

# «Promoting awareness of wildlife crime prosecution and liability for biodiversity damage in NATURA 2000 areas in Crete»

LIFE Natura Themis [LIFE14/GIE/GR/000026]

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Crete, GREECE

## BUDGET INFO:

**Total amount:** 1,580,117 €

**% EC Co-funding:** 935,782 € (59.22%)



**DURATION: Start:** 01/10/2015 - **End:** 30/09/2020

## PROJECT'S IMPLEMENTORS:

**Coordinating Beneficiary:** University of Crete (UoC)

### *Associated Beneficiaries:*

1. Bar Association of Chania (CB).
2. Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature (HSPN).
3. Ministry of Environment and Energy – Coordination Office for the Implementation of Environmental Liability (COIEL).
4. Bar Association of Heraklion (HB).

## OBJECTIVES & SCOPE:

1. Inform and raise awareness about environmental and wildlife crime.
2. Inform and raise awareness about environmental liability for preventing and remediating biodiversity damage.
3. Change the attitude of stakeholders, targeted audience and lay public in Crete that their support and engagement in EU environmental law enforcement is an important tool to protect biodiversity and support local development and social cohesion.
4. Provide stakeholders and target audiences with the appropriate skills to engage in effective prosecution procedure regarding wildlife crime, to require measures for remediation of damage to biodiversity and to integrate biodiversity issues in regional and local policy.
5. Communicate about the role and importance of the implementation of EU environmental legislation in human well-being in NATURA 2000 (N2000) network to other N2000 site managers in Greece.

The main project actions and means involved to reach the project's objectives are:

- ❖ Establishment of 2 Environmental Law Observatories, in East and West Crete, respectively.
- ❖ Awareness raising activities such as workshops, conferences and smart devices application.
- ❖ Training seminars to develop specific skills of stakeholders.
- ❖ Production of Technical Guides.
- ❖ Usage of project's website and of local media as tools towards environmental awareness.
- ❖ Development of indicators for the evaluation of the project's effectiveness.

## EXPECTED IMPACTS

- 80% of stakeholders (judges and state prosecutors, lawyers, public officers, NGOs, journalists, investigating agents, rural population and professionals involved in tourism industry) and 65% of lay public will be aware of the importance of wildlife crime prosecution and of triggering liability for biodiversity damage in ecosystems and livelihoods.
- At least 350 judges and state prosecutors, 600 lawyers, 150 members of environmental NGOs and 100 public officers of DAAC will be trained on wildlife crime and environmental liability for biodiversity damage.
- Smart devices application will be used by at least 100 users for environmental damage reporting.
- At least 50% of all target audiences will identify wildlife crime as a separate case of prosecution.
- At least 30% increase of stakeholders who are aware and fully appreciate of the relevant EU legislation.
- At least 30% increase of environmental claims involving wildlife crime and liability for biodiversity damage.
- Integration of liability to remediate biodiversity damage in N2000 areas in regional and local policy.
- Development of nature-based solutions towards positive governance on biodiversity issues.

### ***Indicators used during the implementation of the project:***

- Percentage of stakeholders and target audiences who: a) acknowledge that wildlife crime is a special category of prosecution; b) are aware of the liability for biodiversity damage; c) took part in a prosecution procedure for wildlife crime; and d) acted towards environmental liability for damages to biodiversity.
- Number of criminal claims (before investigation, under investigation, in court).
- Number of prosecution files in all four First Instance Courts of Crete.
- Sources of prosecution (ex officio prosecution, private claims, institutional claims).
- Number of cases where the Bar Associations undertook initiatives towards the wildlife crime prosecution.
- Number of cases where local NGOs undertook initiatives towards the liability for damages to biodiversity.
- Number of cases where authorities asked the polluter to take action to remedy (or prevent) damages on biodiversity in N2000 areas.

# POLICY IMPLICATION

**MAIN EU POLICIES TARGETED:** EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, "Birds Directive" (2009/147/EC), "Habitats Directive" (92/43/EEC), Environmental Liability Directive – ELD (35/2004/EC).

The current legislation regarding the N2000 sites in Greece is focused on the protection of wildlife through penalties (which should be the last resort) and neglects the socio-economic dynamics underlying the phenomena of compliance and enforcement.

The project will ensure that in addition to local stakeholders, the lay public will acquire information about the conservation of N2000 sites and the implementation of relevant EU directives.

The project's principal aim is the enforcement of European legislation on biodiversity through specific training programmes on N2000 sites for judges and public prosecutors, the development of better compliance promotion capacities and the increase in stakeholders' access to judicial procedures on environmental issues. The project aims to fill a crucial gap in the implementation of EU environmental legislation in regional and national level and to increase the access and participation of public and legal entities to justice on environmental matters and judicial procedures.