Agricultural landscape heritage
The traditional mandras of Lemnos Island

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Terra Lemnia project – Part of MAVA 2017-2022 Mediterranean Strategy Outcome M6
Le contexte / The context (1/4)

Lemnos Island in a few figures

- North Aegean Sea (isolated)
- Medium-sized (8th largest Greek island); 480km², 260km coastline
- 17,000 inhabitants today (emigration in post-war period)
- Extensive lowland plains and coastal wetlands; large Natura 2000 sites

- Important agricultural centre since the antiquity
- Primary sector still very significant (rain-fed arable crops, vineyards, stockbreeding)
- Increasing, but still manageable, tourism pressures
Le contexte / The context (2/4)

Landscape character, natural and cultural heritage:

- Landscape diversity, important agro-ecosystems and agro-biodiversity
- Continuous human habitation since prehistoric times → Rich (agri)cultural heritage, shaping local tradition and identity
- Mixed crop-livestock land use system → Characterised by / organised around the traditional *mandras* → Dominant landscape feature
Le contexte / The context (3/4)

The traditional mandras of Lemnos...

... shape the landscape of the island
Main challenges:

- Land abandonment / intensification of farming practices
- Abandonment of traditional *mandras* and replacement with cheap, metal, constructions

→ Land degradation, soil erosion, biodiversity loss and desertification
→ Landscape degradation, loss of character and vernacular architecture
→ Loss of Traditional Ecological Knowledge
→ Overall loss of appreciation for the land
Framework and general objectives of the Terra Lemnia project:

- 3 +2 year duration (2017 - 2022)
- Part of MAVA’s Mediterranean programme on Cultural Landscapes
- Implemented by six partners, coordinated by MedINA

→ Build a common vision for sustainable development of Lemnos Island
→ Support traditional (extensive / low input) agro-pastoral practices that benefit biodiversity, shaping landscapes of high ecological value
→ Traditional mandras: Dominant element of Lemnos’ agro-pastoral system
Le projet et les actions sur le patrimoine
Project and activities on heritage (2/3)

Specific objectives for conservation and promotion of traditional *mandras*:

1. **Physical restoration actions:**
   - Create a modern animal shed in traditional style: 2019
   - Upscaling actions (model studies for animal sheds of various sizes): 2020 ++
   - Complementary actions (investigate potential to renovate a traditional *manda* as small creamery and/or eco-tourism facility): 2019 ++
   - Institutional framework (lobbying at national and local / regional level)
Specific objectives for conservation and promotion of traditional *mandras*:

2. Valorisation and awareness raising actions:
   - Field recording of traditional *mandras* & Creation of online platform: 2019 +
   - Photo exhibition & Video documentation (life in the *mandra*): 2019
   - Inscription in the national register of Intangible Cultural Heritage: 2019 +
✓ Initiative of the Terra Lemnia project, based on previous efforts of local project partners
✓ Seeking to create a wide partnership between:
  ▪ The main Terra Lemnia partners (MedINA, “Anemoessa”, Agricultural University of Athens): Project-based and voluntary involvement
  ▪ Public authorities (local / regional level): Co-funding potential
  ▪ Public authorities (national level): Institutional support
  ▪ Local farmers & Farmers cooperatives: Main beneficiaries of all actions
Overall impacts and effectiveness:
- Effort still in progress, no measurable impacts yet
- Benefits expected in multiple scales (socioeconomic, cultural, environmental)
- Benefits directly or indirectly linked to the restoration of traditional mandras

Environmental impacts:
- Contribution to mitigate land abandonment → expected positive effects on soil erosion and desertification
- Positive biodiversity impacts for species that depend on extensive farming practices and/or traditional dry-stone constructions

Socio-economic and cultural impacts:
- Direct, multiple-scale, support to the practitioner community
- Promoting and enhancing an integral part of the local identity, economy and character → Contributing to eco-tourism and local economic development
- Awareness raising and visibility (island community level and beyond)
Enseignements
Lessons learned

Les points positifs / The positive points

✓ A long term, constant learning, process
✓ Gradually building the vision and conveying the message to wider audiences
✓ Refining the approach and tools, building the knowledge base
✓ Finding new partners and forming coalitions

Les points négatifs / The negative points

– A sometimes very long process, creating disappointment and frustration
– Frequent changes in public administration don’t allow commitment on a long-term vision for local development
– Non-flexibility of funding instruments and prevailing practice undermine prospects for creative, out-of-the-box, solutions
– Low organisational capacity and limited awareness; need for continuous argumentation and lobbying
Merci pour votre attention
Thank you for your attention

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