



**GoProFor**

LIFE17 GIE/IT/000561



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# LAYMAN'S REPORT

## LIFE GoProFor

Network of good practices for the conservation of forest biodiversity within Natura 2000 Network

[www.lifegoprofor.eu](http://www.lifegoprofor.eu)

## LIFE: 30 years of good practices



The LIFE Programme is the EU's funding instrument which **has supported** the development and **implementation of environmental and climate action policies** since 1992, by co-financing projects proposed by member states. In over 30 years of the LIFE Programme, **many projects have developed experiences, tools and good practices**, which, however, are not always easy to find, especially if they relate to projects that ended years ago.

**Good practice** is defined as: *"an initiative that has been successfully tested and has the potential to be easily transferred and/or adapted to other initiatives with similar objectives"*.

In many cases, **LIFE projects Natura 2000 Network of successful good practices**, applied to real contexts and tailored to the management and resolution of specific problems. However, the techniques, the processes, or even just the approach, **can be replicated in similar situations, or with similar objectives**, even in other contexts.

This is why it is important to keep track of these good practices and of the results achieved.

## NATURA 2000: critical issues and benefits



Natura 2000 is a network of protected areas spread across all 27 Member States to **ensure the conservation of threatened species and habitats** identified by the "Birds" Directive 2009/147/EC and the "Habitats" Directive 92/43/EEC. Forest ecosystems make up approximately 50% of the Natura 2000 Network, making it the most influential instrument for forest conservation today.

Although Habitats Directive intends to take *"account of economic, social and cultural needs, as well as regional and local distinctive traits"*, **in several cases the Network has been perceived as a strict conservation system** in which human activities are severely restricted.

This restrictive perception of Natura 2000 Network also exists in Italy. To reduce this type of impact, **greater knowledge and awareness** of the effects of forest management on the conservation of biodiversity is indispensable among those who work at all levels in the management of Natura 2000 sites.



***This was the starting point for the LIFE GoProFor Project***



# The LIFE GOPROFOR PROJECT

September 2018 was the starting point of LIFE GoProFor ([www.lifegoprofor.eu](http://www.lifegoprofor.eu)), a project which aims to collect, **exploit and disseminate results from forestry-related LIFE projects** carried out across Europe. The main objectives of the project were:

- identifying **good practices** for forest management aimed at preserving biodiversity;
- providing **support and guidance tools** for the actors involved in **forest management of the Natura 2000 Network** towards the achievement of common and shared objectives.

Completed in March 2023, the LIFE GoProFor project, in over 4 years of activity has contributed:

## at Italian level:

- to increase **awareness and knowledge of Natura 2000 Network**;
- to promote **cooperation between forestry and conservation stakeholders**, with the involvement of a significant number of managers, professionals, technicians and operators;
- to increase the **adoption of good practices in forest planning tools**, both inside and outside Natura 2000 Network.

## at European level:

- to establish and maintain a **network** both with **LIFE Projects** and with **Authorities, Institutions** and key processes for forestry management and biodiversity conservation;
- to publish a **call for tender for a preparatory project** to develop a European training system.

Watch the video presentation of the project here:



## LIFE GoProFor in a nutshell...

Network of good practices for the conservation of forest biodiversity in Natura 2000 Network

LIFE17 GIE/IT/000561



**WEBSITE:**  
[www.lifegoprofor.eu](http://www.lifegoprofor.eu)



**DURATION:**  
Start: 01/09/2018  
End: 31/03/2023



**BUDGET:**  
Total: €2,517,130  
EU Contribution €948,057

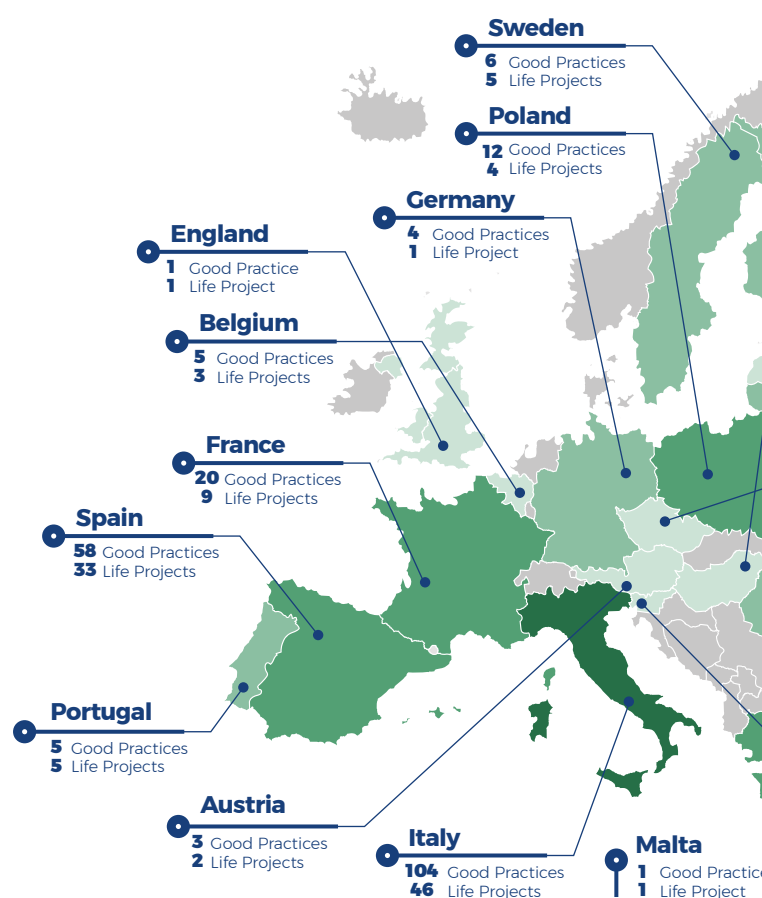
# PROMOTION OF GOOD PRACTICES

## Good Practices Database

In order to **capitalise on the LIFE Programme's decades of experience**, good practices in forestry from European projects have been collected in a single database ([www.lifeprofor-gp.eu](http://www.lifeprofor-gp.eu)). The **GoProFor database** aims **to describe in detail a selection of good practices** and to **make effective tools and techniques available** for the conservation of forest biodiversity and forest management, providing easily accessible information and knowledge. This database is aimed at all those working in Natura 2000 Network or in forest areas whose main function is conservation and, in particular, those involved in forest management in these areas.

### The LIFE GoProFor database is:

- **freely accessible:** anyone can consult the good practices and download all related documentation by registering;
- **in-depth:** each good practice is divided into a detailed file, accompanied by downloadable material (technical documentation, manuals, videos), to ensure the best replicability in other contexts;
- **European:** it gathers good practices from 22 different European countries;
- **multilingual:** the good practices are in Italian and English and the database can be queried through search keys in 5 languages: Italian, English, French, Spanish and German.



*Geographical distribution of good practices and relative projects, selected by LIFE GoProFor.*

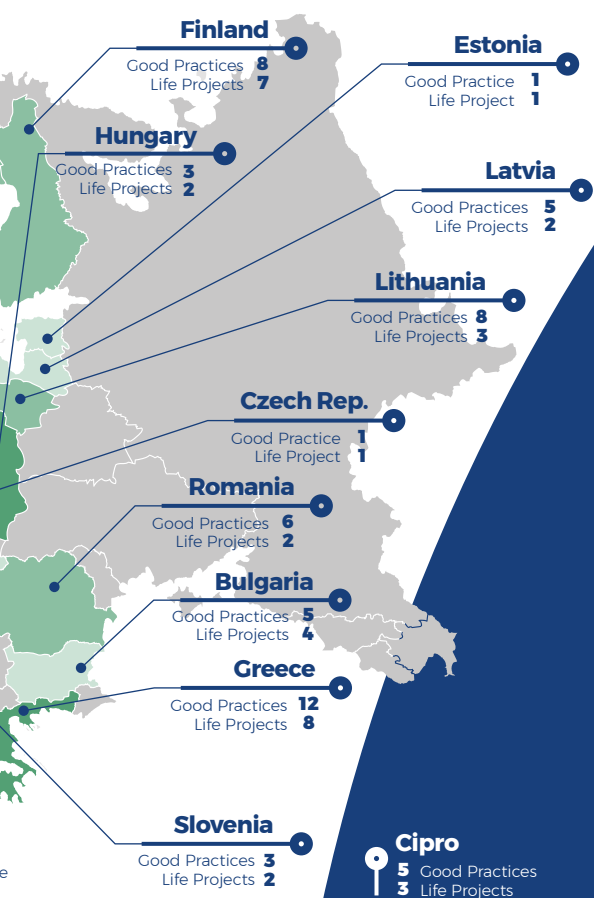


### MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

more than **270** good practices;  
more than **140** LIFE projects;  
more than **220** accredited users;  
almost **50,000** views.

The GoProFor database was included in the **UN Decade Hub in 2022** and will remain active until 2033.





## The demonstrative network across the territory

To achieve the objectives of the project, a “**demonstrative network**” consisting of **60 good practices from 26 Italian LIFE projects** was set up. The good practices were chosen on the basis of their replicability and the possibility of observing the results obtained in the territorial contexts where they were applied.

For each of these 60 good practices, in addition to the in-depth technical data sheet in the GoProFor database, a **multimedia kit** was produced consisting of:

- a **video** (lasting from 4 to 9 minutes) highlighting the context, objectives, results and replicability;
- a **presentation fact sheet**.

(The kits are available at [www.lifegoprofor.eu/it/multimedia/good-practice.html](http://www.lifegoprofor.eu/it/multimedia/good-practice.html)).

When each video was published, potential stakeholders were notified both through the project’s newsletter and social media posts and through other media targeting the Italian forestry and environmental sector.

A smartphone **app** called “**LIFE GoProFor**” (available free of charge in the respective stores) has also been developed, which allows users to reach the application areas of these 60 good practices in order to see them directly on the territory. In addition to the geographical indications, the app can be used to **consult the good practice dissemination tools** on smartphones and directly on site. The fact sheets and the videos on the 60 good practices were intended not only to make their **presentation more immediate and** appealing but also to bring attention to the project itself and to increase knowledge and awareness of its contents.

The entire multimedia kit is available on the website in Italian and English and can therefore be consulted by all forestry and biodiversity conservation actors at European level.



# GOPROFOR TRAINING

## Balancing management with conservation

In Italian forestry training, there is a **lack of integration between the themes of forest management and the protection and conservation of biodiversity**, both in university courses (as in higher technical schools) and in professional ones, where initiatives that involve both naturalists and foresters towards common management objectives are rare and sporadic.

This is the context of **training activities that the LIFE GoProFor project has carried out during 2021**, involving **various professionals from different backgrounds**, with the aim also of fostering moments of comparison and exchange between the forestry sector and the conservation sector.

Watch the training video here:



### MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- 5** editions of theoretical courses; attended by over **620** people;
- 21** editions of practical assessments in training areas conducted in **7** Italian regions;
- 510** Experts completed **level 1!**
- 40** Experts have also acquired **level 2.**

***2021** was the year LIFE GoProFor did all this during the pandemic!*



## Basic knowledge

The profile of **Expert in Forest Management for the Conservation of Biodiversity Level 1** was therefore outlined, through a training plan that includes **theoretical, demonstrative and practical aspects**, calibrated to provide the minimum essential knowledge, skills and basic tools that all those who work in the forest should have in their personal background, especially for those who work in forest areas falling within Natura 2000 Network. The main objective was to **raise awareness on the need to take into account multiple, environmental and socio-economic objectives** when working in forests.

## In-depth knowledge

As a complement to the basic knowledge and skills, the project then identified other important **in-depth knowledge of** forest-related topics and thus outlined the profile of **Forest Management Expert for Biodiversity Conservation Level 2**.

The corresponding training plan, consisting exclusively of theoretical activities, is divided into modules **made available by the project in e-learning mode** ([www.lifegoprofor-training.eu/it](http://www.lifegoprofor-training.eu/it)) and covers the following topics:

- the conservation of the main **forest fauna groups**;
- the fight against the main **invasive alien species** in forests;
- the management of **aquatic ecosystems** in the forest context;
- the enhancement of **ecosystem services** provided by forests;
- **climate change** and its impact on forests.

Added to this is the need to know how to use the various European and national **funding opportunities** with a view also to self-entrepreneurship.

In order to give value to those who have acquired this specific knowledge and skills, the LIFE GoProFor project has published **the list of “Experts”** on its channels, strongly promoting their use by Natura 2000 Network Managing Authorities, forest owners and companies operating within the Network.

## Camaldoli Forestry Olympics 2021

As part of the GoProFor training, the **2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Forestry Olympics** also took place, during which more than **100** students and **37** lecturers from Forestry and Environmental degree courses from **12** different Italian universities trained, met and then “challenged” each other in **4** tests related to GoProFor training topics.

Watch the video of the Olympics here:



Photo: Luigi Torreggiani - LIFE GoProFor

# Training areas

A key part of acquiring skills in GoProFor training is the opportunity to **put what has been learnt in the classroom into practice**, through special **areas set up in the woods** for the following activities:



## Tree microhabitat trail

A guided trail in the forest to practise recognising the types of **microhabitats** that can be found in trees. Preserving and fostering microhabitat-carrying trees ensures the survival of the species associated with them.



## Marteloscope simulation

Exercise on the selection of plants to be favoured or picked in forestry operations in specially prepared portions of the forest (**marteloscopes**). It is possible to verify the sustainability of the choices made through computerised processing.



## Application of IBP

Evaluation of the capacity of a forest to host biodiversity through the analysis of 10 factors following a codified methodology that leads to the definition of the **Index of Biodiversity Potential (IBP)**.



## MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

LIFE GoProFor has created:

- 7** training areas, located in
- 7** regions, to facilitate learner participation

In addition to these, the project created 5 more:

- 3** at the request of the Forestry Service in the Province of Trento
- 2** at the request of the Forestry Consortium in Alta Val di Susa (TO) and the University of Turin



## What is a “marteloscope”?

A “marteloscope” is an area of the forest where all trees are numbered, measured, georeferenced and entered into specific software. The “marteloscope” is used to train students and forest technicians technicians by **simulating specific forestry operations**.

Running on tablets, the software allows the restitution in quantitative and graphical terms of the forestry choices simulated, making it possible **to verify the outcomes in terms of management and conservation**, but also in terms of the **economic yield** of the intervention.

All the GoProFor “marteloscopes” were developed **according to the Integrate Network procedure** (<https://integratenetwork.org>) connecting over 100 demonstration sites across Europe.







# IBP: adaptation to the Italian context

The **Potential Biodiversity Index (IBP)** is a useful tool for forest managers, to take biodiversity into account in their daily management activities. Conceived in 2008 in France by the CNPF for continental forests, it was subsequently adapted for other French biogeographical regions and **over time refined and improved for its dissemination to other countries** both in Europe and the Mediterranean region. In order to ensure the coherence of the IBP extension projects to the various contexts, the **IBP International Committee of Experts** was set up, whose objectives are to:

- provide **scientific and technical advice** on new versions of the IBP;
- discuss **ongoing projects**;
- pool **resources**.

The IBP is an **indirect and compound indicator**, but also **simple and quick** to be defined by a reduced “observer effect” and it requires no special taxonomic knowledge!

Its **diagnosis consists of assigning a score** between “0” and “5” to ten **key factors** (number of native species, vertical layer count, presence of standing and laying dead wood, presence of large trees, etc.) as **influencing the ability of a forest to sustain biodiversity**. The sum of these scores gives the IBP value that helps place the stand in a “low” to “high” capacity range.



## MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

The LIFE GoProFor project made it possible **to adapt IBP to the Italian context** and also to disseminate it through **training and dissemination activities**.

The following documents were produced as part of the project (**downloadable at [www.lifegoprofor.eu/it/pubblicazioni/materiali-ibp.html](http://www.lifegoprofor.eu/it/pubblicazioni/materiali-ibp.html)**):

- the Italian version of the manual **Ten Key Factors for Species Diversity in Forests**, which explains the role and importance of biodiversity in the functioning of forest ecosystems;
- the **field sheets** for the IBP survey;
- the methodological **document** and an **Excel spreadsheet** for storing scores and creating graphs.

The LIFE GoProFor Project is now part of the **International Committee of Experts**, representing Italy.

# National Network for Good Practices

In order to promote the dissemination of good practices and the transfer of tools, approaches and models related to forest management and biodiversity conservation in the Italian context, a **National Network Table** was established.

The National Network's activities were attended by representatives of: Ministries of Environment and Agriculture, Regional Forestry and Biodiversity Services, National Parks Network, Rural Development Programme Management Authorities, Carabinieri Forestry Corps, Environmental Associations, Professional Orders and Professional Organisations.

Through a **participatory process**, the main critical issues perceived at the national territory level were raised, related to:

- **conflicts** between forest management and the management of Natura 2000 Network;
- application of **good practices**;
- **economic policies** for forest management and conservation in Natura 2000 Network.

From these, a **Guideline Document for the management of forest habitats in Natura 2000 Network** has been drawn up, which, in brief, contains:

- **instances, criticalities and new challenges** concerning forest management and biodiversity conservation at the Italian level in light of the new European and national policies;
- **proposals and solutions** to improve forestry management in Natura 2000:
  - examples of good practices;
  - new approaches to forest planning;
  - analysis of forestry models;
  - promotion of suitably trained technicians and operators.



*The  
LIFE GoProFor  
network  
in Italy and  
Europe*



# International Network

LIFE GoProFor has developed a **relevant network**, both with LIFE projects and with key authorities, institutions and processes, for forest management and biodiversity conservation.

In particular, **about 40 LIFE** activities with partnerships throughout Europe have been involved in various activities: from mutual **participation in events**, to support for the **description of good practices on the database**, to collaboration in training activities. The website has a section dedicated to the Network that takes into account the type of collaboration implemented.

LIFE GoProFor activities have also permitted important collaborations, with:

- **Integrate Network:** as a result of the intense activity of the 11 marteloscopes implemented by the project, GoProFor was invited to participate in the workshops and meetings organised by the Integrate and Italy joined its Steering Committee for the first time in 2023;

- **Fao:** LIFE GoProFor collaborated with the Task Force on Best Practices, whose objective is to share and diffuse the best practices for ecosystem restoration, and the GoProFor Database has been included in the UN Decade Hub since 2022;
- **Biogeographical Process for the Mediterranean Region:** LIFE GoProFor brought its experience in increasing capacity building for Natura 2000 management;
- **Egnos:** LIFE GoProFor tested the use of differential correction in the creation of some “marteloscopes”, thus becoming one of the success stories of the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS);
- **EIP-AGRI “turning forest into practice”**, where LIFE GoProFor was presented as an Inspiring story.

The project involved around 20 Member States. With the organisation of the first event, the project already brought together 11 countries in a participative process that led to the publication of the call for the **preparatory project “Network of training activities for managers of Natura 2000 sites”** in 2020 and helped lay the foundations for the development **of a European training system**.



**September 2022  
saw the launch of  
LIFE GoProForMED  
[www.lifegoproformed.eu](http://www.lifegoproformed.eu)**



Photo: Matteo Negro - LIFE Carabus

GOod PRactices implementation netwORk for FOrest biodiversity conservation  
*Implementing the network of good practices for the conservation of forest biodiversity*  
[www.lifegoprofor.eu](http://www.lifegoprofor.eu) | [www.lifegoprofor-gp.eu](http://www.lifegoprofor-gp.eu) | [www.facebook.com/goprofor](https://www.facebook.com/goprofor)



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Environmental and Agri-food Forestry Unit of the Carabinieri Corps



Compagnia delle Foreste



CREA Council for Agricultural Research and Agricultural Economics Analysis



Dr Wolf



Region of Lazio



Region of Molise



Region of Tuscany

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