

Project acronym - Project title

**SIMASEED - Protecting biodiversity in Sicily-Malta Natura2000 sites through Seed Banks and population reinforcement**

Programme Priority Axis	3 Protecting the environment and fostering an efficient use of resources	
Programme Investment Priority	6d) Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soils; promoting services for ecosystems, even through Natura 2000 and green infrastructure	
Investment Priority Specific Object		3.1 To contribute towards the arrest of the loss of terrestrial and marine biodiversity in the area, maintain and reactivate the ecosystem and the protected area
Project Lead Partner		
Università degli Studi di Catania - Dipartimento di Scienze biologiche, Geologiche e Ambientali		
Project Partners		
Partner 2	University of Malta - Argotti Botanic Gardens and Resource Centre	
Partner 3	Regione Siciliana - Dipartimento Regionale Sviluppo Rurale e Territoriale	
Partner 4	Ministry for Gozo Eco - Gozo Regional Development Directorate	
Project duration (months)	Start date	End date
44	01.03.2018	27.10.2021

Project summary

SIMASEED addresses the issue of the progressive loss of terrestrial biodiversity threatened by multiple factors such as climate change, anthropic pressure on particularly sensitive areas and the local population insufficient awareness about the importance of environmental issues and the protection of natural heritage.

The project contributes to halting the loss of terrestrial biodiversity and to promoting a model of sustainable cross-border development, improving the conservation status of wild flora and promoting the use in environmental restoration and in the nursery sector.

The project realizes the repopulation of about 40,000 plants belonging to 20 different species representing the Habitat Natura 2000, chosen among those threatened with extinction and the rare ones. Furthermore, the project repopulates 12,000 plants belonging to 12 different species recognized as vulnerable species in the CITES Europe Appendices and one of them recognized as a priority in the EEC Directive 92/43 (Ophrys lunulata).

This activity of repopulation of terrestrial biodiversity covers an area of 4 sq. Km and also includes the collection and conservation of typed seeds within two existing banks in Sicily and Malta as well as within a third bank that the project will create in Gozo. In particular, Gozo in recent years has become a centre for environmental activities of recognized value and by 2020 it could reach the status of Eco-Island also thanks to the activities of the project.

Project results

4 sq. Km of Natura 2000 sites involved with actions for the terrestrial biodiversity repopulation

Project outputs

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| ✓ 400 wild species seeds collected and stored  | ✓ 12000 wild orchids produced                          |
| ✓ 20 germination protocols                     | ✓ 20 plant species identified through DNA barcoding    |
| ✓ 40000 sprigs of 20 targeted species produced | ✓ 3 seed banks (two existing and one properly created) |

Budget	ERDF Contribution	National Contribution	Additional Co-Financing
€ 1.806.877	€ 1.535.846	€ 271.031	€ 0
Contact	Social Media	Web Site	
rettorato@unict.it	facebook: Simaseed-	<a href="http://www.simaseed.unict.it/">http://www.simaseed.unict.it/</a>	