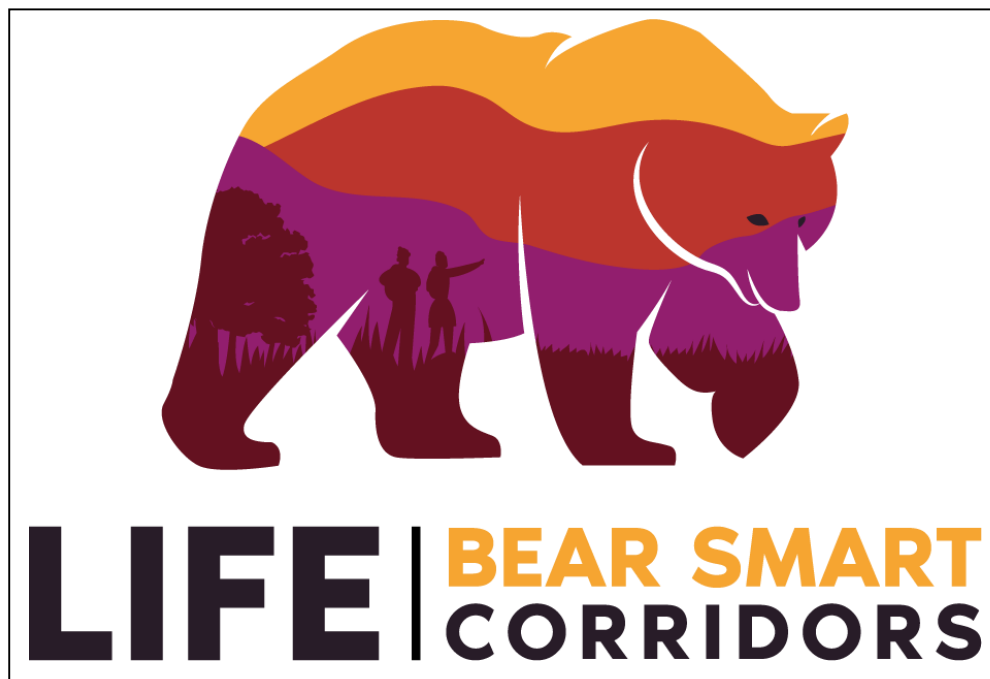




LIFE20 NAT/NL/001107
LIFE Bear-Smart Corridors

REPORT OF STAGE 1 OF CEW
E5 Capacity Enhancement Programme



Dicember 2023

Valerio Reale – Rewilding Apennines Enterprise Manager



life-bearsmartcorridors.com

@lifebearsmartcorridors

info@life-bearsmartcorridors.com



SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION.....	3
PROJECT AREA OF ACTION E5	5
THE CAPACITY ENHANCMENT PROGRAMME	7
First Outdoor Session - Ortona dei Marsi 31.05.2023	11
Second workshop - On-line session on “Bear biology” 28.06.2023.....	13
Third workshop – the economics of a bear smart community, Civita D’Antino, 19.10.2023:.....	15
First Bear Fund Network Event – Rome 09.11.2023	19
THE NEW BEAR SMART BOXES 2023.....	23
Wild Box “Food & Selfcare”	23
New Bear Smart Box Christmas Edition:	27
THE BEAR FUND NETWORK: A POSSIBLE APPROACH FOLLOWING THE ITALIAN LEGISLATION	30
CONCLUSIONS.....	32



INTRODUCTION

The present report was produced in the frame of Action E5 of the LIFE Bear Smart Corridors project, which started in 2023.

The action E5 is a continuation of the action A5, which produced a socio-economic analysis of the landscape (landscape business plan - LBP) in which the different BSC are located, in the central Apennines, Italy. Thanks to the LBP, RA started to engage with several entrepreneurs in the landscape, who have been invited to participate on a voluntary basis to a capacity enhancement programme. The goal is to create a business network.

The following report includes the main highlight of the first eight months of work (April-November 2023) during which Rewilding Apennines kicked off the programme and executed the first workshops.

3

What is the role of local entrepreneurs in the context of a bear smart community? How can they contribute to the development of a successful initiative? And, ultimately, can a bear smart community become a trademark which can significantly contribute to raise awareness on the work of these small enterprises?

These are some among the very first questions raised by and with the entrepreneurs who have been enrolled into a two-years programme (2023-2024) which is designed by Rewilding Apennines around the project of the bear smart community.

The programme aims to provide the technical basis for the development of a Bear Fund Network across the municipalities involved in the project. The aim of the Bear Fund Network is to contribute to raise funds to set up a bear smart community¹ and contribute to improve the performance of the enterprises enrolled in the network.

The programme kicked off within the context of an exceptional and challenging year: as a matter of fact, 2023 has been a critical time for conservation entities in Italy and the central Apennines – especially in referring to large predators, such as bears.

On the one hand, the whole country was shocked when in April 26 years old Andrea Papi was killed by a female bear in Caldes (Trentino), due to unfavourable circumstances. At the same time, the loss of Amarena, one of the most prolific female marsican brown bears in the central Apennines, caused by the villainous act of Andrea Leombruni in August, shed light on the precarious situation of this European subspecies. Moreover, in the central Apennines several poisoning events took place in 2023, causing the loss of several wild animals - griffons vultures, wolves, foxes, martens and ravens just to cite a few - which highlight the lack of monitoring efforts on the one hand, as well as the widespread utilization of poison among certain types of stakeholders.

In this context, the lack of a well-defined national biodiversity strategy to prevent and mitigate conflicts with wildlife is contributing to enlarge the gap between local communities and conservation entities. A new concept such as the one of the bear smart community will need time and resources to support the expansion of the marsican brown bear population and, effectively, become part of the municipalities agenda.

¹ In the Landscape Business Plan an estimation of the operational costs of a bear smart community was conducted to highlight the differences between a BSC with or without volunteer support.



While the project is starting to offer the first opportunities to establish a closer connection with the local communities through ad-hoc meetings – such as the encounters with local communities within the context of action E1 – and the local population is slowly familiarizing with the concept of a bear smart community (one of the questions which is often asked is “Why a BSC is different from a park?”), the entrepreneurs have been enrolled into action E5, to start familiarising which each other and become acquainted with the idea of working together to create a network.

One of the key question aroused from the first workshops is around the formality of the network: in Italy, thanks to a specific law², enterprises can create a more or less formal business network through shared protocols, enabling entrepreneurs to join forces and increase their competitiveness on the market. A strong formalization of the network – as opposed to a less binding agreement (such as an MoU) – currently appears to be a preferred option by most of the entrepreneurs who have participated to the workshops so far. On top of this, a protocol would be a more favourable option also from the point of view of bear smart technical committee: a more formal relationship with entrepreneurs should also ensure greater compliance with commitments made in regards of the Bear Fund.

As a consequence, RA is exploring the possibility to invite the national business network association to participate to the workshops in 2024 and illustrate pros and cons of the business network contract, as well provide example of existing networks in Italy.

² The business network contract is governed by Decree Law No. 5 of 10 February 2009, converted with amendments into Law No. 33 of 9 April 2009 (Article 3, paragraphs 4b, 4c and 4d).



PROJECT AREA OF ACTION E5

Entrepreneurs enrolled in the programme are based in the following municipalities:

In the Gran Sasso and Laga Mountains Park area:

- Acquasanta Terme (Marche Region, province of Ascoli Piceno)
- Crognaleto, Fano Adriano, Isola del Gran Sasso, Castelli (Abruzzo Region, Province of Teramo)
- Calascio (Abruzzo Region, Province of L'Aquila)

5

In the Abruzzo Lazio and Molise Natural park area:

- Ortona dei Marsi, Gioia dei Marsi, Lecce nei Marsi, Scanno (Abruzzo Region, Province of L'Aquila); Alvito and Campoli Appennino (Lazio Region, Province of Frosinone)
- Pizzone (Molise Region, Province of Isernia)

In the Genzana Mount and Alto Gizio Nature Regional Reserve:

- Pettorano sul Gizio (Abruzzo Region, province of L'Aquila, between Abruzzo Lazio and Molise Natural Park and Maiella Natural Park)

In the Zompo Lo Schioppo Nature Regional Reserve:

- Morino (Abruzzo Region, Province of L'Aquila)

In the Collemeluccio-Montedimezzo Man and Biosphere Nature Reserve:

- San Pietro Avellana and Vastogirardi (Molise region, province of Isernia)

Extras:

- Pacentro (Maiella National Park)
- Stiffe (Sirente Velino National Park)
- Pescasseroli (Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park)



life-bearsmartcorridors.com

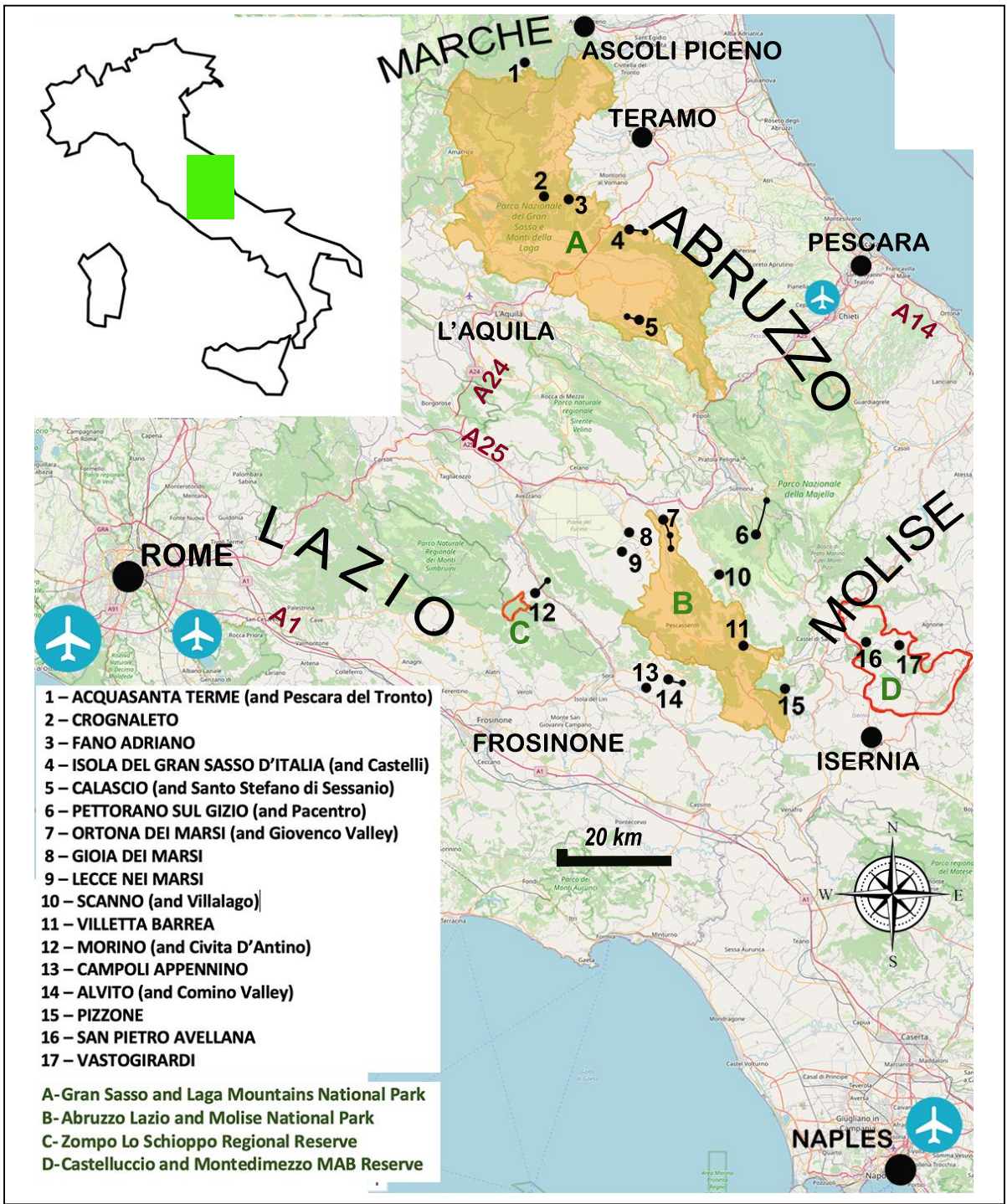


@lifebearsmartcorridors



info@life-bearsmartcorridors.com





Map of BSC Villages in Central Apennines



THE CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

A first illustration of the proposed calendar of the workshops – 2023/2024

GREEN = Workshop completed

OCHRE = To be done in 2024

TIMELINE	ACTIONS	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
March 2023	Soft launch meeting	Bespoke visit to each BSC	First informal meeting between RA and entrepreneurs to present the whole project
May 2023	First Team Building Session with Wildlife Adventures	The session took place in Ortona dei Marsi on the 28 th	The first training session on the ground to explore one of the ecological corridor and understand the work that goes into nature conservation and rewilding
June 2023	Bear biology and coexistence practices	In one of the BSC	RA
TIMELINE	TOPIC	LOCATION	ANIMATOR
October 2023	The economics of a bear smart community	Civita d'Antino	RA
November 2023	First Bear Fund Network	Rome	RA
February 2024	Circular economy and the Bear Fund	In one of the BSC	RA/ ext. consultant
March 2024	Responsible communication	In one of the BSC	RA
April 2024	Nature destination and rewilding tourism practices	In one of the BSC	RA/ ext. consultancy
May 2024	Business Development	In one of the BSC	RA
June 2024	Second team building session	In one of the corridor	RA
TIMELINE	ACTION	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
September 2024	Second Bear Fund Networking Event	In a big city like L'Aquila or Pescara	An enterprise event to present the Bear Fund Network and attract potential investors and clients

The action E5 aims to provide the basis for the development of a Bear Fund Network across the municipalities of the project in Italy, in order to create connections with the socio-economic context of these so-called remote areas. In 2023, a first number of workshops and events took place in the central Apennines.



life-bearsmartcorridors.com

@lifebearsmartcorridors

info@life-bearsmartcorridors.com



Main outcome of stage 1:

- Introduce all entrepreneurs and get them to familiarise with our organisation and rewilding philosophy.
- Get the entrepreneurs to have a broader understanding of the program
- Develop a sense of a network and community between the entrepreneurs
- Create a first connection to the program’s partners and stakeholders
- Have a first publicity about the program within the territories

METHODOLOGY APPLIED TO MAP THE ENTERPRISES

The nature-based enterprises have been invited to join the workshops on a voluntary basis, starting from the analysis of the Landscape Business Plan (action A5), after some preliminary meetings (online and offline) during the first two years of the project.

In 2023, the following list of 37 entrepreneurs was invited to join the programme.

List of entrepreneurs enrolled in the action E5 Capacity Enhancement Workshops

(Inside or in the near proximity of a bear smart community municipality)

	NAME	TYPE	LOCATION	WEBSITE	Email
1	Shine Laboratorio Artigianale	Cosmetic	Pescasseroli	https://www.laboratorioshine.it/	shine.laboratoriosapone@gmail.com
2	Rito Pane	Food	Stiffe	https://www.instagram.com/ritopane/	cstaroccia@gmail.com
3	Filippone	Hotel	Gioia dei Marsi	https://www.hotelristorantefilippone.com/	info@filippone.it
4	Iori SRL	Food	Gioia dei Marsi	https://www.ioriweb.com/	amministrazione@ioriweb.com
5	Dendrocopos	Tourism	Morino	https://coopdendrocopos.com/	https://coopdendrocopos.com/
6	Antica Osteria Zahrtman	Food	Civita d’Antino	https://www.osteriazahrtmann.it/	info@osteriazahrtmann.it
7	Antica Ciociaria	Food	Alvito	https://www.anticaciociaria.it/	anticaciociaria@libero.it
8	Cantina Cominium	Wine	Alvito	https://cantinacominium.com/	mapinto@alice.it
9	Il Palazzo BB	BB	Scanno	https://ilpalazzobb.it/	info@ilpalazzobb.it
10	Fronterotta	Jewelry	Scanno	https://www.bottegaorafafronterotta.it/	orafofronterotta@gmail.com
11	Da Nonna Lì	BB	V. Barrea		danonnali@gmail.com
12	Hotel Degli Olmi	Hotel	V.Barrea	https://www.hotel-olmi.it/	donatodinunzio@gmail.com
13	Rifugio delle Rocca	Mountain Hut	Castel del Monte	https://www.rifugiodellarocca.it/	susanna.salvati61@gmail.com
14	LanAquilana	Wool	S. Stefano	https://www.facebook.com/lanaquilana/?locale=it_IT	lanaquilana@gmail.com



15	La Bifora e Le Lune	BB	S. Stefano	https://labiforalelune.com/	mirellacucchiella@gmail.com
16	Il Torchio	Food	Pettorano sul Gizio	https://www.facebook.com/ristorante.pizzeria.iltorchio.kitchen.wine/?locale=it_IT	iltorchiopettorano@gmail.com
17	Petrelli Carne	Farmer	Acquasanta Terme	https://www.facebook.com/petrellicarni/?locale=it_IT	agripetrelli@gmail.com
18	Castel di Luco	Resort	Acquasanta Terme	https://www.instagram.com/casteldiluco/	casteldiluco@tiscali.it
19	Casa di Cura	Brewery	Crognaleto	https://www.birrificiolacasadicura.it/	info@birrificiolacasadicura.com
20	Le Tre Porte	Cultural association	Isola del Gran Sasso	https://www.letreporte.it/	info@letreporte.it
21	Frantoio GS	Olive Oil	Isola del Gran Sasso	https://www.frantoiogransasso.it/	info@frantoiogransasso.it
22	Eugenio Vitto Massei	BB	PSG		e.vittomassei@yahoo.it
23	La Fantesca	BB	PSG	http://www.lafantesca.com/	info@lafantesca.com
24	MoM	Food	Fano Adriano	https://momcucinavegetariana.it/	info@momcucinavegetariana.it
25	Alla Casa Vecchia	Cheesemaker	Pacentro	https://www.allacasavecchia.com/	vir_sciore@outlook.it
26	Babylon Cafè	Cafè	Bisegna	https://www.facebook.com/babyloncafe21/	ninocreations13@gmail.com
27	Broozy Official	Online Platform	Avezzano	https://www.broozyofficial.com/bear-smart-box/	broozyofficial@gmail.com
28	Rifugio dei Sanniti	Mountain refuge	Borrello	https://rifugiodeisanniti.it/	giuseppedirenzo2@wind.it
29	Fonteluna	Chesse farm	Vastogirardi	https://www.caseificiofonteluna.it/	anna.scocc@hotmail.it
30	Dolce Arte	Pastry	Vastogirardi	https://www.instagram.com/___dolcearte/	giorgiaamicone@hotmail.it
31	Il forno di Gaetano	Bakery	V.Barrea	https://www.facebook.com/p/Il-forno-di-Gaetano-100064202794071/	info@ilpaccodabruzzo.it

Bear smart community guides involved in the programme

(Which either operate independently or belong to a larger organization/network)

	NAME	TYPE	LOCATION	Email
32	Antonella Ciarletta	Guide	V.Barrea	antonella.ciarletta66@gmail.com
33	Roberta Ianni	Guide	S. Stefano	viaggiatorinelparco@gmail.com
34	Simone Barletta	Guide	Molise	barlettasimoneo2@gmail.com



life-bearsmartcorridors.com

@lifebearsmartcorridors

info@life-bearsmartcorridors.com



35	<i>Pierdomenico Amodei</i>	<i>Guide</i>	<i>Molise</i>	amodei.pierdomenico@gmail.com
36	<i>Umberto Esposito</i>	<i>Guide</i>	<i>Abruzzo</i>	info@wildlifeadventures.it
37	<i>Francesco Palladino</i>	<i>Guide</i>	<i>Abruzzo</i>	soundtrekking10@gmail.com

Following the calendar of events (above) published in the Landscape Business Plan (Action A5) the programme started in 2023 with the following workshops/events:

- First Outdoor Session – Ortona dei Marsi 31.05.2023
- On-line session on “Bear biology” 28.06.2023
- The economics of a bear smart community Civita D’Antino 19.10.2023
- First Bear Fund Network Event – Rome 09.11.2023





A group picture of the first workshop in Ortona dei Marsi – Photo Credit Umberto Esposito

The first workshops took place in Ortona dei Marsi – one of the municipalities aspiring to become bear smart and an important hotspot for Rewilding Apennines, given the crucial importance of this corridor area for the expansion of the marsican brown bear.

This first session was led by Rewilding Apennines in collaboration with Umberto Esposito, from Wildlife Adventures.

The workshop was divided into two sessions: the first one, where the participants were conducted by RA Volunteer coordinator Dara Broadey onto the field, to illustrate what are the actions foreseen in the LIFE BSC project, as well as guiding them on a practical activity. The group of 13 participants gathered in Aschi Alto, a portion of the municipality of Ortona dei Marsi, to remove abandoned barbed wire – in this case this was barbed wire left unused by some local livestock farmers.





Francesca Dell'Ovo from Shine Laboratory and Luca Perilli from Broozy Official - Photo Credit Umberto Esposito

The second part of the workshop, was realised in Carrito, another portion of the municipality, where some bear proof bins were installed. During this session, each entrepreneur was given the possibility to introduce his/her products and ask questions related to the whole programme. A formal presentation of the project with all its actions and goals was given by Rewilding Apennines. The overall atmosphere was very positive towards the goals of the BSC initiative: it is important to consider that this workshop was conducted after the tragic accident which took place in Trentino in April 2023, hence there was a general sense of urgency and curiosity towards what tools can be made available to prevent and mitigate conflict with bears.

Some highlights from the first workshops:

- 13 Entrepreneurs participated to this first workshop from different bear smart communities to familiarise with each other and get a sense of the project;
- In the first part of the workshop, a hands-on activity was planned to illustrate some of field actions foreseen by the project; 200 meters of barbed wire were removed in Aschi Alto;
- In the second part of the workshop they received a formal introduction to the LIFE BSC project by Rewilding Apennines and were given the possibility to illustrate their work, talking about their challenges and asking questions;



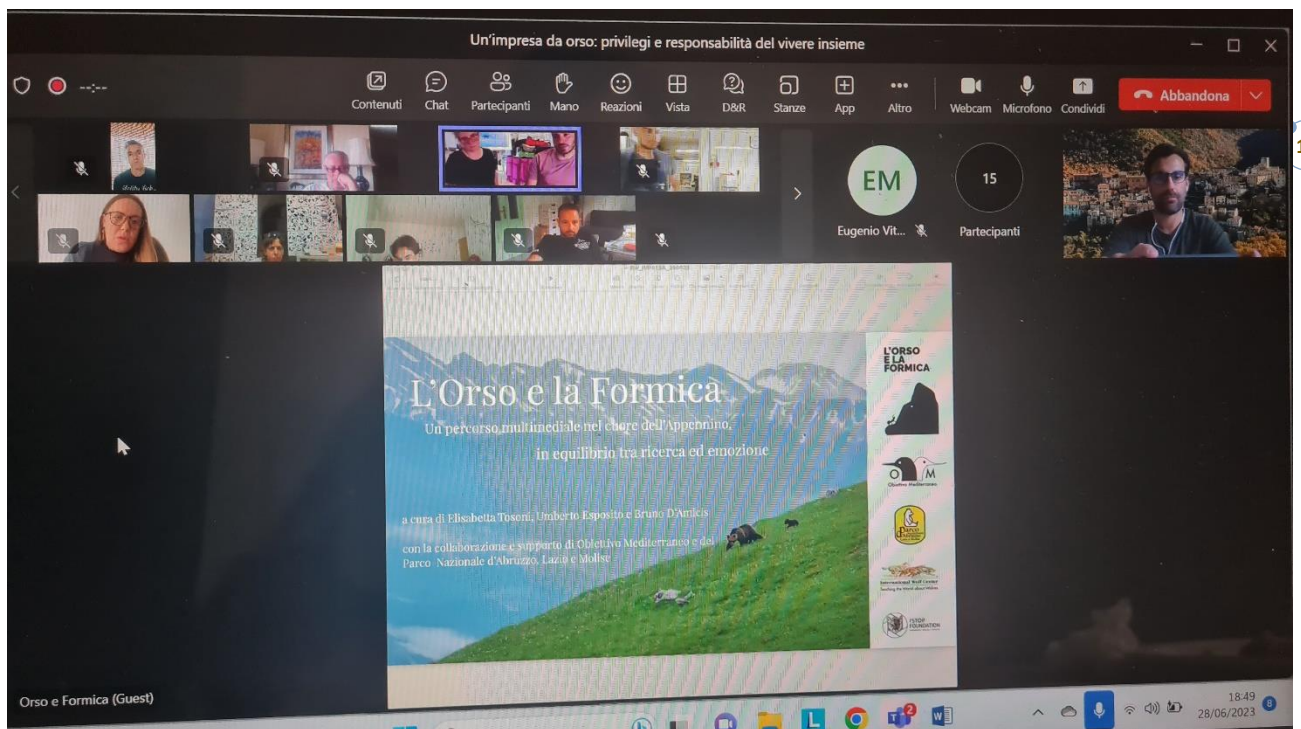
life-bearsmartcorridors.com

@lifebearsmartcorridors

info@life-bearsmartcorridors.com



Second workshop - On-line session on “Bear biology” 28.06.2023



Screenshot of the online session – Valerio Reale

The second workshop was organised by Rewilding Apennines in collaboration with The Bear and the Hunt³, an online project which illustrates both scientific, historical and social aspects connected to the marsican brown bear.

The session was organised in three parts:

- The first one was conducted by Elisabetta Tosoni, one of the leading expert in the central Apennines who has dedicated her life studying the marsican brown bear, from a field perspective. She is a well-recognised expert in Italy and author of numerous publications on the topic. Her presentation focused on the bear biology, especially in regards to the misconceptions in our society related to behaviour towards humans.
- The second part of the session was led by Pietroantonio Costrini, Rewilding Apennines Bear Ambassador, who explained in details what other the latest coexistence tools that a number of local stakeholders can use to prevent and mitigate conflict with bears. The presentation focused in particular on the role of electric fencing – how to install them and maintain them properly, as well as describing why this tool can help to prevent and mitigate conflicts but, at the same time, requires a careful design and management of trophic sources in the territory, in order to decrease chances of bear frequenting human settlements. As a matter of fact, it is evident that while fencing can be used to prevent conflicts, a bear smart community should go beyond the logic of the fence and re-design land management practices to eliminate the “cost” of the fencing.
- The third part was dedicated to questions from the participants.

³ <https://www.orsoeformica.it/?lang=en>



The registration of the session is available at the following link https://stichtingrewildingeuropa-my.sharepoint.com/:v/g/person/valerio_reale_rewilding-apennines_com/EdAOU8h5ylhAvztVbZVpQ-0BL13ocehVKkWSayDLj4YgUg?referrer=Teams.TEAMS-ELECTRON&referrerScenario=MeetingChicletGetLink.view.view

Some highlights of the second workshops:

- There is still a lot of fake news and misconceptions about the behaviour of these bears;
- Entrepreneurs who work in the hospitality sector have expressed an interest in developing their skills in regards to the how to communicate the presence of bears in the area – what kind of information are more or less sensitive when welcoming some guests? Should a BSC have a list of recommendations in this regard? RA is now exploring the possibility to structure a bespoke English programme for BSC entrepreneurs in 2024 with a private foundation;
- Electric fencing is a crucial part of the BSC approach today; in the long term, fencing is a recurring cost which, if and when possible, landowners should try to eradicate or lower;

14



life-bearsmartcorridors.com

@lifebearsmartcorridors

info@life-bearsmartcorridors.com



Third workshop – the economics of a bear smart community, Civita D’Antino, 19.10.2023:



On the left, the entrance of Osteria Zarthman; on the right Roberto Zaina introducing the session

The third workshop took place in Civita D’Antino, in the Rovertò Valley, at the Osteria Zarthman of Roberto Zaina, a very passionate cook and bear lover.

The workshop was led by Rewilding Apennines to illustrate the economics of a potential bear smart community in the Apennines and reflect on a fundraising strategy for each municipality. Finally, the workshop aimed to provide some suggestions on what opportunities have been highlighted to group the enterprises into a network and increase their competitiveness on the market.

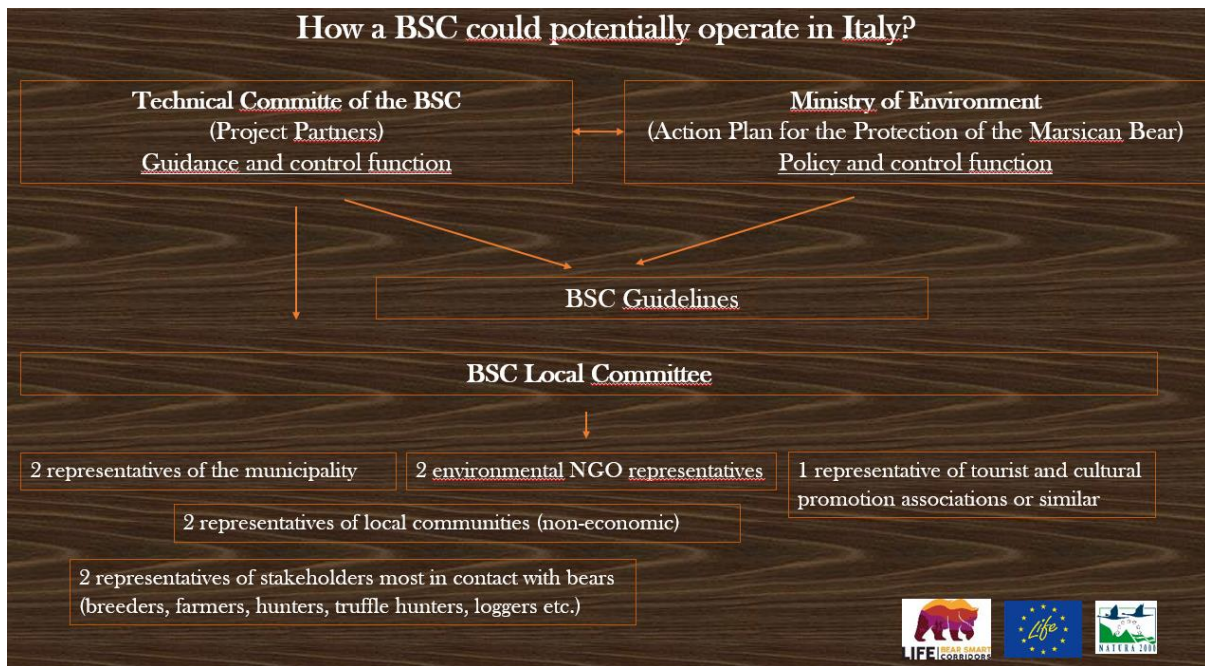


The first tool to determine the requirement of a BSC from a funding perspective is the coexistence plan: this should represent a formal document adopted at municipal level – hence formalised through the municipality’s protocols – and overseen by the technical committee of the project partners.

The document should include:

- A risk assessment: clear and continuous mapping of habitats with high bear use;
- Management plan for human conflicts with bears: once dangers have been identified, new strategies to reduce conflict risks are evaluated;
- A communication strategy: which include all communication actions foreseen with local and national stakeholders;
- An enterprise strategy: with a calendar of community events with local businesses to shed light on the initiative, as well as a predetermined contribution to the Bear Fund;

The coexistence plan is realised at municipal level by the BSC committee: an example of how this could work, including the relationship between the local and the technical committee is proposed below.

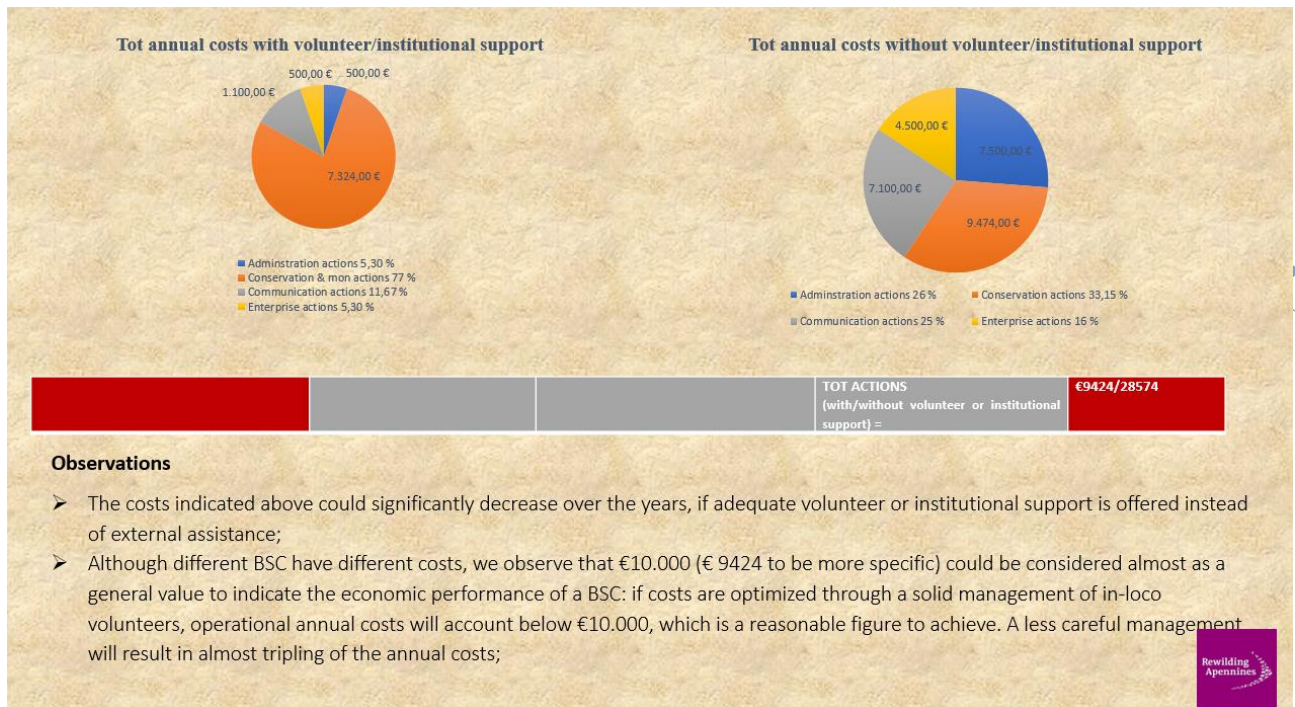


A suggested structure of the BSC protocols in Italy

Starting from the analysis in the LBP (action A5), it was shown that local enterprises might have to contribute to the fundraising strategy of the coexistence plan with an annual contribution ranging from € 10.000 to € 30.000 per municipality⁴.

⁴ For more information, please consult the Landscape Business Plan.





BSC annual costs with/without volunteer support

Finally, the workshop highlighted through a discussion what challenges local enterprises are facing in the landscape, as well as listing some potential opportunities.

The discussion highlighted four type of challenges which we summarise as following:

- **Local enterprises are disconnected and isolated one from the other:** The complexity of an interconnected and fast-paced world pushes towards aggregation and permanent adaptation. Smaller companies, however, are slow to understand this reality;
- **The impact of sustainable development on the tourism industry:** New regulation and trends regarding sustainability may bring a reduction in travel that generates unnecessary energy expenditure and a greater role for proximity (which means consistently rethinking the supply chain);
- **The demographic challenge in central Italy:** this trend is changing the relationship with commerce, both in terms of making the need for proximity even more important and by playing in favour of 'value for money' (rather than towards a systematic search for the lowest-priced service offer);
- **The challenge of social media:** local companies are not necessarily equipped to deal with a fast changing digital market – or simply they do not want to - and are aware that in the future will have to combine traditional sales methods with new information exchange tools;



Finally, the following needs have been discussed to support the creation of a network:

CENTRALISED BOOKING FOR HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES

Objective: creation of a centralised booking service for the existing and widespread hospitality offer in an area by businesses (hotels, alpine refuges, agritourisms, restaurants) with the creation of a BSC website or an application for tablets and/or smartphones;

Benefit for businesses: it is linked to the fact of being able to communicate the offer and better manage accommodation capacity throughout the year and to help the customer/tourist in the construction phase of their trip/visit;

JOINT COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION

Objective: to develop a joint communication and promotion policy through the use of traditional media (newsletter, radio) and linked to new technologies (touch screen, electronic couponing, social networks) for the benefit of member companies, also building opportunities for cross-selling;

Benefit for businesses: it is linked to the fact of being able to develop a communication policy at a lower cost than each member could do individually and to be able to develop more targeted promotion actions through the sharing of customer information;





The morning session hosted by Rewilding Apennines and the Penn State University

The first Bear Fund Network was organized within the unique context of the first Coexistence Forum organised at the Centro Studi Americani in Rome by the American Embassy, the Carabinieri Forestali, the Penn State University and Rewilding Apennines.

The Forum aimed to share knowledge between American and Italian communities, in regards to coexistence practices with large predators – bears and wolves in particular. The forum was divided into two parts: the morning session, which was open to the public, was attended by about 100 people, including about 30 students from American high schools in Rome, and some of the most important national conservation stakeholders.

Two keynote speakers gave a presentation about issues concerning the coexistence between humans and large carnivores in Italy and USA:

- Paolo Ciucci, Associate Professor, “Charles Darwin” Department of Biology and Biotechnology La Sapienza University of Rome;
- Stewart Breck, PhD - Carnivore Ecologist, U.S. Department of Agriculture and National Wildlife Research Center;





Stewart Breck, PhD

Both presentation highlighted that in both Italian and American communities, the big challenge is to shift the attention from the so called “problematic” bears, onto the lack of careful management of trophic sources by local landowners, including municipalities, which end up affecting the behaviour of some individuals.

The second part of the morning was dedicated to discuss the following topics:

- Col. Giancarlo Papitto - Head of Projects Office, Commander of the Carabinieri’s Forestry, Environmental and Agri-food Unit The illegal use of poison to kill wildlife and the Carabinieri K9 anti-poison team.
- Dara Brodey - Volunteer Coordinator, Rewilding Apennines The bear-smart community approach: from British Columbia to the central Apennines - the key role of local communities.
- Ovidiu Ionescu, PhD – Researcher, Institute for Research and Development in Forestry (INCDS) The coexistence with large carnivores in Romanian Carpathian.
- Valeria Salvatori, PhD - Carnivore Ecologist, Istituto di Ecologia Applicata, Rome Project LIFE WILD WOLF: concrete actions for maintaining wolves wild in anthropogenic landscapes of Europe.
- Cameron Krebs - U.S. Rancher, American Wool Managing coexistence in the middle of Oregon’s largest concentration of wolves.
- Francesco Paltoni, PhD - Provincial delegate of Rome, Coldiretti Young Enterprise How young farmers live the coexistence in a balance between the environment and the enterprise.



life-bearsmartcorridors.com

@lifebearsmartcorridors

info@life-bearsmartcorridors.com



Rewilding Apennines presented the concept of the bear smart community in front several key stakeholders. The Forum represented a strategic opportunity to show the work and the approach offered within the LIFE BSC project in front of a high level panel. Many inputs have been received during the session, including those technical sessions which were held in the afternoon, which will be summarised in shared document in 2024, signed off by all stakeholders.

Key recommendations discussed during the event:

- The coexistence plan of the bear smart communities, as well as the communication strategy, requires a shift from the “managing conflict” narrative to “managing resources” – from ANIMALS to HUMANS;
- Livestock farmers within a BSC should be able to produce a socio-economic analysis of predation episodes based on seasonality: an example of this was provided by livestock manager Cameron Krebs from Oregon;

Cattle Cycle	Vulnerability	Predator(s) of Concern	Risk of Attack
Calving (Jan-Feb)	High	Coyote	Low
Spring (March - May)	Moderate	Coyote	N/A
Summer (June - Sept.)	Low	Wolf	Low
Dry Cows (Oct. - Dec.)	Low	Wolf/Coyote	Low

Assessing predation risks based on seasonality to anticipate resource allocation

- Coexistence plans at municipal level should be legitimize by both a scientific approach – especially the mapping of potential sources of conflict – and, if possible, by the Higher Institute for Environmental Protection and Research ISPRA;

In this context, some bear smart enterprises were gathered to present a first concept of the network. Each one of them was given a dedicated space to present their product.

Furthermore, a new bear smart box was presented by Broozy, highlighting the role of the Bear Fund.





The new Wild Box was presented during the Coexistence Forum in Rome

Please note that, following the first workshops in 2023 the budget allocated to the Bear Fund Network events is under re-structuring in 2024 to guarantee requirements from the entrepreneurs are met.



life-bearsmartcorridors.com

[@lifebearsmartcorridors](https://www.instagram.com/lifebearsmartcorridors)

info@life-bearsmartcorridors.com



THE NEW BEAR SMART BOXES 2023

Please note that the Bear-Smart box initiative is not funded by the LIFE Bear Smart Corridors but it's part of one of the goal of the project aiming to develop an enterprises strategy for the area and explore new solutions to raise funding for the BSC and the Bear Fund. Project partners do not take profits from the commercialisation of such boxes.

23

This pilot initiative, started in 2022 with a first box, continues to inspire several entrepreneurs in the project area. In 2023, two more boxes have been designed with Broozy and launched on-line. The boxes include products from the bear smart community or in the near proximity (in case of an interesting case study or a very motivated entrepreneur) and, in the design, they aim to include at least one product from each project partner.



A percentage of each box is destined to the Bear Fund – which is a tool which will require further regulation in order to support the implementation of the coexistence plans for each municipality. The realization of a coexistence plan from a municipality perspective is a key element to determine that funding is made available upon a list of transparent and shared criteria.

Wild Box “Food & Selfcare”



The first box launched in 2023, available all year around, is dedicated to *Food & Selfcare* products. It contains the following items from the following enterprises:



life-bearsmartcorridors.com

[@lifebearsmartcorridors](https://www.instagram.com/lifebearsmartcorridors)

info@life-bearsmartcorridors.com



Dolce Arte – Vastogirardi: the northern part of Molise is a new area for the expansion of the bear and this small pastry laboratory is participating to the initiative to raise awareness on the importance of learning more about how to coexist with this species. From the meeting of the action E1 it was evident how these communities in this area are quite intrigued by the presence of the bears – there are some stakeholders which will need more alignment to ensure a stable coexistence (this is an area which is known for the presence of truffle pickers and hunters who, more often than not, may use poison to tackle competitors and hence may harm wild animals) – but overall during the meetings there was a sense of curiosity and wonder towards the project.



Alla Casa Vecchia – Pacentro: This town is not yet aspiring to become a BSC but the young woman who runs the laboratory with her family, Virginia Sciore, has enrolled herself in the capacity enhancement programme on a voluntary basis, as she is interested in how to coexist with large predators. Furthermore, raw milk cheese represents an important element of this project – as a matter of fact, during the meetings with local communities (action E1) the final moment was accompanied by a tasting of raw milk cheeses, as they can be used to highlight the importance of preserving the surrounding environment.

In Europe there is a rising interest towards natural cheese and raw milk cheese. This type of cheese making – the milk is not pasteurised but it is cooked under 46 degrees – results in an overall better quality, by which we refer not only to the final organoleptic properties but also to the diversity of vegetal species present in the landscape, and the diet of the animals, and how this process can positively impact the variety of microorganisms in the milk and, hence, a more diverse bacterial flora in the human gut⁵.



⁵ <https://wp.unil.ch/uniscope/le-gout-du-fromage-est-il-menace-par-le-climat/>



La Casa di Cura – Crognaleto: Crognaleto is one of the municipalities of the Gran Sasso and Monti delle Laga National Park which aims to become bear smart. In one of the portions of the municipality, Senarica, there is a microbrewery founded in 2013, which makes artisanal beer using the nearby water source. The beers are light and easy to drink, highlighting the good quality of the water; the style of the recipes is international and they result in a variety of different types of beers, often following seasonality.



Laboratorio Shine – Pescasseroli: Francesca Dell’Ova has been one of the entrepreneur who has shown the most dedication to the principles behind the project. She has approached the project management by herself, asking to be part of the programme to contribute to the Bear Fund. Her business is based on the production of solid soaps, using the cold methodology, using certified organic products and 35% goat milk, produced in the Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park.



Dendrocops Cooperative – Morino: The Roveto Valley is an important area for the expansion of the bears and the local cooperative in Morino is supporting the municipality to organise community events to raise awareness on the project. For this box, they have produced a distilled water out of local lavender which acts as a natural skin toner, eliminating impurities with a disinfectant and flaming effect.



Azienda Agricola IORI SRL – Gioia dei Marsi: Gioia dei Marsi, to some extent, seems to be one of the municipalities more aligned with the project and the idea of drafting a first coexistence plan could well be experimented in the context of this town, which is often frequented by bears due to its proximity to the core area (where the majority of the population lives, i.e. the Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park). The carrot farmer – who was visited during the first monitoring trip of this project in 2022 – is now producing two cosmetic products – a solid soap and a hand cream – out of the non-performing products which are discarded by the retail trade.



Food & Selfcare Cost Categories:

ITEM	COST	COST X KG
Dolce Arte Sfoglia Mandorle	€ 3,00	
Dolce Arte Crackers	€ 3,00	
Birra Casa Di Cura	€ 2,80	
Iori Hand Cream	€ 3,30	
Iori solid soap	€ 1,90	
Raw Milk Cheese Alla Casa Vecchia	€ 5,90	€ 15,00
Shine solid soap	€ 3,00	
Lavanda Spray	€ 4,00	
Packaging/Print	€ 2,00	
TOT	€ 28,25	

Final Pricing:

	Full Price	Cost	tax 15%	Bear Fund 15%	Broozy
	€ 60,00	€ 28,25	€ 9,00	€ 9,00	€ 13,75
Discount 10%	Disc. Price				
€ 6,00	€ 54,00	€ 28,25	€ 8,10	€ 8,10	€ 9,55



The box will be available all year around at the following link
<https://www.broozyofficial.com/prodotto/wild-box-food-selfcare/>

New Bear Smart Box Christmas Edition:



Available only for December 2023, this new box includes new products which have been developed specifically for this occasion, showcasing the interest and commitment by some local artisans to support the project. It includes the following enterprises:

Dolce Arte – Vastogirardi: The diet of the marsican brown bear inspired the creation of an artisanal panettone with apples which are one of the staple of the diet of the marsican brown bear), chocolate and walnuts. A first trial was tested during the Bear Fund Network Event in Rome, at the Coexistence Forum organised with the American Embassy and the Carabinieri Forestali. Furthermore, a small box of red wine biscuits, a more traditional product of central Italy.



Melagusto – Ortona dei Marsi: One of the most important corridor for the expansion of the bears, Ortona dei Marsi is a town where apples are one of the traditional products of the region, with many endemic cultivars. Traditionally the apples were sold fresh into local and national markets or, in some cases, transformed into vinegar. Marco De Matteis, a young entrepreneur, has started to make a sparkling cider, with two types of fermentation processes, both in steel and wooden barrel. The one present in the box, ages in chestnuts barrels.



life-bearsmartcorridors.com

@lifebearsmartcorridors

info@life-bearsmartcorridors.com





Azienda Agricola Carfagnini – Scanno: Honey is another distinctive element of the relationship between human and bears. Beehives are often interested by seasonal visits of the bears and require a preventive approach to conflict mitigation, through the installation of electric fencing. The local variety used in this case is the sideritis syriaca or stregonia, as named in the local context.



Eramo Tartufi – Alvito: The farm is located in the latium side of the Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park. It is an important area to develop the bear smart initiative as it is traditionally connected to the truffle industry, which is becoming more fragmented and dependent from the European market. This small farm is cultivating local varieties of black truffles which are transformed into different types of spreadable creams.



Alla Casa Vecchia – Pacentro: Unlike the previous box, a special recipe was adopted for this one, combining milk and honey. Traditionally, in central Italy, wine or cooking water of the pasta were used to wash the outside skin of the cheese during the fermentation process. In this case, Millefiori Honey was used both on the outside wax) and inside, to add a sweet and acid taste to the final cheese.



Christmas Edition Costs Categories:

ITEM	COST	COST X KG
Cider 33 ml	€ 3,50	
Millefiori Cheese	€ 9,00	€ 30,00
Stregonia Honey	€ 4,00	
Truffle cream 120g	€ 5,00	
Red wine biscuits 250 gr	€ 3,00	€ 12,00
Bear Panettone 500 gr	€ 14,00	
Packaging/Print	€ 2,00	
TOT	€ 40,50	

Final Pricing:

	Full Price	Cost	tax 15%	Bear Fund 15%	Broozy
	€ 70,00	€ 40,50	€ 10,50	€ 7,00	€ 12,00
Discount 5%	Disc. Price				
€ 3,50	€ 66,50	€ 40,50	€ 9,98	€ 6,65	€ 9,38

The box will be sold during December 2023 and it is available at the following link <https://www.broozyofficial.com/prodotto/bear-smart-box/>



THE BEAR FUND NETWORK: A POSSIBLE APPROACH FOLLOWING THE ITALIAN LEGISLATION

One of the key question aroused from the first workshops is around the formality of the network: in Italy, thanks to a specific law⁶, enterprises can create a more or less formal business network through shared protocols, enabling entrepreneurs to join forces and increase their competitiveness on the market. A strong formalization of the network – as opposed to a less binding agreement (such as an MoU) – currently appears to be a preferred option by most of the entrepreneurs who have participated to the workshops so far. On top of this, a protocol would be a more favourable option also from the point of view of bear smart technical committee: a more formal relationship with entrepreneurs should also ensure greater compliance with commitments made in regards of the Bear Fund.

The “business network contract” – in italian “contratto d’impresa” - is an innovative model of cooperation between companies, introduced into the Italian legal system in 2009, which enable aggregated companies to realise shared projects and objectives to increase their innovative capacity and competitiveness on the market, while maintaining each of them independence and autonomy.

The contract can be stipulated between companies without limitation as to:

- legal form: corporations, partnerships, sole proprietorships, cooperatives, consortia, etc.
- size: large, medium and small enterprises
- number of companies: must be at least two
- location: companies located in different parts of Italy and foreign companies operating in Italy may participate (in this sense it may be strategic t include those companies with which RA is currently in partnership with, such as Exodus Travels)
- activity: may operate in different sectors

In the regulatory scheme, it is stipulated that the parties first prepare a 'network programme' - i.e. a general plan of action aimed at enhancing innovative capacity and competitiveness - and then concretely implement the activities envisaged in the plan – **this should connect to the coexistence plan of each municipality.**

These activities can be of three types:

- cooperation between the parties in areas related to the operation of their businesses
- exchange between the parties of information or services of any kind (industrial, commercial, technical and technological)
- joint exercise between the parties of one or more activities falling within the scope of their respective undertakings

Some concrete advantages relate to possibility to:

- become an aggregation of such a size that it can better face the market, including foreign markets
- expand the offer of goods and/or services
- share costs

⁶ The business network contract is governed by Decree Law No. 5 of 10 February 2009, converted with amendments into Law No. 33 of 9 April 2009 (Article 3, paragraphs 4b, 4c and 4d).



- access funding and grants
- benefit from tax breaks (when applicable)
- participate in tenders for public contracts
- employ personnel between companies⁷: the interest of the party arises automatically by virtue of the operation of the network (in italian “distacco del personale”)
- hire employees on a codetermination (in italian “codatorialità”) basis according to the rules of engagement set out in the network contract

The last two appears to be of some interest, especially in the context of remote areas, where finding personnel is not always easy.

The network contract formalises the collaboration and sharing relationships between the participating companies in such a way as to clearly define the commitment, investment and type of bond to be adopted.

In particular:

- how to implement the joint programme and how to measure progress towards the strategic objectives of innovation and increased competitiveness; what rights and obligations are assumed by each participant;
- the rules for the management of the joint capital fund, if any, and the extent and criteria for assessing the initial contributions and any subsequent contributions that each participant undertakes to make;
- the possible establishment of a common body for the execution of the contract or of one or more parts or stages thereof, the powers of management and representation conferred, the rules for its replacement;
- the rules for the taking of decisions by the participants on any matter or aspect of common interest which does not fall within the management powers conferred on the common body, if any (which may provide for simple majority, qualified majorities or unanimity of the participants on all or even some decisions);
- the duration of the contract, the modalities of adherence of other entrepreneurs and, if applicable, the grounds for early termination and the conditions for exercising the relevant right;

⁷ Pursuant to Article 30 of Legislative Decree No. 276 of 10 September 2003, the posting (distacco) of a worker occurs when the employer, in order to satisfy its own interests, temporarily places one or more workers at the disposal of another party for the performance of a specific work activity.



CONCLUSIONS

In light of the start of the capacity enhancement programme and after these first workshops which took place in 2023 it is safe to assume that the programme seems to be attracting a fair amount of interest among local entrepreneurs.

The search for correct information on the one hand, and the need to network on the other, seem to be the key reasons that inspire these small and medium-sized enterprises to attend the meetings. The concept of a BSC also seems to offer insights from a 'brand' perspective, provided that there is real commitment from all local stakeholders - not only the companies that are often asked to be in the front line - and that municipalities start adapting their coexistence plans. Identifying those municipalities that are more advanced in their thinking that can start working on these plans, bringing public and private together, will be one of the challenges of 2024.

One of the key points of the coexistence plan will be the formalisation of how to access the Bear Fund (apart from the geographic element). This tool, which for the time being is connected to the promotion of the bear smart boxes, will have to be formalised to ensure that only through certain criteria will it be possible to take advantage of the donations collected, to implement action aiming to promote coexistence. The technical committee will also have to deliberate on this in 2024.

The formalisation of a network according to Italian law could go in this direction and strengthen the link between local enterprises and territory. It will be crucial for local enterprises to have other points of view with respect to the project partners and to analyse case studies of active networks on the Italian territory that operate in similar contexts (rural or marginal areas).

RA is looking for new funds to enrich the programme and create the right synergies to structure a long-term business network.

