazione dei prodotti del marchio Bear Friendly e la crescita della loro notorietà anche condividendo tue conoscenze ed esperienze (tecniche, commerciali, di marketing) con altri operatori della rete? \*

*Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.*

- Sì, certamente  
 Probabilmente sì  
 Sono indeciso  
 Probabilmente no  
 No

16. 16. (Domanda aperta) In base all'esperienza finora maturata quali suggerimenti vorresti proporre per migliorare il sistema dei produttori "Bear Friendly" e aumentarne l'efficacia sia per la conservazione dell'orso sia per lo sviluppo economico della tua attività? \*

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*Grazie per aver completato il questionario. Le tue risposte sono preziose per il miglioramento continuo del progetto "Bear Friendly".*

