

Terms of Reference: Links between agricultural practices and biodiversity in Mediterranean Landscapes

Background

The Mediterranean landscapes have been shaped by human presence, and numerous wild species of plants and animals depend on agrosilvopastoral practices in different ways, often complex and multidirectional relation. Significant parts of Mediterranean biodiversity is dependant on low intensity farming practices mostly in what are often called as Mediterranean cultural landscapes.

Across Mediterranean we are observing how agricultural landscapes are evolving in a polarizing trend towards abandonment or intensification. The conversion of the traditional farming into a more profitable intensive agriculture, requiring more inputs to maintain production, is provoking the loss of the associated biodiversity. This is, in return, reducing the resilience of agricultural systems, and adaptation to variations and causing instability and increasing the risk of collapse of the entire system.

These cultural practices are being lost for different social and economic reasons, but often influenced by lower productivity and profitability. This is partly due to lack of recognition (and measurement) of the ecosystem services that cultural practices provide. To stop the loss of these valuable practices, it is decisive to enhance the knowledge on linkages between biodiversity and agricultural practices that maintain them.

Fortunately, there still are some agricultural, pastoral and silvicultural practices that maintain elements of wild diversity across the Mediterranean basin that in turn benefit the equilibrium of the system.

For this reason since 2017, several conservation organizations in the Mediterranean basin are working together for the preservation of cultural landscapes. The main goal of this initiative is to halt the loss of cultural practices that benefit biodiversity.

IUCN Med aims to strength the knowledge on the linkages between certain agricultural practices and certain elements of biodiversity. To do so, IUCN-Med is analysing the biodiversity associated to cultural practices at five pilot sites¹, located in agricultural landscapes. In those areas, where the land is the result of human activity and its equilibrated interaction with nature, the aim is to recognize that many human practices constitute a main contributing factor to the ecological and functional integrity of the landscape.

Adding to the above mentioned, to enhance these type of practise around all the Mediterranean countries, IUCN-Med wants to create a database compiling examples of that feedback loops between agricultural practices and biodiversity, to better prove the beneficial of those practices to maintain the correct functionality Mediterranean cultural landscapes.

¹ Dehesas/Montados in Spain and Portugal; Al Shouf in Lebanon; High Atlas in Morocco, Menorca island in Spain and Lemnos island in Greece

Overall Goal of Service

The goal of this consultancy is to provide a collection of examples around the Mediterranean basin where the link between cultural practices (agriculture, grazing, silviculture etc.) and biodiversity is well understood, documented and justified. To describe of those sites; its cultural practices; and feedback interactions with certain biodiversity elements. The study may highlight the areas where the evidence is suspected but unavailable, to point further research.

Expected Tasks

The consultancy will take place in collaboration with the IUCN-Med team and should cover:

Phase I: Preparatory work including preparation of standard data form to be filled in each site or per practice (i.e.- description of practices, biodiversity, status and trends, etc.). Work plan and agenda.

Phase II: Compilation of the available information from bibliographic sources complemented by interviews when information is not published.

- a- On project pilot cases studies (Dehesas/Montados, Al Shouf, High Atlas, Lemnos and Menorca).
- b- Around Mediterranean countries to bring together all the existing proof of the relationship between cultural practices and biodiversity. Being responsible to liaise with other experts that may have further information.

Phase III: Data representation and preparation of deliverables on an already existing webpage, showing on a map the found links, areas with suspected but unavailable evidence, etc.

Deliverables:

The consultant is expected to remit the following deliverables

Phase	Deliverables	Notes
Phase I: Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda and workplan including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard dataform Preliminary list of sites to evaluate 	Validate by IUCN Med before starting Phase 2
Phase II: Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data form completed for evaluated sites. 	Validate by IUCN Med before starting phase 3
Phase III: Data representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive map with all the data ² Final report including all the results and discussion/analysis of situation (trends and future perspectives of analysed practices) 	

² Data representation on an already existing story map webpage, representing practices around the Mediterranean basin that are good for biodiversity.

Budget and Timeline

The budget for this consultancy should be around of 6.000 € (VAT included); proposals with amounts larger than this should be carefully justified.

The consultant will be paid 50% at the signature of the contract and agreement of Phase I (Work plan, agenda and standard data form) and 50% upon timely and satisfactory remit of all deliverables to IUCN-Med

The consultant is expected to complete the work in approximately 2 months from signature of contract, with possible extensions that will not exceed 30th August 2019.

Profile and Experience

The candidate must have experience and knowledge in how to perform these types of reviews (mixed between bibliographic and interviews). The candidate should have expertise and knowledge to systematically undertake complex search strategies, and gather and review the existing evidence of data to perform its analysis, with skills of reporting and editing and of representing data on webpage format.

The budget is estimated considering 2 different profiles. The work can be conducted by 1 expert gathering both skills or by partnership of two or more individuals. Budget estimation:

- Consultant- Researcher data gathering and collection of information (4.500€)
- Consultant-Edition and design of results (1.500€)

Selection of candidates

Interested candidates should apply until April 30th 2019. Candidatures of individual and group experts will be accepted, but collective applications will require that the division of activities inside the team is clearly defined.

Applicants should submit a description of the methodology that will be used and a resume justifying the capacity for the development of the activities.

The selection will be done based on previous expertise, the capacity for developing the proposed activities, the proposed methodology and the economic offer.

The application should be sent in pdf to: mercedes.munoz@iucn.org no later than April 30th at 17.00 CEST.