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Down to Earth

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Environmental risks related with depopulation and ageing population
in rural areas

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Abbreviation list

Term	Description
PSL	Local Development Plan
PSR	Rural Development Plan

Executive Summary

The document aims to provide a general overview of the issues that contribute to the problem of depopulation in relation to climate change and violent and sudden weather events. The document is articulated through the presentation of the socio-economic context of the vast area of Campobasso, presenting its demographic structure, data on education, the main economic sectors and the use of renewable energies in the various municipalities, a Swot analysis carried out through a survey with the project stakeholders, the presentation of the regulatory framework of the Molise region and a compendium on the Italian situation, the presentation of good practices from a social, energy and strategic point of view and finally the proposals developed around the theme of training, digital and tourism.

The major problems identified during this study are those of the growing trend of abandonment of the region by Molisians, which triggers trends of ageing and denatality. The territory suffers and the events of landslides, mudslides and floods are increasingly frequent due to the lack of maintenance of the territory by farmers who, although they represent the majority of the productive fabric, are represented by individual or micro farms that do not have the economic and technological strength to be able to take care of the territory adequately.

The cultivated agricultural area has progressively shrunk throughout the region and in the vast area of Campobasso, the lack of population means that essential services in the villages are lacking, and the fragmentation of the population in the villages makes accessibility to the urban area difficult, as well as a general difficulty in organizing transport.

However, concrete actions and solutions supported by the citizens and municipalities of the Campobasso vast area to counter depopulation through the reactivation of socio-cultural aggregation points, carried out with a bottom-up strategy, and the progressive effort to use renewable energy and network energy to reduce climate change, as well as

digitization strategies implemented by municipalities and companies to try to keep up with national and international players, are noted.

The document certainly does not manage to give an exhaustive overview of the problems presented above, but it gives a clear picture of the trends, tendencies and sets reference points to develop new strategies and policy tools to succeed in the coming years and with the new cohesion policy to revive the life of rural villages and the natural ecosystem that is proposed in this research as a focal point of development through rural tourism, slow to revive the economic and social vitality of a region and a vast area that face enormous difficulties.

1 Introduction of the local context

The Campobasso wide area consists of the municipality of Campobasso, the regional capital, and 17 surrounding municipalities: no longer, in fact, only Campodipietra, Ferrazzano and Ripamolisan, but also Baranello, Busso, Campodipietra, Casalciprano, Castropignano, Fossalto, Limosano, Matrice, Mirabello Sannitico, Montagano, Oratino, Pietracupa, San Giovanni in Galdo and Vinchiatur. An operation born from the desire to build the new strategy and public action on the network between cities and on the activation of innovative partnerships with dynamic actors in the territory.

With an area of 4,438 km², Molise is the second smallest region in Italy after Valle D'Aosta. The vast area of Campobasso covers an area of 455.74 km², or 10.2 percent of the entire region, corresponding to hilly inland areas.

The total population of the Campobasso Vast Area is 75,260: among its 18 municipalities, those with the largest number of residents are - in ascending order - Ripamolisan, Ferrazzano, Vinchiatur and Campobasso. The capital, with its 47,535 residents, sees 66.7 percent of the population of the entire area. Throughout the vast area, with the exception of the municipalities of Oratino (which as of 2011 counted 1560 inhabitants² and in 2021 recorded 16573) and Mirabello Sannitico (from 2067 inhabitants to 2157), there is a gradual decline in population, with a 3.3 percent drop from 2011, despite a positive trend that boded well for 2015. ⁴ The average population density is 130.54 in/km², overall much higher than the regional average of 70.7 in/km², and, significantly lower than in the municipality of Campobasso alone, with 868.7 in/km². Overall, as in the whole of Italy, the average household size has been shrinking, and the decrease in the incidence of young couples with children, at 6.34 percent compared to an Italian average of 7.4 percent⁶. /km²⁵, is underlined.

Also of particular relevance at the regional level is the phenomenon of aging, relating both to the increase in the number of elderly people related to improved living, and to the decline in births and younger generations. Indeed, the demographic structure that emerges is that of a very large elderly class, with an old-age index of 231.6 at the regional

level and 216.42 at the level of the Campobasso Vast Area, compared with a national old-age index of 148.7 as of 2011. Standing out among municipalities is Pietracupa, with an incidence at 566.7, extremely above average, while in Campobasso the figure is around 169.5. 7.

The structure of the population by age group denotes an incidence of people aged 65 years and older of 24.7 percent, one point above the regional average figure and more than two and a half points higher than the Italian figure. This characteristic takes on considerable significance in terms of the area's dependence. The Structural Dependency Index shows that the non-working age population (those 0-14 and those over 65) now accounts for more than 56 percent of the working age population (15-64). About old-age dependency, the population over 65 makes up 38.7 percent of the working population itself. The old-age index projects the population structure in a "dynamic" perspective, highlighting that the population over 65 is now several times more than twice as large as the population under 15 (more precisely, almost 218%) highlighting a strong criticality in terms of demographic sustainability. Again, it should be added that the situation is not uniform throughout the territory, with the "usual" municipalities of the Campobasso belt (Ferrazzano, Ripalimosani, Vinchiaturro, Campodipietra, Oratino, Mirabello) and the Bojanese directorate (Bojano, San Massimo, etc.) whose elderly dependency index, for example, is even lower than the national one. These realities are contrasted by some really critical situations where this index exceeds in some cases (Castelbottaccio and San Biase) even 100 percent.

1.1 Socio – Economic Context

1.1.1 Education

According to ISTAT, the main indicator of educational attainment is the share of the population aged 25-64 with at least an upper secondary degree: The diploma is considered, in fact, the level of education indispensable for labor market participation with individual growth potential. In Molise, as of 2019, this share stands at 62.6 percent (62.2 percent Italian average and 79.0 percent European average).¹⁰ Considering instead the incidence of adults with a diploma or degree within the Campobasso wide area, the

figure stands at 54.5 percent in line with the entire region at 56.2 percent and a national average at 55.1 percent. Standing out positively are the municipality of Campobasso (70.6 percent), Ferrazzano (70 percent) and Oratino (69.3 percent) while a worrying figure emerges in the municipality of Fossalto where 39.8 percent is recorded. The latter also records a 15.1 percent incidence of college-educated youth compared to a regional average of 28.4 percent, at the opposite end of the spectrum Oratino, which records 38.8 percent of college-educated youth with a national average at 23.2 percent.

1.1.2 Labor Market

Campobasso's wide area employment rate stands at 40.88 percent in line with the regional average of 40.4 percent and 4.12 percentage points lower than the national average (45 percent). Within the area, the municipalities of Casalciprano, Pietracupa and San Giovanni in Galdo are particularly underperforming, with respective percentages of 32.8 percent, 35.2 percent and 35.4 percent. These figures for the vast area comprising the 15 municipalities refer to the year 2011, as more updated data on individual municipalities are not available.²³ However, it can be seen that employment has increased at the regional level from 2011 to 2019, rising to 45.50 percent, in line with the growth at the national level, which rose to 59 percent.²⁴ Still referring to the year 2011, youth employment in the 15 municipalities is around 30.55 percent while in Italy, again as of 2011, it is 36.3 percent: to this data it seems relevant to highlight how the municipality of Fossalto, stands higher than the national average with an employment rate between the ages of 15 and 29 of 39.5 percent. Comparing the data to 2019, there is a negative trend, with youth employment in the region plummeting to 24.50 percent in line with the Italian figure, which collapsed to 31.80 percent ²⁵. Also underperforming compared to the rest of Italy is female employment, with an index at 43.20 percent compared to a national figure of 50.10 percent, still up from 30 percent in 2011²⁶. On the other hand, female entrepreneurship was positive, standing at 32.6 percent in the region compared to 26.47 percent in Italy, and the employment of women with children, at 80.80 percent in the region and 74.30 in Italy.

1.1.3 Structure Of Entrepreneurship

The structure of entrepreneurship in the Urban Area mirrors that of the region, which sees few structured businesses and a high number of small businesses, mostly family-owned. Data from the Molise Chamber of Commerce as of 2019 shows 35,470 businesses in the region, of which 29,125 are in the province of Campobasso: predominant is the agricultural sector with 29.8 percent, trade with 22.7 percent, construction with 12.6 percent, and follow under 10 percent are business services (8.7 percent), manufacturing (8 percent), transportation and shipping (2.6 percent) and a remainder of other sectors of 6.6 percent.

1.1.4 Tourism

In this analysis, with reference to tourism enterprises, only ATECO codes with interest in tourism are considered. There are, according to Infocamere data as of 2018, 2291 businesses in Molise of which 1938 are in Campobasso, a figure in line with Italy for the ratio of active businesses to resident population (Molise 0.87 percent and Italy 0.86 percent). Of these preponderant is the restaurant sector, which drives the entire sector with 2125 businesses in Molise of which 1531 are in Campobasso, representing 79 percent of total businesses. There are 205 lodging services in the region of which 147 are in Campobasso, 57 activities of travel agencies, tour operators, reservation services and related activities of which 43 are in the capital, 69 in the region and 53 in Campobasso creative, artistic and entertainment activities; 6 in total are libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities, of which 4 are in Campobasso and finally there are 229 in the region sports, entertainment and amusement activities, of which 160 are in Campobasso. In general, it can be seen that at the legal level, as a percentage, sole proprietorships are greater for each type of activity (59 percent compared to 49 percent in Italy). As for accommodation facilities to prevail are the non-hotel ones - 405 throughout the region of which 291 in Campobasso - in which, however, only 24% of tourists are concentrated. In hotel facilities - 103 in Molise of which 76 in Campobasso - on the other hand, 76 percent of visitors stay. With reference to the number of businesses operating in sectors complementary to tourism, there is a preponderance of "other personal service activities"

followed by "land transport and transport by pipeline": these together account for 82 percent of the total number of complementary businesses.

The number of people employed in the tourism supply chain in Molise in 2018 is 877756, of which 76% belong to the accommodation of lodging and catering supply chain: almost 13% of the total number of people employed in Molise. The value added per affect in the tourism sector in Molise is 5635, not far from Italy's 59.76. 57

1.1.5 Cultural And Creative Enterprises

As stated in the study "I am culture - The Italy of quality! and beauty challenges the crisis" prepared by Symbola and Unioncamere with the collaboration and support of the Marche Region in 2018: In just one year, the Molise Culture and Creative Productive System grew by 12.2 percent in terms of added value and 11.7 percent relative to employment. The regional dynamic is! the best in the national panorama and allows Molise to rank at the top of the South of Italy in terms of the share of employed people in the total economy (4.6%). Overall, the wealth produced in the territory by the cultural and creative supply chain reached a record 251 million euros thanks to the employment of about 5 thousand workers. On a provincial basis, Campobasso ranks highest in the national rankings, forty-first in value added (4.8%) and fifty-fourth in employment (4.8%); further behind is Isernia, with incidences of 3.3% and 4.0%, respectively.

1.1.6 Energy

Energy consumption data refer to regional ISTAT data available as of 2018. Gross domestic consumption is estimated to be 1511.6 GWh in Molise; the electricity consumption of industry enterprises is 62.60 percent (measured in GWh per hundred million euros of industry value added), denoting an underperforming energy efficiency - as well as an opposite trend - compared to the Italian average consumption of 36.70 percent. In contrast, the electricity consumption of private tertiary enterprises (excluding public administration) is almost in line with that of Italy, at 11.80 percent versus 10.90 percent. Underperforming is the total energy consumption attributed to the municipality, at 36.70 percent compared to Italy's 29.50 percent. The share of electricity consumption covered by renewable sources in Molise, according to 2019 GSE data, equals 39.10% exceeding

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both the national average of 18.02%, the DM March 15, 2012 forecast for 2018 (29.7%), and the target to be reached in 2020 (35.0%). On the other hand, the gross efficient power of renewable sources is 38.5 percent compared to the national average of 46.0 percent. In terms of energy efficiency, the region is still sub-performing with zero district heating and cooling systems, zero smart grid and gridedge solutions, and only 33 medium and small storage systems. According to Terna data as of 2018, there are a total of 34 hydroelectric, 23 thermoelectric, 79 wind, and 4041 photovoltaic systems in the region.

2 SWOT analysis

The questionnaire was answered by 9 stakeholders, municipalities in the Campobasso wide area, associations, cooperative societies and state environmental protection agencies. The spatial extent covered by the stakeholders is at the local regional and national levels. All of the associations and cooperatives are micro or small enterprises, and the predominant business sector 42.9% is agriculture, tourism, and environmental protection and superficial water study. All the respondents declare that they have problems of depopulation and aging of the population and have found themselves facing problems related to climate change.

Tipo di istituzione:

9 risposte

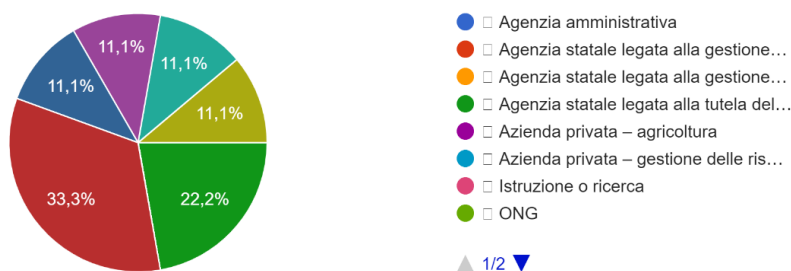


Figure 1 type of stakeholder

Qual è il tema ambientale più vicino alla tua attività?

7 risposte

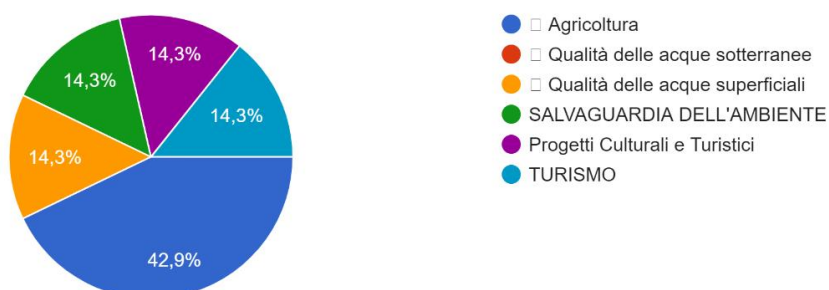


Figure 2 main activities of the stakeholders

2.1 General Overview on the questionnaire

What can be seen in general from the swot questionnaire is that the companies believe that they have 55.6% qualified and well-informed staff 75%, but that there is a lack of sufficient facilities and technology to ensure neutral and positive business impact or public resource management activities.

Avete il personale/i volontari e le competenze necessarie per raggiungere i vostri obiettivi ambientali?

9 risposte

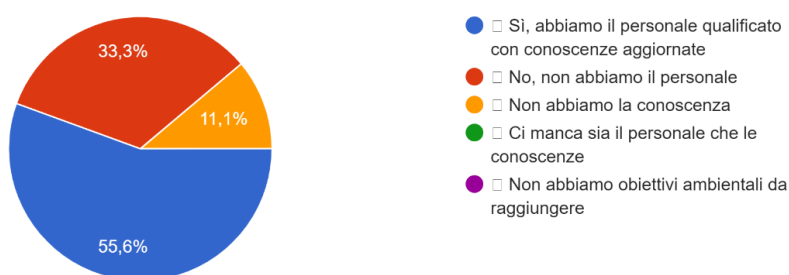


Figure 3 knowledge and staff

Avete strutture/attrezzature/tecnologie sufficienti per garantire attività neutrali/positive dal punto di vista ambientale?

9 risposte

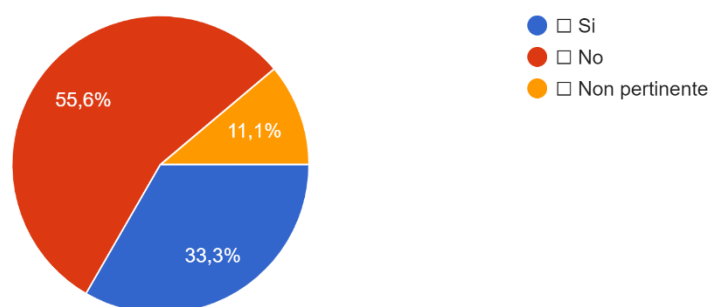


Figure 4 structures and equipment

Sixty-six percent of respondents seek to use good practices such as waste sorting and remanufacturing electronic equipment and reuse incentives, organize door-to-door recycling collections, provide public facilities with geothermal heating or equip them with photovoltaic systems to reduce environmental impact. When asked to recommend

solutions that could be transposed into laws, the suggestion is to bring "Continuous land maintenance in both urban and rural areas." More than 50 percent of respondents have been affected in the course of their business by exceptional weather events to a large or small extent, 33 percent to a very small extent. Despite this, 44 percent of respondents do not know what measures to reduce the impact to climate change. Suggested actions are participating in reforestation efforts, using public transportation, and buying electric vehicles.

2.2 Socio Economic Swot

Table 1 - Socio-economic SWOT

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good educational level of the population - Regional employment growth from 2011 to 2019 - Female entrepreneurship: regional figure 32.6 percent vs. Italian 26.7 percent - National and international export: Truffle Industry
Weaknesses
<p><u>Demographics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Severe depopulation and gradual population decline especially of young population - Decreasing incidence of young couples with children -Very large elderly class <p><u>Education</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack and low quality of functional endowments and learning environment (cafeteria service, endowments for sports activities, building vulnerability, mobile students, full-time learners, disabled assistance) - Adults with a high school diploma or degree: Fossalto 39.8% (national average 55.1%) - College-educated youth: Fossalto 15.1% (national average 23.2%) - School dropouts: Pietracupa 33.3%, (more than double the national average) - NEET: Pietracupa 38.5% (national average 22.5%)

<p><u>Employment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional employment underperforming - Collapsing youth employment and downward trend at regional level - Female and foreign employment underperforming in Molise compared to Italian average - Low percentage of working-age population with digital skills in the region - Employment Campobasso Vast Area: Casalciprano, Pietracupa and San Giovanni in Galdo of 32.8%, 35.2% and 35.4% (national average 45%) <p><u>Entrepreneurship and enterprise</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supply chain mainly characterized by small- to medium-sized, family-owned agricultural and artisanal businesses - Internalization rate among the lowest in Italy - Lack of youth entrepreneurship
<p>Opportunities</p>
<p>Measures active or to be activated from other funding sources and grants such as: PNRR, Incentives for female entrepreneurship, funds for the establishment of new businesses in Southern Italy by young entrepreneurs, funding for innovative projects, grants for re-employment, research and development tax credit, FIRST: research and innovation, calls to combat school dropout and dropout.</p>
<p>Threats</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low incidence of Research and Development Expenditure: 0.34 percent of Public Expenditure - Insufficient rate of innovation in the production system - Low incidence of productive specialization in high-tech sectors (among the threats as representative of the propensity of the system that shows a certain "resistance" to change on aspirations to reap rewards in the new employment basins of research, digital and ecological transition).

2.3 Swot Green And Sustainable Energy

Table 2 - Green and Sustainable Energy SWOT

<p>Strengths</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High consumption of energy covered by renewable sources compared with average

national

- Birth of the first two energy communities in the AU of CB
- First photovoltaic installations in the AU of CB
- Some municipalities very positive performance of separate waste collection

Weaknesses

- Energy consumption of industry very high
- Municipality energy consumption high
- Renewable sources have with lower power than Italian average
- No district heating and cooling systems, zero smart grid and gridedge solutions and only 33 medium and small storage systems size in all of Molise
- Recycling in the region underperforms the Italian average
- Lack of urban green space
- High risk associated with natural disasters
- Lack of interest in green solutions given other more pressing priorities
- Lack of synergies and coordination among municipalities

Opportunities

- Opportunity to create public-private partnerships with actors in the territory for the realization of interventions of savings and efficiency energy
- Potential availability of measures active or to be activated to achieve the 2030 energy goals from other funding sources:

Threats

- Rapid advancements in technology could lead to the obsolescence of existing green energy infrastructure or make it less competitive compared to newer, more efficient technologies.
- Dependence on specific suppliers for components or materials required for sustainable energy projects exposes the sector to risks associated with supply chain disruptions, such as shortages or price fluctuations.

- Shifts in government policies or regulations could impact the economic viability of green energy projects.

3 Legal and strategic framework

3.1 Regional Frameworks

3.2 Rural Development Plan 2021-2027

Since 2018, the Molise Region has been engaged in the elaboration of the Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development (SRSvS), as a territorial declination of the National Strategy (SNSvS) and with reference to the 2030 Agenda. The SRSvS constitutes a long-term strategic direction and approach document and, as recalled in the Resolution launching the SEA process (62/2022), it represents the frame of reference within which regional policies will have to move in the near future as well as the reference framework for the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the ERDF PR 2021-2027. With DGR No. 46 of 25.02.2022, the Molise Region adopted the Positioning Document with respect to the implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) and the UN 2030 Agenda, as the first part of the SRSvS, and a reference tool for the regional context analysis (Chapter 6 of the RA) The SRSvS is divided into the following Thematic Areas covering the three dimensions (social, economic and environmental) of sustainability, identified with reference to the five policy objectives of the Cohesion Policy 2021-27:

1. Local development (Molise more competitive)
2. Environment, agriculture, forests (greener Molise)
3. Infrastructure, energy (Molise more connected)
4. Education, training, work (Molise closer to citizens)
5. Soil defense, climate, risk management (Molise more sustainable)
6. Employment, and social policies (Molise more social)

3.2.1 Regional Legal Framework

The laws presented below regulate the main issues from an environmental and energy standpoint, in the case of the PSR they regulate the actions to be taken to positively impact the business, naturalistic and social network of the Molise Region. Updated in light of the

most recent provisions of the Italian government and the European commission, except for residual actions of the PSR that is now expiring, there is no firm and direct link that bonds environmental issues to the depopulation of Molise's inland areas.

The laws on the "regional environmental energy plan" seek to define and regulate, with reference to and in relation to the most recent European laws, the production and management of Molise's electrical energy, with a focus on the production and consumption of wind, solar, and hydroelectric energy, the laws on "water protection and the water management plan seeks to outline in an innovative way the issue much attention by the EU, on the efficiency of the water distribution network and the reuse of wastewater, after acquiring data on water wastage due to old infrastructure, the natura 2000 network management plan on the other hand aims to manage areas of forest and nature interest and defines rules for the use and prohibits the exploitation of these protected natural resources, the second flood risk management plan on the other hand tries to give rules for the management of natural disasters due to excessive rainfall.

The PSR 2014 – 2022 and 2021-2027 complements and organizes these laws by providing the strategy of action to solve the problems due to climate change and depopulation, activating lines of action and the creation of calls to be able to intervene on the critical issues mentioned above, allocating specific funds to enable the agricultural, social tourism and culture to implement projects and support training to counter depopulation and social crises that develop in countries that due to these phenomena (climate change, depopulation) and deplete the social fabric of essential services such as health, mobility, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

PSR 2014-2020 Regione Molise (ver.10.2)

Decisione di esecuzione della Commissione Europea 19.08.2016. Approvato dalla Commissione Europea con Decisione di esecuzione C (2015) 4623 del 2.7.2015 e ratificato dalla Regione con deliberazione di Giunta Regionale n. 412 del 03-08-2015 e deliberazione del Consiglio Regionale n. 218 del 04.08.2015

PIANO ENERGETICO AMBIENTALE REGIONALE

Determinazione G.R., n. 133/2017 “PIANO ENERGETICO AMBIENTALE REGIONALE DELLA REGIONE MOLISE. APPROVAZIONE”

Piano Regionale per la Gestione dei Rifiuti

D.G.R. n. 100/2016, approvazione del “Piano Regionale per la Gestione dei Rifiuti della Regione Molise”

PIANO TUTELA DELLE ACQUE

DCR n.386 del 25 novembre 2019 - Modifica del Piano di tutela delle Acque
DCR n. 25 del febbraio 2018, approvazione Piano regionale di tutela delle acque e Piano nitrati della Regione Molise

DGR n. 139/16, approvazione del Piano di Tutela delle Acque, in attuazione del Decreto Legislativo n. 152/06, art. 121

PIANO DI GESTIONE DELLE ACQUE (Direttiva Comunitaria 2000/60/CE, D.L.vo 152/06, L. 221/2015) CICLO 2021-2027

Piano di Gestione Acque "I ciclo" (2009-2015) - redatto nel 2010, adottato in sede di Comitato Istituzionale del 24 febbraio 2010 ed approvato con D.P.C.M. del 10 aprile 2013 – Gazzetta Ufficiale n.160 del 10 luglio 2013;

- il Piano di Gestione delle Acque - "II ciclo" (2015- 2021) - redatto nel 2016 come aggiornamento del ciclo precedente, adottato in sede di Comitato Istituzionale del 3 marzo 2016 ed approvato con D.P.C.M. del 27 ottobre 2016 – Gazzetta Ufficiale n. 25 del 31 gennaio 2017

- Progetto di Piano di Gestione Acque III Ciclo (adottato nella seduta del 29/12/2020 della Conferenza Istituzionale Permanente), costituisce il II aggiornamento del Piano di Gestione Acque per il periodo di pianificazione 2021-2027, una prima individuazione delle linee di aggiornamento del Piano di Gestione delle Acque approvato nel 2016.

PGRA Piano di Gestione Rischio Alluvioni II ciclo 2016-2021

Conferenza Istituzionale Permanente (CIP) del 29/12/2020 adozione dell'aggiornamento del Progetto di Piano di Gestione Rischio Alluvioni relativo al II ciclo

PIANI DI GESTIONE DEI RELATIVI 61 SITI RICOMPRESI NELLA RETE NATURA 2000 DEL MOLISE

Decreto Ministeriale del 16 marzo 2017 (G.U. n°81 del 6/4/2017) il Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare (MATTM), in base ai Piani di Gestione approvati, ha designato 60 Zone Speciali di Conservazione (ZSC) nel territorio della Regione Molise - DGR n.772/2015 di approvazione in via definitiva, dei 61 Piani di Gestione dei relativi siti Natura 2000, adottati con - DGR n°604/2015.

3.3 National Framework

Depopulation has been a significant demographic challenge for Italy in recent decades. The country has experienced a steady decline in its population, primarily driven by a combination of low birth rates and high emigration rates. Italy's birth rate is among the lowest in Europe, and this trend has resulted in an aging population, placing increasing pressure on healthcare and social services.

High youth unemployment and limited economic opportunities in some regions have led many young Italians to seek better prospects abroad, contributing to the country's depopulation. This emigration often includes skilled professionals and graduates, which poses a risk to Italy's workforce and economic competitiveness.

To address depopulation, the Italian government has introduced various measures, including incentives for families to have more children, initiatives to attract skilled workers, and regional development programs. Additionally, there's a growing focus on creating jobs, fostering economic growth, and improving infrastructure in regions affected by depopulation, aiming to revitalize communities and reverse the trend. However, depopulation remains a complex challenge, and sustained efforts are required to ensure a more balanced demographic future for Italy.

Depopulation in rural areas of Italy is a pressing issue, with data and statistics underscoring the magnitude of the problem. In these regions, a stark decline in population has been observed in recent years, primarily due to a combination of aging populations, low birth rates, and emigration.

Aging Population: Rural areas in Italy face a significant challenge with their aging populations. The median age in these regions is often higher than the national average. This demographic shift puts increased pressure on healthcare services and pension systems while reducing the number of potential workers to support the economy.

Low Birth Rates: Rural areas frequently experience lower birth rates compared to urban centers. Young couples often hesitate to start families due to limited economic opportunities and inadequate infrastructure. The lack of accessible healthcare and educational facilities in some rural areas exacerbates this issue.

High Emigration Rates: Emigration from rural areas continues to contribute significantly to depopulation. Many young people and skilled workers leave their rural hometowns in search of better job prospects and quality of life in larger cities or even abroad. This brain drain further depletes rural communities of their vitality and potential for growth.

Economic Disparities: Rural areas often suffer from higher unemployment rates and lower income levels compared to urban counterparts. The lack of diverse job opportunities and access to essential services can deter young people from staying in or returning to rural regions. To address rural depopulation and environmental protection, Italy has initiated several measures:

- The National Strategy for Sustainable Development (SNSvS)
- The National Strategy for Biodiversity
- The National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC)
- The National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR)

3.4 EU Regulation

The European Union has recognized depopulation as a significant challenge, particularly in rural areas, where dwindling populations can lead to economic decline and social challenges. Efforts to address depopulation are often integrated into broader rural development strategies. The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been a key instrument in promoting rural development by supporting farmers, encouraging sustainable agriculture, and investing in rural communities. Additionally, cohesion

policy, which aims to reduce development disparities between regions, plays a crucial role in supporting rural areas.

In the context of climate change, the European Union has been at the forefront of global efforts to combat environmental challenges. The European Green Deal, a flagship initiative, outlines the EU's commitment to becoming the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050. Various legislative measures have been put in place to achieve ambitious targets, including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, increased use of renewable energy, and sustainable land use practices. Funds from the EU's budget, including the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund, contribute to initiatives promoting climate resilience and sustainability in rural areas.

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP): The CAP is a major EU policy that supports farmers, promotes sustainable agriculture, and aims to ensure a stable food supply. It includes measures to address rural development and depopulation in agricultural areas.

Cohesion Policy: This policy focuses on reducing economic and social disparities between regions. It includes funding mechanisms such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund, which can be used for projects promoting rural development and climate resilience.

European Green Deal: This is a flagship initiative of the European Union that outlines a comprehensive roadmap to make the EU's economy sustainable. It includes legislative measures to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 and addresses various aspects of climate change, including agriculture and land use.

Renewable Energy Directive (RED): The RED sets targets for the use of renewable energy in the EU and establishes a regulatory framework to support its development. It plays a role in addressing climate change by promoting the use of clean and sustainable energy sources.

Climate Action Regulation: This regulation sets binding annual greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for EU member states. It is part of the EU's efforts to implement the Paris Agreement and mitigate the impact of climate change.

European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF): These funds, including the ERDF, are used to support regional development, innovation, and job creation. They can be employed to address depopulation challenges and promote sustainable practices in rural areas.

4 Good practices & other experiences

The good practices that are reported below are related, on the one hand, with the Local Development Plan and "the fault line" of the municipality of Oratino to present good practices for the development of networks and initiatives for the development and social and economic inclusion of the Molisian population, and on the other hand, the projects of Mirabello and Fossalto aimed at reducing environmental risks through energy efficiency, the installation of solar panels and the establishment of energy communities. All reported practices involve a bottom-up, strategic approach to activate and raise awareness among the population.

4.1 Oratino "La Faglia"

Oratino city count many citizenship organizations Associazione Culturale "La Faglia", Pro Loco Oratino, Associazione Culturale "Arturo Giovannitti", Associazione ZOORATINO and many sport Association. Born with OFF Project in 2022, that aimed to re-active citizen participation in the town reconstructing folk traditions and recovering abandoned assets, Associazione culturale "La Faglia" is the last experiment on active citizenship and networking activated through bottom-up approach and citizen collaboration. Project in his first stages searching for volunteer staff among citizens shit with and event called "STAFF citizen CREATE social workshop The Fault.". Selected citizen where then divided in four different area of activity to start the intervention. Each group involved adults and children, with the collaboration of artists and creative entrepreneurs, to actively participate in the reuse and transformation of the former clinic into a social workshop and the enhancement of the entire area. Territorial and bottom-up approach of OFF project involved citizen through workshop paths, implemented with the network of companies involved, opening knowledge of the area and through direct, hands-on experience led by artists and creative people that have fully recovered an abandoned communal infrastructure. The actions results was great in term of involvement of citizen, recovery of old building and in term of activated network. Local partnership was established with other regional association of citizen and with local enterprises. The network expanded

also beyond the regional borders establishing connection and link with the Focara tradition in Puglia Region and “la fogata de San Juan Maschwitz” in Buenos Aires, Argentina. For the first time, a social workshop seen as a place for the dissemination of art, knowledge and culture, in close connection with the community of reference and the heritage of the area, has been established in this territory. The project is a new and original experience of creating the "common good in common," which synthesized the desire to find a suitable place to bring together artistic experimentation with a different way of using spaces for production, research and study.

Short overview on Main Outputs of the project:

1) From Ex-Ambulatory to “La Faglia ” Social Workshop:

This first phase of self-organization from below fostered a process of empowerment and reappropriation of public space. In particular, the reuse and refitting of cultural spaces and content was co-designed and the permanent social workshop (La Faglia Social Workshop) was established.

2) Everyone's Social Workshop: let's officiate together.

Creative workshops, implemented throughout the project, have improved the services, fruition and cultural functions of the Ex-Ambulatory site and strengthened the historical-cultural-artistic identity of the municipality of Oratino. Opportunities for the enjoyment of cultural, educational, recreational and playful initiatives aimed at local, regional, national and international citizenship have increased; and paths of citizen participation have been fostered.

3) The Social Workshop La Faglia discovering the territory.

The Guided Tours that allowed to achieve the following results: - stimulated the activation of participatory pathways, through the involvement of local businesses, institutions, professionals, artists, citizens and active subjects in the area, encouraging participation in urban regeneration processes oriented to the strengthening of socio-cultural dynamics of participatory growth.

Increased participation in the regeneration process and a sense of territorial ownership and active citizenship was achieved.

Oratino municipality has as main object is citizen participation. Indeed, The project OFF was strongly wanted as social policies and economics politics founded by Oratino Municipality. Oratino municipalities believe that is citizen participation is essential to creating an effective and successful political system. Is a strategic point that citizens have access to all the necessary resources for participation. This includes providing citizens with access to public meetings, information about their elected officials, and the ability to comment on proposed legislation. Promote transparency and accountability in government by making sure that citizens are aware of the decisions that are being made and the reasons behind them. Transparency is a main topic to raise citizen trust to local governance. Oratino municipalities is implementing policies and politics strategy to ensure that citizens have the opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of the political process, economic, social and cultural life.

Oratino Municipalities have a working staff dedicated to citizen participations strategy.

4.2 Mirabello And Fossalto Experience

The project has realized the development of new business models that have benefited from the transfer of know-how and the start-up of innovative enterprises for capacity building and training activities aimed at successfully triggering access and positioning in the Renewable Energy Sources (RES) market (through the acquisition of high skills in energy efficiency interventions and energy production from RES). Through the implementation of small pilot projects for energy efficiency in the Partners' public buildings and the triggering of local microgrids (smart-grids) for energy and data exchange on public buildings, the financial and environmental potential of these buildings was exploited, allowing start-ups to test and demonstrate their technical and organizational capabilities. Partners increased their awareness in relation to energy end-uses, measurement and monitoring of achievements, and benefited from the implementation of specific adaptation plans, aimed at ensuring the safety of urban environments.

4.2.1 ADRIA_Alliance Fossalto

The project has realized the development of new business models that have benefited from the transfer of know-how and the start-up of innovative enterprises for capacity building and training activities aimed at successfully triggering access and positioning in the Renewable Energy Sources (RES) market (through the acquisition of high skills in energy efficiency interventions and energy production from RES). Through the implementation of small pilot projects for energy efficiency in the Partners' public buildings and the triggering of local microgrids (smart-grids) for energy and data exchange on public buildings, the financial and environmental potential of these buildings was exploited, allowing start-ups to test and demonstrate their technical and organizational capabilities. Partners increased their awareness in relation to energy end-uses, measurement and monitoring of achievements, and benefited from the implementation of specific adaptation plans, aimed at ensuring the safety of urban environments.

4.2.2 Lec Mirabello Sannitico

Short description of the project: The overall objective of LEC is to contribute to improving energy efficiency and renewable energy usage through the development of a "local community of active energy consumers" (LEC) which cooperates with municipalities (public-private partnerships), by promoting the creation of sustainable municipalities models, based on local actions inspired by the change in the everyday behavior of citizens. The common aim is to educate local consumers to an energy saving behavior. The expected result is the adoption of a joint cross-border action plan for energy efficiency in 4 target areas (Tuzi, Tirana, Mirabello and Metropolitan City of Bari), which will be tested thanks to the implementation of 4 coordinate pilot projects and the active involvement of local communities.

4.3 Local Development Strategy PSL

The main objective of the Local Development Strategy is to support and implement actions, largely supply chain and business networks and/or carried out by public-private partnerships and with input from the world of science and knowledge, that place at the center the strengthening and innovation of the local production system and the growth

of sustainable tourism. These actions must be inextricably correlated with the care and protection of the landscape, with a soil management that resumes a correct relationship between ecology and productive intervention, with the preservation of animal and plant biodiversity, balanced with the need to nonetheless have intervention policies to control environmental disruption resulting, for example, from uncontrolled wildlife presences. Cross-cutting themes are inclusion and innovation. The PSL aims to raise the levels of cooperation among enterprises in the rural economy and between them and administrations, to enhance the quality of "bio-territory" products/products, entrepreneurial efficiency, the contribution that enterprises can make to the environment and landscape in terms of care and protection, and to strengthen the links between km0 food, the role of rural enterprise for the well-being and quality of life of the population of the area, and the environmental, landscape and natural heritage identity. The OSH focuses on three thematic areas: 1) development and innovation of local production chains and systems (agri-food, craft and manufacturing, fish production) - 2) sustainable tourism - 3) care and protection of the landscape, land use and biodiversity (related and cross-cutting). The three thematic areas are consistent with the SSL by supporting the goal

4.3.1 PSL ACTION:

Specific Leader action 19.2.2 Support to businesses for the development of direct sales activities on the consumer market (direct sale to the consumer)

The objective of the action was to support the innovation of agricultural and artisan micro-small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through investments aimed at improving the methods of direct sales of products. The interventions financed and completed are:

- the creation of an oil library with an adjoining sales point for the promotion and sale of typical local products;
- the purchase and setup of a food track for the promotion and direct sale of pastry products.

Specific Leader action 19.2.4 – Education campaign on good and healthy nutrition for the population of the Leader area with particular reference to children and the elderly

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On May 30, 2023, the final event of the project "Good and healthy eating has no age" implemented by Impresa Verde Molise srl took place. The project involved 39 private partners, 3 comprehensive schools and 17 local schools. During the final event in which the students of the schools participating in the project participated, a simulation of direct sales of the Coldiretti Molise companies was carried out by the nutritionist Dr. Raffaella Mastantuoni, the workshops carried out by the Auser Molise and IISS L. Radice Bojano - IPSEOA of Vinchiaturò by the Manager of "Women in Molise" Manuela Virtuoso, to then conclude the day with the tasting of the "5 intergenerational dishes" by the IISS L. Radice Bojano - IPSEOA of Vinchiaturò, Auser Molise and Coldiretti Molise companies.

Specific Leader action 19.2.16 – Bio monitoring of the territory with "sentinel" bees

The project was carried out by the University of Molise with the aim of monitoring the environmental quality of the territory through the installation of monitoring stations on the territory of the GAL area, of producing and disseminating data on the state of health of the territory to environmental and biodiversity level, in order to support the local production system and improve public policies for the territory..

5 Proposals for improvement

The proposals to create tools and solutions revolve on the one hand around the themes of training, to train farmers in techniques with low environmental impact and the general public in the reuse and use of good practices from a social and environmental, the implementation of integrated services that can manage to develop more sustainable and extended services to all municipalities in the vast area and on the other the creation of a digital tourism hub that can act as a driving force to revive the economic and social context of the vast Campobasso area.

5.1 Stakeholder Proposal

5.1.1 Low price housing and entrepreneurial activities

One of the proposals coming from the meeting with the stakeholders to fight depopulation is coming from the mayor of San Giovanni in Galdo to recover abandoned houses in the villages, to give them away or sell them at a low price to citizens who decide to move to the village targeted by the initiative in order to create an entrepreneurial activity, in fact according to the mayor of San Giovanni in Galdo it is not only tourism that will reactivate the economy but above all a permanent garrison in the inland areas that can be supported by new entrepreneurial activities that must be born in the area. (Loredana Latessa of the chamber of commerce declares that although among many difficulties, entrepreneurship in Molise is possible, but it is necessary to relate with the University of Molise and on the promotion of degree courses targeted to the territorial reality).

5.1.2 Renewable energy

Professor Sacchetti of Legambiente Molise proposes focusing on the issue of renewable energy to combat climate change and reduce depopulation of the villages in the interior areas of Molise. In the 1950s of this century, hydropower was a vector of development for inland areas that over the years gradually saw their energy primacy eroded with the adoption of coal and fossil fuels. At this time when renewable energy is becoming a

national energy strategy, inland areas with their greatest potential for energy production should focus on strengthening wind, solar and hydropower.

5.1.3 Integrated Services

The solution proposed by all the stakeholder representatives who spoke is to create a common urban planning circuit, to reduce waste and enhance services to citizens (health, mobility, socio-cultural activities) which, in a context of progressive depopulation, they are gradually decreasing and cause inconvenience to the resident population and do not attract new human resources to the countries. This point is strategic not only to guarantee services but also to enhance the tourist offer of the vast Campobasso area. The integration of urban planning circuits, in addition to being physical, must also be digitalised, and we must aim for the creation of a unique platform for booking tourist services and selling local agri-food products abroad, so as to give more strength and visibility to companies of the territory.

5.2 Municipality of Campobasso “area Vasta” proposal

5.2.1 Integrated Service: Training and mapping

In order to give a dynamic structure to the levers identified, it is of primary importance to place the different interventions within a process that can be articulated in phases to give life to a first strategic project, namely a telematic portal of services for citizenship and tourism: - mapping: within the regional context, both rural and coastal in nature, there are different types of virtuous actors that within the agribusiness sector ensure small forms of social and cultural animation. The alliance between the productive sector and the social fabric can be supported through an initial activity of territorial mapping within which to connect the different actors to make the different activities promoted usable and to be disseminated. The mapping will also serve to understand what the links between different types of stakeholders may be both inward (regional context) and outward (interregional context).

The identification of the "good practices" already active in the territory will make it possible to revolve around these virtuous places the new (cycle paths, camini,

spontaneous mobility of proximity) and ancient (sheep-tracks and paths) itineraries that will connect the entire area. Thanks to this first activity of feeding the portal, it will be possible to build a first interactive map where to identify and get in touch with the different experiences that only the territory of Molise, thanks to its agro-food and cultural peculiarities, can offer. The different experiences of territorial animation will be closely linked to the places of historical-artistic interest in such a way as to offer users (citizens and tourists) a complete map that comprehensively tells the potential of the territory.

training: the development of new services is preparatory to the training of professional figures capable of fully exploiting the area's historical-cultural heritage. This is a capacitation process that can enable individuals who have undertaken hospitality and territorial animation activities to expand the tools and methodologies of intervention within the tourism sector. Working in the world of hospitality within this perspective means developing practices of territorial emancipation, thanks to which it will not be necessary to intercept external professionalism but it will be possible, instead, to enhance the experiences and potential of territorial subjects, providing tools to those who have already undertaken work activities in the sector and to those who intend to invest from a professional point of view. This piece of the platform will be closely interconnected with the work being done in the territory by ITS and territorial promotion agencies.

- Integrated services: the application developed will serve, as anticipated, to provide services for two macro target audiences: citizens and tourists. Assuming that tourism can be a driver of sustainable and equitable growth only and exclusively if the conditions and quality of life of residents is protected and respected, the platform will provide access to a number of basic services that can qualitatively affect the lives of different users.

5.2.2 Digital Tourism And Co Design Strategy

The theme identified to encourage the active participation of all stakeholders in the Campobasso Wide Area Strategic Plan is that of tourism, which emerges as an aggregating and priority element from the analysis of questionnaires addressed to territorial stakeholders. The proposal of an Integrated Tourism System would make it possible to connect the main attractions of the territory, fully enhancing the specificities of the

different actors involved, considering the different types of stakeholders and the size of the entrepreneurial realities operating at the local level. More in detail, such a project intends to help stimulate and a tourist offer that can meet the identified needs through:

- Greater integration of tourism BOM inputs.
- The integrated management of the entire cycle of the relationship with the tourist (pre, during and post visit).
- The use of innovative and integrated digital solutions for territorial marketing.
- The adoption of a CRM strategy to build tourist loyalty.

Distinctive element of the project proposal is the creation of a basket of complementary goods and services that can be provided by the territorial realities involved and that will allow the potential tourist to plan different customizable itineraries, choosing among the different options present on the basis of a plurality of variables such as means of transport, accommodation, food and activities. With a view to complementing the provisions of the Regional Strategic Plan for Tourism Development (STP), which through Action 3.4 intends to "structure a single portal on tourism with the dual function of reference for users and operators," the project proposal would allow the different services mentioned above to be brought together within a single digital platform of the Vast Area, which through interoperability mechanisms and logic would also allow specific sections and content provided by the regional portal to be fed and kept constantly updated.

The tourism platform of the Campobasso Urban Area will be built from a multichannel and multilingual perspective and will implement both information and device services, through which it will be possible:

- Comprehensively facilitate and accompany the tourist experience.
- Offer the various activities that contribute to the area's tourism offer system (accommodation, catering, infrastructure and proximity mobility, cultural heritage, crafts, ...) an integrated communication and promotion channel.

Services will be organized to better manage the different stages of the cycle of the relationship with the tourist. Prior to the visit, through a structuring of content within thematic routes (Art and Culture, Health and Wellness, ...) and the use of digital storytelling, it will be possible to give the tourist an anticipatory experience that will increase the desire to "touch" the territory. All the tools will also be implemented that will enable tourists to compare and book (online booking and payment systems) facilities and services and organize their trip. During the visit, tourists will have tools to manage their trip and purchase local services and products. The platform will integrate gamification tools (e.g., treasure hunts, etc.) to enrich the user experience with playful elements, and loyalty mechanisms (e.g., loyalty points to spend on local products and services) that will incentivize users to use it as a priority channel. The platform will also feature appropriate virtual (email, chat) and telephone (dedicated call center) support systems to assist and support the visitor at all times during their stay.

ECommerce tools integrated with the physical circuit (tourist ID) and specific agreements with logistics carriers for delivery of purchased products directly to the tourist's home are the additional elements that will help improve the tourist's experience and encourage the purchase of local products. After the visit, promotional initiatives, feedback and advice, updates on local products and tourism services can be conveyed to the tourist, so as to achieve a goal of never-ending tourism. The data exchanged with the platform (bookings, products and services purchased, reviews, etc....) will be used to implement a CRM strategy aimed at increasing the tourist's loyalty to the territory thanks also to a careful profiling of their needs.

6 Conclusions

In the context of depopulation and its far-reaching implications, this report underscores the intricate relationship between demographic decline and environmental vulnerabilities in affected regions. The gravity of the situation cannot be overstated, as depopulation sets in motion a cascade of interconnected challenges that jeopardize the well-being of both local communities and the environment they inhabit. The exodus of residents from these regions not only leads to economic decline and the erosion of social fabric but also amplifies environmental risks, casting a shadow over the sustainability of these areas.

One of the most pronounced environmental consequences of depopulation is the abandonment of rural landscapes and the subsequent neglect of agricultural and forestry sectors. As once-cultivated lands lay fallow, invasive species take root, and ecosystems suffer from disruption. The diminished human presence also hampers conservation efforts, making it difficult to combat deforestation, protect biodiversity, and preserve fragile ecosystems. Moreover, the neglect of urban areas in depopulated regions can result in deteriorating infrastructure, contaminated sites, and increased vulnerability to natural disasters, exacerbating environmental and human risks alike.

The interconnectedness of these challenges demands a holistic and multidimensional approach. To effectively address depopulation and its environmental ramifications, comprehensive strategies must be developed, encompassing economic revitalization, social well-being, and ecological sustainability. Collaboration among regional and national governments, local communities, environmental organizations, and other stakeholders is imperative. Such collaboration can yield innovative solutions that not only mitigate environmental risks but also restore the vitality of these depopulated regions.

Moreover, the importance of data collection and analysis cannot be underestimated. Timely and accurate data on population trends, environmental conditions, and risk assessments are indispensable for evidence-based decision-making. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms should be established to track the evolving dynamics of depopulation and environmental changes, facilitating adaptive policies and interventions.

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In conclusion, depopulation poses complex and multifaceted challenges to regions grappling with environmental risks. However, it also presents an opportunity for resilience and renewal. By nurturing an environment of collaboration, implementing sustainable land management practices, and crafting policies that incentivize repopulation, regions facing depopulation can transform adversity into a catalyst for positive change. In doing so, they can safeguard their natural heritage, foster thriving communities, and pave the way for a more sustainable and equitable future.

7 References

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8 Annexes

Incontro con gli stakeholders:06/09/2023

Partecipanti

- Paola Felice: vicesindaco di Campobasso, saluti e ringraziamenti ufficio programmazione
- CCIA - Dina Chirico - servizio ambiente CCIA Molise
- Sindaco Campodipietra Giuseppe Nortartomaso
- Domenico Credico - sindaco di San Giovanni in Galdo
- Sandra Palombo - Confcommercio Molise
- Latessa Loredana, sindaco Oratino
- Ricciardi Rosa Maria - sindaco di Busso
- Silvia Santorelli - MuSe - Just MO
- Angelo Sanzò, LEGAMBIENTE MOLISE
- Stefano Aiello MAAVI
- Guardie ambientali: Giuseppe Persichilli
- SEA Roberto Martinino
- Simone Cretella - assessore ambiente

15.30 – 16:30 Saluti Istituzionali e Registrazione partecipanti

16.00 / 16.30 Presentazione progetto INTERREG Europe Down To Earth:

Adolfo Colagiovanni: introduzione Down To Earth INTERREG EUROPE; perché il Comune di Campobasso? capofila dell'area vasta, per migliorare la strategia dell'area vasta volta a ridurre i danni ambientali provocati dall'invecchiamento della popolazione e dallo spopolamento. L'importanza di coinvolgere gli stakeholder, strategia dell'approccio dal

basso, per rilevare le tendenze delle imprese, associazioni e comuni che rappresentano la cittadinanza. DOWN TO EARTH - - strumenti politici dei partner - Strategia Area Vasta di Campobasso - programma e fasi progettuali.

16.45 / 17.30 Piano strategico dell'Area Vasta di Campobasso "Costruiamo insieme il futuro: nuove connessioni per la strategia dell'Area vasta di Campobasso"

Sabrina Tirabassi: presentazione della strategia dell'area vasta del comune di Campobasso, focus sul digitale e sul turismo. L'importanza del confronto con gli stakeholder per migliorare la strategia in relazione alle tematiche dei cambiamenti climatici e lo spopolamento. Le azioni progettuali per migliorare le politiche del comune sono azioni di ricerca e scambio di buone pratiche, allo scopo di creare un piano d'azione per il territorio regionale che venga accolto ed attuato dagli organismi competenti.

17.30 / 18.30 Dibattito e compilazione del questionario

- Sindaco di San Giovanni in Galdo - pratica contro lo spopolamento. Il sindaco prende la parola e riflette sulla situazione del suo comune, in cui lo spopolamento è presente. Una buona pratica potrebbe essere quella di investire in immobili ed attività nei piccoli comuni piuttosto che nelle grandi città. Il rilancio delle aree interne non deve provenire solo dal turismo ma anche dalle attività e dall'imprenditoria, e il comune sta ragionando in questo modo attraverso la concessione di immobili a cittadini che vogliono trasferirsi lì. Bisogna pianificare il territorio attraverso azioni pratiche in circuiti integrati, attraverso uno studio urbanistico dei diversi comuni dell'area vasta facendone un circuito unico.
- Sindaco di Campodipietra - CIS Tratturi: Alla nostra regione manca il coraggio di puntare su un unico aspetto che aiuti realmente a crescere. Si tenta di investire su tutto con scarsi risultati. Il turismo lento potrebbe avere una chance se è su di esso che si punta realmente. I problemi del Molise sono sempre gli stessi: arretratezza nella viabilità, spopolamento, sanità. Un'idea è la creazione di una piattaforma che includa comuni e aziende molisane per internazionalizzare e promuovere i prodotti e i luoghi molisani tipici all'estero. Tratturo come volano di sviluppo.

- Professor Sacchetti (LEGAMBIENTE): excursus sulle aree interne/ risorse idriche e primarie/ motore per lo sviluppo delle aree urbane. Anni '50 - cambio di rotta: l'energia non proviene più dall'interno verso l'esterno (aree montane verso mare) ma al contrario. Questo ha sconvolto l'economia delle aree interne, portando le stesse ad essere abbandonate. Ora l'Italia punta sulle energie rinnovabile che sono maggiormente cospicue nelle aree interne, per cui il vettore di sviluppo deve basarsi non soltanto sul turismo, ma prima di tutto e soprattutto sull'energia rinnovabile e sulle aziende funzionali alla produzione di energia.
- Simone Cretella (assessore comune di Campobasso) e Giuseppe Persichilli (guardie Ambientali): un Villaggio turistico gestito male diventato Bosco e parco naturalistico urbano (bosco Faiete). Gestione responsabile delle aree verdi. Due filoni per le aree rurali: turistico (che porta denaro) - ritorno alla terra, che è il vero portante delle aree interne, attraverso un ritorno all'agricoltura. L'abbandono della terra e lo spopolamento portano alla mancanza dei servizi per coloro che restano, contribuendo all'arretratezza e alla decadenza qualitativa dei territori. Il gestore di Bosco Faiete dà la disponibilità ad ospitare una visita studio in loco.
- Sindaco di Campodipietra - CIS Tratturi: agroalimentare connesso allo sviluppo turistico e rurale.
- Loredana Latessa: il confronto con giovani imprenditori ha portato alla conclusione che fare impresa in Molise è possibile, sebbene con qualche difficoltà. Un ruolo fondamentale deve essere dato dall'università attraverso la focalizzazione su corsi di laurea più mirati alla realtà territoriale.