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MED-GIAHS



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MED-GIAHS Network: protocol and tools

Network of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) across the Mediterranean to promote sustainable tourism and preserve their unique cultural and environmental heritage

Junta de Andalucía | Consejería de Agricultura, Pesca, Agua y Desarrollo Rural

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3. Joint Guide for Defining Action Plans (Deliverable 2.1.1)
4. Joint catalogue of Med GIAHS sustainable agricultural tourism https://www-tinyurl.com/c768f53f (D 3.1.1)
5. MED GIAHS Joint Training Plan (Deliverable 2.2.1)

Tools 2, 3, 4 and 5 are available in zip folder where the MED GIAHS network can be found

Abbreviations

GIAHS	Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNWTO	World Tourism Organisation

Executive summary

Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) are unique farming systems that combine agricultural biodiversity with resilient ecosystems and valuable cultural heritage, forged through the co-adaptation of inhabitants with the environment, which provides a valuable tangible and intangible heritage.

At a global level, these unique traditional agricultural systems are subject to serious threats that are common to all, such as climate change, globalization, more competitive products, or the abandonment of the activity due to low profitability, which implies depopulation and loss of biodiversity and ancestral knowledge in these territories.

Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) is an initiative by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), that recognizes and supports outstanding landscapes of rich biodiversity, resilient ecosystems and traditional agricultural practices, managed by local communities in a sustainable way.

The MED GIAHS project, funded by the EU's Interreg Euro-MED Program, aims at protecting GIAHS sites, consolidated and future candidates, from threats such as climate change, depopulation, and loss of biodiversity and also to develop and reinforce a new, more sustainable approach to tourism that supports the economic and social well-being of GIAHS communities.

To give response to these challenges, MED GIAHS project creates a network of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) across the Mediterranean to promote sustainable tourism and preserve their unique cultural and environmental heritage.

This is the basic operational aspect of the MED GIAHS network: to serve as a place of mutual learning and cooperation for current and future GIAHS sites, but also for any other territory that shares with the members of the MED GAHS network common values, challenges and opportunities.

Relevance

MED GAHS network provides a strategic response to the need to maintain and reinforce the ecosystem of services that can be found in these agricultural territories of great tourist potential, regardless of their tourist starting point, based on validated methodologies, tools, and good practices and also to preserve and foster GIAHS production systems by rebuilding and redefining tourism in a new and more sustainable way.

It's a meeting place for cooperative mutual learning aimed at agricultural heritage systems that want to promote sustainable tourism. It is also a tool to face challenges that these Mediterranean unique agricultural heritage systems may face and search for common solutions.

The creation of a network of current, candidate and potential GIAHS sites will serve as a mirror in which other Med territories can see themselves reflected and, by adhering to it, commit to improved food security and sustainable tourism able to deal with climate change and the loss of ecosystem services and biodiversity

The MED GIAHS network stands also as an integrated and joint solution to preserve GIAHS sites from threatening factors by a redefinition of tourism in a new more sustainable and innovative way that will contribute to creating more resilient livelihoods and diversify the income for local communities.

All of this will undoubtedly increase the visibility and international recognition of these important agricultural systems on a global scale.

MED GIAHS network is open to incorporating newly recognised GIAHS sites.

Contents of MED GIAHS network

The MED GIAHS network comprises the following documents:

1. **Technical Protocol** containing the basic operational aspects of the MED GIAHS network and its governance functions.

2. **Strategy for Sustainable Agricultural Tourism in MED GIAHS sites** that establishes the common framework for the development of sustainable agricultural tourism in GIAHS sites. It is the cornerstone of the MED-GIAHS network.

3. **Joint Guide for Defining Action Plans** that establishes a methodology for the development of Action Plans for the dynamic conservation of the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) supported by the FAO. This guide serves both for developing new action plans or improving existing ones.

4. **Joint catalogue of Med GIAHS sustainable agricultural tourism**: collection of the catalogues produced in the territories; it displays establishments offering touristic experiences linked to the agrifood production system of the GIAHS sites.

5. **Joint Training Plan** aimed at improving the operational skills and knowledge of stakeholders who play a prominent role in defining or improving action plans from recognized, candidate and or potential GIAHS sites.

These documents have been jointly elaborated by MED GIAHS project partners and associated partners to work together at network level. Except for the Technical Protocol, which sets the basis for the network's governance, the rest of documents are to be used and adapted by each GIAHS site and potential candidates GIAHS sites in their best interests and can complement the already existing documents at local level.

In the future, additional products may be created and incorporated into the network.

Strategic framework

For more than two decades, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Global Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) program has been helping farming communities safeguard traditional farming systems, as well as the territories, agricultural biodiversity, knowledge systems and cultures associated with them. Networking is an essential tool under the program to achieve its objectives and build more sustainable and resilient agricultural systems.

The FAO GIAHS program strategic framework also aligns very closely with the United Nations 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This connection is crucial, as GIAHS contribute significantly to achieving multiple SDGs, including:

- SDG 1: No poverty: GIAHS support employment in developing regions of the world, while also preserving and creating new job opportunities in rural landscapes.

- SDG 2: Zero Hunger: GIAHS ensure food security and nutrition, preserving local varieties and resilient production systems.

- SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth: The project stands as a key driver for strengthening sustainable agriculture in local communities by promoting the transfer of knowledge and good agricultural practices among them. This collaboration will result in significant improvements in agricultural production, which in turn will have a positive impact on the economies of the regions involved.

- SDG 10: Reducing inequalities: the project addresses existing inequalities through various strategies such as capacity building, active participation of various social groups, or the reduction of socioeconomic gaps.

- SDG 12: Responsible production and consumption: the project promotes sustainable agricultural practices, reducing environmental impact and encouraging the consumption of local products.

- SDG 13: Climate Action: GIAHS are climate resilient systems and contribute to climate change mitigation.

- SDG 15: Life on land: GIAHS protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, aid sustainable management of forests, halt and reverse land degradation, desertification and drought and enhance biodiversity. Furthermore, they contribute to the

protection of traditional and historic agricultural landscapes, overall contributing to the health of the planet.

- SDG 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goals: the project promotes cooperation among various stakeholders to achieve sustainable development.

In addition to the SDGs, GIAHS fall within other relevant global and regional strategic frameworks. The UNWTO (World Tourism Organization) promotes sustainable tourism as a tool for achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically those related to poverty eradication, environmental protection and the promotion of economic prosperity. Sustainable tourism seeks to balance the needs of visitors, the tourism industry, the environment and host communities, both now and in the future.

The UNWTO believes that sustainable tourism can contribute significantly to the achievement of the SDGs, especially those related to inclusive economic growth, sustainable consumption and production, and the conservation of oceans and marine resources. To achieve this, the UNWTO works to include tourism in national and global programs, promoting its potential to reduce poverty, generate employment, foster innovation and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

Strategic Lines

The MED GIAHS project Strategy seeks to contribute to the process of improvement of the quality of life of local communities, particularly those engaged in primary production. To achieve this, the strategy proposes a roadmap structured around three main strategic lines:

1. Capacity building of local actors, strengthening their skills in the design, management and promotion of sustainable tourism products.
2. Tourist dynamization of the destination, through the participatory design of authentic and meaningful tourism experiences and products, linked to agri-food heritage, gastronomy, biodiversity, landscape, traditions and local identity.
3. Dissemination and promotion of the destination, through both online and offline actions, to position GIAHS as a unique site aligned with new demands for sustainability, authenticity and emotional connection.

Objectives

6.1. Main objective

The main objective of the MED-GIAHS network is to contribute to dynamic conservation and revitalization of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) in the Mediterranean through sustainable agricultural tourism, strengthening local capacities with training and action plans, and fostering regional cooperation for rural development.

Furthermore, the network aims at creating economic benefits for local communities, preserve cultural and ecological heritage, addressing threats as climate change and rural depopulation by integrating GIAHS into regional development policies.

6.2. Specific objectives

- To generate economic, social and environmental benefits for recognized, candidate and potential GIAHS sites in the Mediterranean basin through sustainable tourism;
- To exchange of knowledge, experiences, resources and best practices related to GIAHS dynamic conservation and sustainable tourism;
- To promote and facilitate inter-institutional dialogue related to GIAHS and potential GIAHS sites at different levels and territories;
- To address other common challenges and seek solutions for these productive systems;
- To strengthen their dynamic conservation and sustainable development;
- To promote the participation of new agricultural systems that wish to join this network.

Activities

Within the framework of the established objectives, the MED GIAHS network may promote a wide range of related activities to achieve the general and specific objectives, such as the following:

- The creation of tourist routes that allow visitors to get to know recognized, candidate and or potential GIAHS sites and local communities, generating additional income for farmers and promoting local culture.
- The contribution in the management and use of brands for the promotion, enhancement and marketing of products, goods and services of the GIAHS sites and potential candidates in respect of any national process ongoing. These brands will be voluntary and complementary to the existing ones at local level.
- Participation in activities and initiatives related to GIAHS sites and cultural, social and natural areas.
- The promotion of networking and knowledge sharing to address work of common interest at the international level (such as, for example, initiatives to conserve the genetic diversity of local varieties and landraces present in GIAHS sites and potential candidates, promote sustainable agricultural practices.
- Training and capacity building for farmers, technicians and other stakeholders involved in the management of GIAHS on sustainable agricultural practices, biodiversity conservation, sustainable rural development, among others.
- The development of joint research projects on priority topics. These projects may be composed of some of the partners participating in the MED GIAHS network. The results of such projects will be shared with all members of the network.
- Develop tools for the quantification of ecosystem services provided by GIAHS/GIAHS candidates such as carbon sequestration, water regulation or biodiversity conservation.
- The proposal of measures or public policies that promote the conservation and sustainable development of GIAHS/GIAHS candidates.
- The promotion of cooperation: Explore the possibility of establishing alliances with other similar GIAHS sites and potential candidates to share experiences and knowledge.

MED GIAHS network partners

The MED GIAHS network is formed by the following members:

<u>The 5 partners from MED GIAHS project:</u>

- Regional Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development of Andalusia, Spain
- Regional Development Agency for Bjelasica, Komovi and Prokletije, Montenegro
- University of Florence, Italy
- Pazardzhik Regional Administration, Bulgaria
- Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

<u>12 recognized GIAHS sites:</u>

- Malaga Raisins Production System in La Axarquía – Spain
- Historical Irrigation System at l'Horta de València – Spain
- The Agricultural System of Valle Salado de Añana – Spain
- The Agricultural System Ancient Olive Trees Territorio Sénia – Spain
- Olive Groves of the Slopes between Assisi and Spoleto – Italy
- Ghout Oasis system El Oued – Algeria
- Argan-based agro-sylvo-pastoral system within the area of Ait Souab - Ait Mansour – Morocco
- Oases System in Atlas Mountains – Morocco
- The ksour of Figuig: oasis and pastoral culture around the social management of water and land – Morocco
- Gafsa Oases – Tunisia
- Hanging gardens from Djebba El Olia – Tunisia
- Ramli agricultural system in the lagoons of Ghar El Melh – Tunisia

5 potential candidates GIAHS sites:

- Agricultural Heritage System: “Bulgarian Rose” agroecosystem in the Rose Valley area of Strelcha – Bulgaria
- Katuns of Montenegro – Montenegro
- Agricultural Heritage System: Gum Mastiha of Chios Island – Greece
- Fogarra of Adrar and Timimoun, water management system in Central Sahara – Algeria
- Salt-making and aquaculture production system of the Bay of Cádiz estuaries - Spain

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1.MED GIAHS TECHNICAL PROTOCOL

Relevance of the MED GIAHS technical protocol

This technical protocol is a working tool. It establishes the working basis for a cooperation network for the exchange of experiences, mutual learning and territorial collaborations on the conservation, promotion and sustainable development of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), recognized, candidate and or potential, in these territories.

It contains the basic operational features of the MED GIAHS network and stablishes its governance procedure which are key to reach the objective of MED GIAHS network.

Working group

This protocol creates a Working Group composed initially of partners of the MED GIAHS project and its associated GIAHS sites that will meet annually in person or virtually, to take decisions, establish an agenda of activities to be carried out periodically and review their implementation.

The Working Group will be headed initially by the Regional Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development of Andalusia Government (Spain) who has led the MED GIAHS project and who has coordinated the creation of the MED GIAHS Network. This coordination may be carried out by another partner if decided in the Working Group.

Decision Making

The Working Group, will take all decisions by consensus, including those regarding the incorporation of new members, always seeking the mutual benefit of the participating sites and, if this is not possible, by simple majority. Decisions will be taken by written procedure of the members of the Working Group when needed.

The members of the Working Group will meet in yearly basis.

Responsibilities

- Establishment of an annual program of activities and follow-up of actions

- Regular assessment, reviews, and updates of the proposed activities (in terms of the degree of compliance, results, benefits, etc.) and carry out the appropriate revisions and updates.

- Creation of a joint evaluating and monitoring system

- Promote the continuity of the MED GIAHS network and its enlargement both in members and in content

Advisory Committee

The Working Group may promote the creation of an advisory committee composed of national and international experts in GIAHS sites, sustainable agriculture, territorial development and international cooperation, who may support the MED GIAHS network in strategic orientation, project evaluation and identification of complementary collaboration opportunities. The proposal and appointment of members of this Advisory Committee will be the responsibility of the network's Working Group. The Advisory Committee should be composed by members of different sectors (academic, governmental, civil society), with complementary experience to create synergies.

Membership

This protocol is opened for potential candidates and consolidated GIAHS sites who wish to become members, by expressing their interest with a letter of intention addressed to the MED GIAHS network Lead Partner.

The following MED GIAHS network tools are available at the zip containing the MED GIAHS network output (O 3.1) and in the following link: *https://med-giahs.interreg-euro-med.eu/what-we-achieve/*

2. Strategy for Sustainable Agricultural Tourism in MED GIAHS (Deliverable 2.4.1).
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