



Biodiversity Conservation in the Community

This category highlights 8 selected and transferable case studies from across our regions.

These examples showcase community initiatives that are contributing to the conservation of biodiversity within the communities where they are being implemented.

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KEEPERS OF THE RIVER SADO

CATEGORY

Biodiversity conservation in the community

LOCATION OF THE PRACTICE

Portugal, district of Setúbal, Sado Estuary

PROBLEM THAT TACKLES

Seagrass meadows degradation in the estuary in the Sado river, due to human activities such as litter from shellfishing and destructive fishing, has led to the decrease of marine life in this habitat and the decline of the resident dolphin pods.

VOLUNTEERING ASSOCIATION OR PERSONS INVOLVED



Ocean Alive, a co-operative association founded by Raquel Gaspar and Sofia Jorge, was the first co-operative in Portugal dedicated to the protection of the sea. 18 fisherwomen, the Keepers of the Sea, work with this Association as guides for their education programme. They act as awareness-raising agents of the Shell Fishing WITHOUT Litter campaign, and monitor scientific projects related to the seagrass meadows.

DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRACTICE



One of their key projects is focused on the restoration of the seagrass meadows existing in the estuary of the river Sado, where seagrass meadows are the nursery habitat for both the prey of the resident dolphin pods, and for the fish and shellfish which are the livelihood of the local fishing community. Seagrass beds support emblematic species with economic value to traditional fisheries - cuttlefish, gilthead seabream, seabass, sole - and charismatic species, important for marine conservation and tourism, like seahorses and the resident population of bottlenose dolphins.



The main objective is to protect the seagrass meadows through a programme of marine education, awareness-raising campaigns, and monitoring and evaluating the impact of the project on the seagrass meadows. To achieve its goal the project relies on the engagement of local fisherwomen, the Keepers of the Sea. Through a capacity-building programme, Ocean Alive created new occupational and professional roles tailored to these women's expertise and life experiences. They assume an important role catalysing behaviour changes in their peers in the fishing community. To reward this behaviour change, a best practice certification label will be granted, encouraging the public to buy fish and shellfish from this fishing community and thus providing them with a source of supplementary income.

Sharing & Learning

Ms. Raquel Gaspar said that the Shellfishing WITHOUT litter campaign responded to a local problem but also to the global problem of plastic contamination of the ocean. It started on a Holy Friday, the day when shellfish gatherers go to the estuary of the Sado to catch razor clams for that day's family gathering. With the support of the Oceano Azul Foundation and the Lisbon Oceanarium, the activity created a network of awareness-raising agents.

Transferability of the Practice

Shellfishing WITHOUT litter includes three activities: direct awareness actions carried out by the network of Keepers of the Ocean (women from the fishing community educated as awareness-raising agents); monthly beach-cleaning actions with volunteers in the Sado Estuary, and a network of local stakeholders that implement solutions to tackle the problem of plastic in the ocean. Keepers of the Ocean is a process led by the local fisherwomen aimed at being reproducible in other marine areas of Portugal and Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP communities). Collaborating with projects that support women and the protection of seagrass meadows in PALOP communities is already on the way.



IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD (START/END DATE)

Start Date: 1/1/2015

End Date: Ongoing

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS (RESULTS ACHIEVED)



The Shellfishing WITHOUT Litter campaign organises every year 3 major awareness-raising and beach-cleaning actions, involving the local fishing community and volunteers from all over the country. Since 2016, over 5,318 volunteers have participated in this activity and more than 60 tonnes of litter were collected from the estuary of the river Sado.

The campaign won the “Mobilization Initiative” award at the 10th edition of Green Project Awards, in 2017.



INFORMATION LINKS

<https://www.wilder.pt/naturalistas/raquel-gaspar-so-com-persistencia-podemos-mudar-habitos/>

<https://www.ocean-alive.org/en/keepers-of-the-sea>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5t7-bVLNVQ>

CONTACT

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BIOCOFINAKI

CATEGORY

Biodiversity conservation in the community

LOCATION OF THE PRACTICE

196, Lagkada Str. Stavroupoli **Western Thessaloniki, Greece**

PROBLEM THAT TACKLES

Biologically farmed food products contribute to the use of less chemicals and fertilisers, following the benefits of climate-friendly practices in agriculture.

VOLUNTEERING ASSOCIATION OR PERSONS INVOLVED



With a rehabilitative focus, the people who work on the biological farm are mainly former addicts (21 individuals) and the families of former addicts (8 individuals), thus the project has an added value since it helps these people reintegrate back into society.

DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRACTICE



Biological vegetables and fruit are farmed in the 1-acre land as part of the Psychiatric Hospital of Thessaloniki. Former addicts who have now recovered, parents of former addicts and workers of the hospital tend to the biodiversity project. Other biological products such as honey, tomato sauce, dough and traditional sweets are also for sale. The products are sold online and delivered directly to the customers by truck. All vegetables are seasonal, so they vary from summer to winter.



The workers of BIOKOFINAKI are members of the Social Inclusion Enterprise “ARGO”, collaborating with 4 more entities, 1 public hospital and 3 civil society organisations. The profit is shared among the members of the enterprise, helping them to financially support themselves.

The project BIOKOFINAKI has an ambiguous objective. On one hand, to provide the community with biological, healthy products free of chemicals and sustainably farmed, and on the other hand, it offers vulnerable groups of former addicts the chance to recover from their addiction both emotionally and physically, while earning a decent income and improving their financially precarious situation.

Sharing & Learning

Stelios Giuseppas, the Head of the social inclusion enterprise ARGO that runs the project BIOKOFINAKI, has stated:

“The project is based on the freshness of the products, in other words, it is about quality over quantity. If a customer wants a kind of vegetable that is either out of season or hard to farm biologically, we simply say no. The main goal of the project is to help people overcome themselves and reinvent their dreams by being employed and by earning a steady income, that will discourage them from falling back into the trap of becoming addicted”.



Transferability of the Practice

A parcel of land appropriate for agriculture and of a minimum size that can sustain a variety of farming products needs to be purchased. Good weather conditions favour the effort. The commitment of people with agricultural skills and managing skills is necessary. An initial funding capital will be required. People from a vulnerable group with fewer opportunities must also be interested to work in the long term with the purpose of achieving good results.

Spreading the platform opportunities leads to positive green side effects - waste will be prevented and reused and it will not go to incineration, landfill or be dumped in the landscape.



IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD (START/END DATE)

Start Date: 6/2018

End Date: Ongoing

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS (RESULTS ACHIEVED)



The project BIOKOFINAKI started with a modest ten customers base and within two years this number had multiplied by five. The success was such that last year (2021) the social inclusion enterprise was donated a small refrigerated van, in order to help with the deliveries with longer distances and in warmer weather conditions. The donation was made by a private institution.



INFORMATION LINKS

<https://argokoinsep.gr/biokofinaki/>

https://www.voria.gr/article/viokofinaki-kalathia-me-viologika-proionta-apo-apexartimena-atoma?fbclid=IwAR3KWkd2ySr9QQVYxKwr8Z_6irhEK5fjAk95mhYIfITUTY9PKq9h-8mSAvg

Photo Sources: <https://argokoinsep.gr/biokofinaki/>

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SCIENCE FOR CITIZENS FOR THE BENEFIT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND NATURE

CATEGORY

Biodiversity conservation in the community

LOCATION OF THE PRACTICE

Bulgaria, Sofia, 71 Yavorov Residential Complex

PROBLEM THAT TACKLES

Limited access to and use of research on environmental, climate change and biodiversity conservation issues, such as:

- policy monitoring and advocacy;
- establishing or maintaining partnerships between civil society organisations and public or private institutions and organisations;
- carrying out educational activities.

VOLUNTEERING ASSOCIATION OR PERSONS INVOLVED



The good practice is a project of the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds - BSPB

DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRACTICE



Migratory birds are of great ecological and economic value as they are an integral part of the global biological diversity. Nearly half the world's 10,000 bird species depend on forests, wetlands and grasslands - they are inhabitants of virtually all ecosystems of the world. Bulgaria ranks second in Europe in bird species diversity, and this makes even more important the activities initiated in the good practice.



The practice "Science for Citizens for the Benefit of Local Communities and Nature" demonstrates how young people with a strong interest in science and in particular in nature conservation can be engaged. The activities of the project are united around the targeted involvement of more young people in research and data collection on birds in key places of the ecological network Natura 2000 in Bulgaria through the innovative mobile application SmartBirds Pro. The application makes it possible to monitor common bird species and their mapping for the Bulgarian Atlas of nesting birds. A new step, which is extremely important for the preservation of valuable and rare places in the wild, is the training among local civic groups and representatives of various non-governmental organisations. The training is focused on getting acquainted with the legislation in the field of environment and biodiversity and how to collect and use scientific data in the preparation of opinions and participation in procedures and appeals in the field of environmental legislation.

The main stakeholders and beneficiaries of the practice are young people, NGOs, government institutions, and civil society all over Bulgaria.

Sharing & Learning

Irina stated that attracting young people and training local societies and NGOs is the key to the success of the "Science for Citizens for the Benefit of Local Communities and Nature" project. This gives ground for the sustainability of the initiative and constant update of the Atlas and thus contributes to biodiversity preservation.

Transferability of the Practice

The atlas and its online version aim to update and supplement the data on the species of nesting birds in Bulgaria and their distribution. Work on them will continue over the next four years and will unite the efforts of anyone who would like to get involved and collect data using the SmartBirds Pro application - <https://bit.ly/3c431KR>. This application can easily be transferred to other regions or countries



IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD (START/END DATE)

Start Date: 27/9/2019

End Date: Ongoing



EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS (RESULTS ACHIEVED)



The result of the good practice is the first of its kind in Bulgaria's public platform "Atlas of Nesting Birds in Bulgaria"; which provides an easy and interesting way to collect ornithological information for the purposes of nesting and wintering birds.

There are more than 20 training events for citizens and NGOs for data collection and monitoring of common bird species and over 20 on-site inspections carried out by experts to verify the data collected by the citizens.



INFORMATION LINKS

<https://atlas.bspb.org/en>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqdroOqsDx_lA2_Myqi-xrg

<https://www.facebook.com/BSPBirds>

<https://www.instagram.com/birds.bg>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-R9vDOZKb1E&ab_channel=%D0%91%D0%94%D0%97%D0%9F

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ECOTREE

CATEGORY

Biodiversity conservation in the community

LOCATION OF THE PRACTICE

Denmark

PROBLEM THAT TACKLES

The world loses 48 football fields worth of forest every minute. Those forests are home to 60,000 different tree species, 80% of amphibian species, 75% of bird species and 68% of the world's mammal species.

Forests are essential to human life too. They provide clean drinking water, building materials, materials for medical equipment and drugs, a free space to enjoy, plus much more. One of the most important carbon sinks on Earth, forests absorb around 2.6 billion tonnes of carbon every year. That's one third of the CO₂ released by burning fossil fuels.

However, as much as 80% of the world's original forests have been destroyed beyond repair. The race to supply cheap timber on top of climate change caused by human activity has led to mass deforestation.

VOLUNTEERING ASSOCIATION OR PERSONS INVOLVED



The idea behind EcoTree was born in 2014, when a group of five friends from France went on holiday to Copenhagen, Denmark. They noticed how the Danes use financial incentive to get more people to recycle. When they return cans and bottles to supermarkets, they get a direct cash payment.

EcoTree's co-founders asked themselves: "Why don't we do the same on a larger scale... but with trees?"

The concept rewards people who care about the environment and are ambitious about tackling climate change. That is the foundation of EcoTree.

Today, EcoTree has more than 100 employees located in Paris, Brest and Copenhagen. They are a diverse team of foresters, business experts, designers, communicators – you name it!



Their mission at EcoTree is to reforest Europe. As sustainable forestry experts, they protect and conserve vital carbon sinks and biodiversity ecosystems. Their foresters use a close-to-nature concept, which means they never plant monocultures or clear-cut the land. Instead, they plant trees of various ages and species to promote biological diversity. They cut trees selectively when they no longer sequester carbon, so they can replant or make room for natural regeneration.

The high-quality timber from those trees is then used for furniture and building materials. The carbon stored in the wood is locked for several hundred years and can be used in place of climate-damaging materials, such as plastic, cement or steel.

Ecotree wants to put sustainable forestry in the hands of everyone. Through EcoTree, anyone can own a real tree in a real forest. They don't do greenwashing. They don't do traditional carbon offsets.

The EcoTree model is unlike other tree-planting companies.

1. They offer a financial incentive that encourages people to invest, literally and metaphorically in sustainable forestry, reforestation and to tackle climate change.
2. They remove carbon from the atmosphere by creating and protecting carbon sinks in the form of forests and wetlands.
3. They don't plant a tree with the customer's name on it. It really belongs to them.
4. They are a certified B Corp and their methods are verified by third parties.
5. They don't just work with trees, but also biodiversity.
6. They provide tree owners with an online account where they can follow the growth of their tree, estimated carbon absorbed and its growth in value. They also access further data on their tree and any other projects they support.
7. They offer carbon removal for businesses, verified by Bureau Veritas, a world-class

certification organisation.

EcoTree also engages in communities and social projects by working with local partners, such as sawmills, foresters, ecology experts and beekeepers. That allows them to create jobs in local areas and support specific initiatives, including those that help disabled people get back into the labour market.

Sharing & Learning

Individuals and companies need to stop looking for the perfect, miraculous solution. Instead, they should just get started by engaging with and supporting multiple initiatives.

"Inaction is the issue, not the potential to fail along the way. Doing nothing waiting for perfection will not help the world tackle climate change."

Similarly, Ecotree believes they do not need to reinvent the wheel. Nature has given us one of the best routes to maintaining a planet we can all live on happily: trees. Trees contain a tremendous amount of 'technology', which took approximately 4.5 billion years of 'research and development'! We have what we need already... and it is free. So, we need to start by leveraging what we have in the natural world

Transferability of the Practice

Ecotree is a rapidly expanding organisation that has transformed a simple concept into a huge success. They have established their organisation in a number of nations and plan to expand it even further across Europe. It would be a simple notion and idea to reproduce on a small scale within your community by signing up as a volunteer or looking into and investigating the work they do.



IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD (START/END DATE)

Start Date: 1/1/2014

End Date: Ongoing

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS (RESULTS ACHIEVED)



The solution of many of humanity's problems is found in the conservation and planting of forests. Much of what they do has a ripple effect. Ecotree's work has a positive impact on reforestation, climate change, biodiversity, food and water supply, jobs, sustainable building materials, and threatened species.

By planting trees, they create carbon sinks, safe habitats for local flora and fauna, protect pollinators, secure clean water sources, provide high-quality timber and much more.



INFORMATION LINKS

<https://ecotree.green/en/>

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LERSØGRØFTENS INTEGRATION VILLAGE GARDENS

CATEGORY

Biodiversity conservation in the community

LOCATION OF THE PRACTICE

Denmark

PROBLEM THAT TACKLES

They hope to bring nature and the outdoors into the community by hosting community members who do not have access to a garden space in their own home.

VOLUNTEERING ASSOCIATION OR PERSONS INVOLVED



Lersøgrøftens Integrationsbyhaver

DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRACTICE



We are a garden community with 150 gardens located along the path between Bispebjerg station and Lersø Parkallé. Each garden is 12 square meters and all are grown by local residents.

DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRACTICE



Their community works to strengthen local unity across residents' groups. Therefore, half of the gardens are reserved for people born outside of Denmark, while the other half is reserved for people born in Denmark.

In addition, The community focuses on sharing knowledge about gardening and sustainable principles. At the same time, the ambition is to actively enter networks with the many other associations and organisations working on green initiatives in Copenhagen and on a national level.

Sharing & Learning

Through the activities of Lersgrftens Integrationsbyhaver, they have managed to create a community and bring nature to those who would otherwise never have had the chance to have a garden.

Transferability of the Practice

A community garden is not a new idea; it is a popular one with a lot of potential benefits for folks who don't have enough room in their own house. Lersgrftens Integrationsbyhaver, employs a set of principles and procedures that might assist others who want to develop their own community gardens. Here is a link to their House Rules, as a guideline to potential future community gardeners.



IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD (START/END DATE)

Start Date: 1/1/2020

End Date: Ongoing





In Lersøgrøftens integrationsbyhaver they focus on the social community. All of their members live in the local area. No matter when you stop by the gardens, you will most often meet other members. They greet each other and share ideas and advice on cultivating the gardens. Even though there are 150 gardens. No two gardens are alike. Therefore, there is a lot of knowledge and inspiration to find in each other.

We are a community run by volunteers. that means: We help out by looking after each other and the common areas. We have common garden days during the year.



INFORMATION LINKS

<https://lersogroften.dk/?wkid=92454&navid=1>

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THE BEE SANCTUARY OF IRELAND

CATEGORY

Biodiversity Conservation in the Community

LOCATION OF THE PRACTICE

The Bee Sanctuary of Ireland. Coolafancy, Co. Wicklow, Ireland.

PROBLEM THAT TACKLES

One of the key ecosystem services provided to us by nature is through pollination with natures pollinators providing \$577 billion in global economic value annually with Bees alone estimated to contribute €53 million to the Irish economy each year.

Habitat loss, non-native species, and the use of herbicides and pesticides in agriculture has led to a 76% decline in flying insect populations by mass in Europe between 1991 and 2018.

While we're all aware that we must protect the bees, each bee has a niche, so it's important that we protect all native bee species and not just the ones that produce products for us.

The Bee Sanctuary solves that problem on its 55 acres of natural habitat being the first designated native bee sanctuary in the World.

VOLUNTEERING ASSOCIATION OR PERSONS INVOLVED



The Bee Sanctuary of Ireland is the World's first designated native bee sanctuary and the only certified organic vegan land in Ireland. It is family-run, set up by a husband-and-wife team of Paul Handrick and Clare-Louise Donelan with the help of their four children. They advocate for and educate about endangered wild bee populations and are real-life proof of the simple measures we can all take to address the serious issue of pollinator decline.

DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRACTICE



For over a decade the Save Bees movement has been in the mainstream discourse with CSR and green communities making homes for bees with hives on rooftops and in gardens. We immediately associate Bees with honey and hives, but only 4% of all species produce honey. According to Biodiversity Ireland, there are 101 bee species in Ireland, including the native Irish honeybee. Nineteen of these species are bumblebees and more than half of these are in decline with three very rare bumblebees threatened with extinction. Of the other 81 bee species in Ireland, most of them are solitary and nearly half of them are in decline.



When Paul and Claire-Louise first bought their land in Wicklow in 2012 they decided to do things differently and create a habitat for all bee species in Ireland.

Activities

Originally planning on running a productive organic vegetable farm, Paul and Clare-Louise struggled to tame nature and prevent it from damaging their crops. They decided instead of fighting nature they would work with it and Paul, Louise, and their family now own and maintain 55 acres of native habitat, consisting of wildflower meadows, 12 acres of wetland habitats and other vital ecosystems.

2 acres of their land is set aside as Ireland's only certified organic vegan farm, with the other 53 acres given over to nature providing a habitat for native bees.

'So, what are we? We are inspiring. We are reconnection. We are fields of wildflower meadows, sunflowers, phacelia, clovers and mustard buzzing with bees and dancing with butterflies. We are vast hedgerows unkempt and full of nettles, brambles, thistles, wildflowers and life. We are trees filled with a cacophony of birdsong. We are quite literally a breath of fresh air.'

Although they never set out to be activists, Paul and Clare-Louise share that they are 'reluctant activists' as they believe there shouldn't be anything special about caring for the native insect species. Despite this, Paul and Clare-Louise are ambassadors for Ireland's bee population and are setting an example for the rest of Europe and the World as to what is possible just by giving over to Nature.

Evidence of Success and Transferability

Over the last decade they have given their land back over to Nature creating a sanctuary for Ireland's Bees. The 55 acres of land is now home to Ireland's native flora and fauna as well as acting as a carbon sink.

Not only have they successfully created a sanctuary for native bees and pollinators on their land in Wicklow, but they are also extending their reach through the transfer of knowledge and encouraging other stakeholders to get involved. Through their '[Business for Bees](#)' scheme they are communicating the economic value of bees and getting businesses involved through sponsorship,

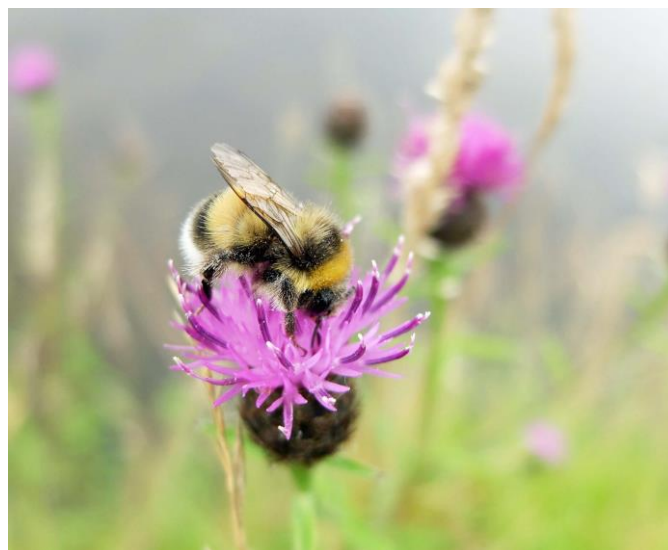
partnership, donations and through allowing businesses to experience what real sustainability looks like with corporate outings at the Bee Sanctuary.

To extend the habitat for bees beyond their 55 acres, Paul and Clare-Louise have begun the 'National Meadowland' project, asking farmers to pledge 2% of their land to a no-graze policy from March to September increasing the habitats for Bees Nationwide.

The Bee Sanctuary has created a community of learning on its extensive webpage. Through their website and social media presence, they continue to educate the public and the native flora and fauna of Ireland and lay out clear and easy steps for what we can all do to help save the bees.

1. Stop Poisoning them with Chemicals
2. Stop removing their Habitat – provide habitat
3. Make sure they have food

The transferability of Paul and Clare-Louise's actions are simple. Allow space for nature to take over and we will provide a habitat for bees to thrive.



“Save the Bees, Save the Future” | Sanctuary’s Call



IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD (START/END DATE)

Start Date: 2012

End Date: Ongoing

INFORMATION LINKS

[The Bee Sanctuary of Ireland Website](#)

[RTE Climate Heroes](#)

[Independent News – Nature Just want us to give it some space](#)

[The Bee Sanctuary of Ireland Instagram](#)

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WILD WORK

CATEGORY

Biodiversity conservation in the community

LOCATION OF THE PRACTICE

Ireland

PROBLEM THAT TACKLES

Nature is facing a number of serious challenges. Throughout our landscape, we need to conserve, protect and reinvigorate biodiversity. Wild Work is an initiative to help you, help nature, and help people.



By working together to sustain nature and biodiversity, Wild Work are creating something special to benefit our people, our communities and the places in which we work and live.

All around us, there are numerous natural places that are not being used to their full potential; with Wild Work this potential can be realised – creating beautiful connections – not just ecologically – but between business and community to bring wildness back into people's lives.

Working in partnership, SECAD Partnership CLG, West Limerick Resources and Cavan County Local Development have expanded the reach of the award-winning Wild Work initiative. This innovative new training experience will combine outdoor classrooms with online learning, exciting virtual reality experiences and online toolkits, building and expanding on the Wild Work carried out by SECAD over the last five years. We want to bring people back into wild spaces in their counties and help people help nature help people.



Wild Work's role has been to lead the project as a solutions provider for data-driven programmes. They have a team of a dozen people ensuring all communications and KPI's are tracked and measured to achieve the best outcomes for the over 400 volunteers. With their ecology team under Dr. Amanda Greer, they are bringing Irish place-based learning into this new innovative blended programme.

Wild Work has developed important relationships with many businesses directly engaging with over 100 individuals in the business community. Their work with businesses aims to bring nature into the workplace by helping companies discover, protect and promote the biodiversity that can be found at their site. Encouraging nature and wildness at work is not only good for biodiversity, but for people too. By engaging staff through nature walks and talks, they show how nature can greatly benefit mental health and stress management.

The free, flexible, 12-week training programme will be delivered in 20 locations across South Cork, West Cork, West Limerick and Cavan, as an extension of the award-winning Wild Work not-for-profit biodiversity initiative first established by SECAD Partnership CLG in 2017. It is hoped that, over time, it will be rolled out nationwide and will inspire other counties to create similar programmes for the benefit of both people and place.

Sharing & Learning

Any income generated through their work is re-invested to help people, help nature, help people. It is their hope that people who become part of the Wild Work movement will enjoy helping nature and our environment, as well as having the opportunity to socialise with others and benefit greatly in terms of health and well-being.

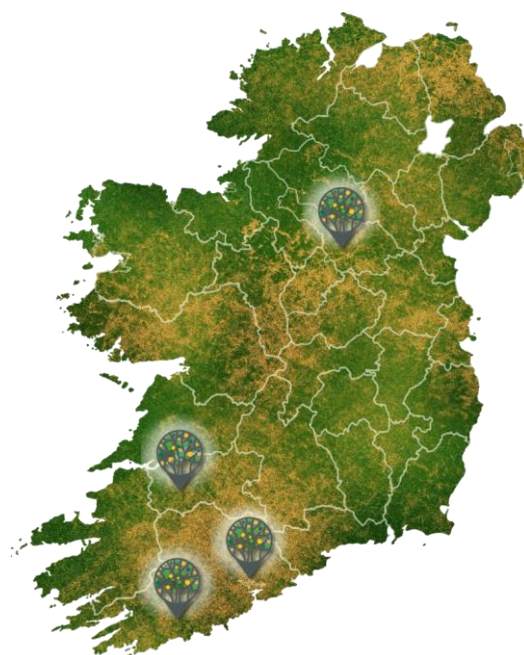
Above all, they aim to make a big impact by fostering people's goodwill to ensure that our local flora, fauna and habitats are protected, valued and enhanced. They believe their collaborative approach with business and communities will

prove successful in benefiting biodiversity, our environment and our society; a society dependent on nature for its prosperity...

Through their citizen science portal, significant trees project, the pollinator project, biodiversity action plans, habitat management projects and their research, they aim to share their practices and help others learn and grow in the areas of biodiversity.

Transferability of the Project

This innovative new training experience combines outdoor classrooms with online learning, exciting virtual reality experiences and online toolkits, building and expanding on the Wild Work carried out by SECAD over the last five years. The Project is transferable as it helps engage businesses and people and show them in a creative and innovative way the wild spaces in their countries and how they can help protect it.



IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD (START/END DATE)

Start Date: 2021

End Date: Ongoing

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS (RESULTS ACHIEVED)



Wild Work is Growing

It is exciting to see Wild Work spreading to more locations on our beautiful Island. Their blended learning approach offers an opportunity for people to reengage with nature and see the impact it can have on our wellbeing.



INFORMATION LINKS

<https://wildwork.ie/>

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Wildwork

HELPING PEOPLE **HELP NATURE** HELP PEOPLE



CASTLECOOTE BOG BIODIVERSITY & ECOLOGICAL STUDY

CATEGORY

Biodiversity conservation in the community

LOCATION OF THE PRACTICE

Castlecoote Co. Roscommon, Ireland

PROBLEM THAT TACKLES

- 01** The area was lacking any official analysis of the flora and fauna of the Castlecoote Bog (selected sections);
- 02** There were no signage or information boards currently
- 03** The group wanted to provide information for printed and digital media for schools and other organisations for education and training purposes;
- 04** The group wanted to provide information to inform a potential project to construct a boardwalk across the bog

VOLUNTEERING ASSOCIATION OR PERSONS INVOLVED



Castlecoote Tidy Towns was re-activated in the 1980's. Since then, the group has gone from strength to strength, winning two environmental awards, two bronze, three silver and six gold medals. For three years in a row, 2016/17/18, they came 1st in Roscommon. In 2019, they again received a gold medal and increased their overall score by 4 marks. In 2013 the village received the major award of winning the Tidiest Village and Small Town in Ireland.

Castlecoote Tidy Towns is a vibrant and hardworking community group representative of a variety of interests from throughout the community. This group has been instrumental in voluntary community activities for the past number of years and is supported in its endeavours by Roscommon County Council, CE Scheme and Sesame Construction. The group has also successfully completed work on the Old Mill Wheels and the development of the Island on the River Suck. This group has good experience in dealing with funding applications.



Castlecoote Bog is a raised bog, located 1.5km north of Castlecoote village and is adjacent to a section of the Suck Valley Waymarked Way (900m). Castlecoote Bog has not been worked for at least 25 years and is, to the naked eye, heavily overgrown with rushes, birch, briars and other vegetation.

The following information is taken from the Irish Peatland Conservation Council website:

Raised bogs are discreet, raised, dome-shaped masses of peat occupying former lakes or shallow depressions in the landscape. They occur throughout the midlands of Ireland. Their principal supply of water and nutrients is from rainfall and the substrate is acid peat soil, which can be up to 12m deep. Raised bogs are characterised by low-growing, open vegetation dominated by mosses, sedges and heathers, all of which are adapted to waterlogged, acidic and exposed conditions.

Raised bogs are beautiful landscapes with a unique biodiversity. Raised bogs are:

- the finest example of their type in Europe, and probably the world
- a unique repository of information of past climates, vegetation and human activity
- valuable outdoor laboratories in which plants, animals and natural processes in an extremely inhospitable environment can be studied
- of national and international importance as part of the biosphere in which they are inextricably linked to other ecosystems
- a unique feature of the Irish landscape of considerable tourist value
- a priority habitat under the EU Habitats Directive because of their scarcity in Europe
- an important store of carbon, helping to control greenhouse gases
- an important store of water within river catchments

Castlecoote Tidy Towns sought LEADER funding to engage a competent consultant to carry out a full Biodiversity and Ecological Survey on selected

sections of the Castlecoote Bog. The results of the survey will:

1. Provide a comprehensive analysis of the flora and fauna of Castlecoote Bog (selected sections);
2. Provide information for signage and information boards;
3. Provide information for printed and digital media for schools and other organisations for education and training purposes;
4. Provide information to inform a potential project to construct a boardwalk across the bog

Innovation:

This project will add to the current ecological knowledge of Castlecoote specifically around its nearby bog land and the River Suck bank environments. The project forms Phase 1 of a larger project aimed at creating a Biodiversity Attraction Site at Castlecoote Bog, including the establishment of a boardwalk across the bog and a viewing stand and hides on the bank of the River Suck.

This is the first time that a biodiversity and ecological analysis of any area of Castlecoote Village or Castlecoote Bog has been carried out. It is also the first time that the promoters have undertaken a project of this nature.



IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD (START/END DATE)

The project was approved funding at 90% rate of aid to a maximum of €8,966.70 by Roscommon LCDC on 11th December 2019. Flynn Furney Environment Consultants were engaged and work on the project commenced in late February 2020 but was soon halted due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Despite a number of delays caused by restrictions on public gatherings and travel, the project was completed in August 2021.



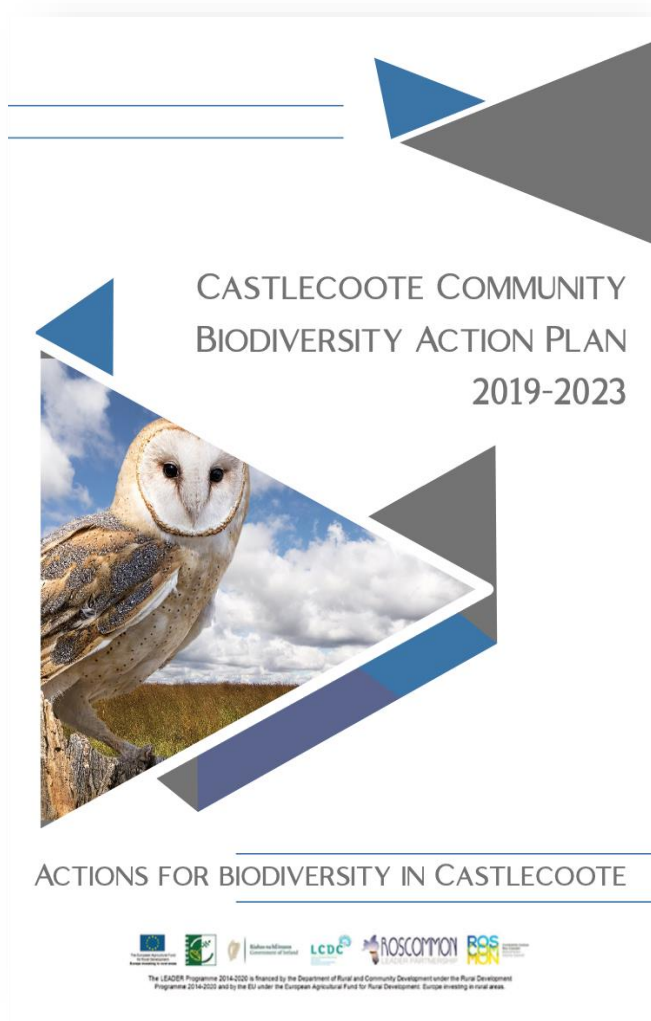
The Consultants assessed habitats, examined the presence of rare and threatened flora and/or fauna and identified if there were any ecological constraints present along the proposed route options. The survey also assessed ground conditions, identified drains, ditches and other impediments to track construction and safe access to and through the bog and woodland.

Castlecoote Bog and surrounding landscape contains a number of excellent habitats including rivers, wetlands, peatlands and woodland. This complexity creates opportunities for a diverse range of plant and animal species. A full range of the flora and fauna to be found on Castlecoote Bog has been provided as part of the study. Of particular interest were recordings of Wasp Hoverfly (believed to be the first recorded sighting for County Roscommon). Another interesting find close to the River Suck was Common Meadow Rue (*Thalictrum flavum*) which is not a widespread

species in Ireland and there are only 172 records for this species on the National Biodiversity Data Centre database.

The Final Report has provided the promoters with valuable information on the biodiversity and habitats found at Castlecoote Bog as well as a number of options to potentially link to the Suck Valley Way.

A number of the Castlecoote Bog landowners also became very interested in the variety of flora and fauna on their land. The promoters felt that it was very important to bring these landowners on-board with the overall project idea at an early stage as their co-operation and agreement would be required for any future capital project. This project has helped to do this





In 2018, Roscommon LEADER Partnership devised and implemented a Training Project, Introduction to Biodiversity Training for Community Groups in Co. Roscommon. Castlecoote Tidy Towns were one of 15 community groups who participated in the training. As part of the training, 15 Biodiversity Local Area Plans were developed, setting out biodiversity actions that community groups could implement as well as giving biodiversity advice and assistance to the community groups.

In mid-2019, Roscommon LEADER Partnership issued a LEADER Targeted Call for Biodiversity Projects. Castlecoote Tidy Towns submitted an EOI which was deemed eligible in principle, and they were invited to submit a full application for LEADER funding.

The results of the survey have

1. Provided a comprehensive analysis of the flora and fauna of Castlecoote Bog (selected sections);
2. Provided information for signage and information boards;
3. Provided information for printed and digital media for schools and other organisations for education and training purposes;
4. Informed the biodiversity and ecological elements of a feasibility study to construct a raised boardwalk across the bog to the River Suck.

The Survey covered all Fauna and Flora and must be Seasonal, Daytime and Night-time.

The specifics of the survey were:

- The undertaking of all necessary surveys to recognised standards.

- Completed site visits to conduct the survey across both day and night and to include as many visits as are deemed necessary to capture seasonal changes across the Bog habitats.
- Recorded, identified, and documented all species found and provided full listings in the interim and final reports.
- Liaised and consulted with Castlecoote Tidy Town during on-site visits and with issues arising.
- Provided itemised cost estimates for the completion of the project.
- Provided an interim report covering the initial seasonal survey.
- Provided final report to cover the full survey period.
- Provided 4 full 'hard-copies' and one soft-copy of both Reports
- Provided soft-copy information for use in interpretative signage for Castlecoote Bog
- Provided soft copy information for dissemination to local schools and other outlets.
- Provided relevant information on the biodiversity and ecology of Castlecoote Bog so as to inform a future feasibility study into the construction of a Boarded Walkway and River Suck Viewing Area at Castlecoote Bog.

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