

# rEdESIGN Project

## NEWSLETTER

#1 - JAN. 2025

FOSTERING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN RURAL AREAS  
FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS



**rEdESIGN**

Fostering social entrepreneurship  
in rural areas for sustainable  
food systems



## Strengthening Social Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas



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## Revitalizing Sicily: Local Social Economy Initiatives Driving Change

Sicily's social economy is experiencing a renaissance, thanks to various local initiatives that blend sustainable development, cultural preservation, and community empowerment. - **p.3.**

## THE L.A.G Metropoli EST: cultivation of cultures

The L.A.G. Metropoli Est covers a territorial area of 561.5 square kilometres east of Palermo, including 14 municipalities and a total population of approximately 149,500 inhabitants - **p.4.**

## rEdESIGN Project in a nutshell

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# rEdESIGN Project in a nutshell

The project rEdESIGN is aiming to boost the cooperation between social businesses on rural areas active in the agri-food sector in regions of Crete (Greece), Sicily (Italy) and Andalusia (Spain), through the building a European network of regional and local authorities with converging priorities on social economy and creating space and opportunities at EU level for learning and collaboration.

The consortium has been built to ensure the achievement of foreseen results in the most cost-effective way, while at the same time covering the diverse needs of the target groups in terms of content developed and activities implemented. It consists of seven partners. It includes one Regional government, two local government Bodies, one Chamber of Commerce one VET one developmental agency, and one structural developmental body.

**GREECE:** REGION OF CRETE (PERIFEREIA KRITIS), European Centre in Training for Employment (ECTE)

**SPAIN:** CAMARA OFICIAL DE COMERCIO INDUSTRIA SERVICIOS Y NAVEGACION DE SEVILLA (CCSEV), AYUNTAMIENTO DE DOS HERMANAS (Dos Hermanas)

**ITALY:** G.A.L. METROPOLI EST S.C.A.R.L. (G.A.L.), COMUNE DI CASTELDACCIA

EU grant: €253.493

Project duration:

01/09/2024 - 31/08/2026



## rEdESIGN Project Kickoff Meeting in Crete, Greece

The rEdESIGN project officially launched with a dynamic two-day kickoff meeting held on January 15-16, 2025, in Rethymno, Crete. This initiative, supported by the SMP-COSME-2023-RESILIENCE program, aims to promote social entrepreneurship and sustainable food systems in rural communities.

### Day 1 Highlights

The first day began with an overview of WP1: Management & Administration, led by the Region of Crete, which focused on risk management strategies. ECTE then presented the Quality Management framework to ensure high project standards. A keynote speech by Mrs. Maria Lioni, Vice Governor of Rethymno, highlighted the importance of sustainable food systems. Key discussions included WP2: Literature Review and Knowledge Gathering, where partners collaborated on identifying good practices and case studies. WP3: Network Development and Capacity Building sessions followed, addressing strategies for building stakeholder connections and organizing transnational workshops. The day concluded with a networking lunch, fostering collaboration among participants.

### Day 2 Insights

The second day focused on WP6: Dissemination, Exploitation, and Communication. ECTE outlined strategies for sharing project findings, emphasizing the importance of effective communication. Further discussions revolved around project implementation, quality indicators, and evaluation metrics. The Region of Crete facilitated strategic planning, ensuring alignment with project goals. The meeting wrapped up with a Steering Board Committee session, finalizing next steps and reaffirming the collective commitment to advancing social entrepreneurship in rural areas.



## New European Project Promotes Social Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas

The Region of Crete recently presented its new European project "rEdESIGN" at the 2nd General Assembly of the AREPO association, held in Larissa. This exciting initiative focuses on promoting social entrepreneurship within rural areas, specifically in the agricultural sector, and aims to create sustainable food systems across Europe.

The "rEdESIGN" project, led by Crete's Department of Education, Vocational Education and Employment, is part of the EU's Single Market Program. With a two-year duration, this project fosters cooperation between social enterprises in rural regions of Crete, Sicily, and Andalusia. By building a European network of local and regional authorities, it will create new opportunities for collaboration and learning within the social economy sector.

At the Assembly, representatives from 33 European regions discussed various strategies to enhance the promotion of origin-certified products. Crete also showcased its involvement in other EU initiatives such as "GI Smart" and "MOVING," which examine sustainable practices in agriculture, particularly focusing on carob production in Crete.

The "rEdESIGN" project highlights Crete's commitment to empowering rural communities, enhancing the local economy, and building sustainable partnerships for the future. It is a significant step toward fostering innovation and resilience in the agricultural sector across Europe.

## Revitalizing Sicily: Local Social Economy Initiatives Driving Change

Sicily's social economy is experiencing a renaissance, thanks to various local initiatives that blend sustainable development, cultural preservation, and community empowerment. Several projects across the island are making a significant impact on rural and peripheral areas, focusing on environmental sustainability, local businesses, and social inclusion.

In Eastern Sicily, GAL Etna and GAL Sicilia Orientale are promoting sustainable tourism and agriculture. GAL Etna's projects, such as eco-friendly tourism routes around Mount Etna and organic farming initiatives, highlight the region's natural and cultural heritage. Similarly, GAL Sicilia Orientale fosters rural development by creating cooperative networks and supporting local agricultural products.

Central Sicily's GAL Terre del Nisseno is enhancing agricultural and cultural tourism through initiatives like olive oil production and wine-making, while the GAL Madonie in Northern Sicily is tackling depopulation by focusing on environmental sustainability and community empowerment. The island's social cooperatives, such as Cooperativa Sociale "Libera", are also pivotal, offering meaningful employment to marginalized groups, including inmates and people with disabilities. Together, these initiatives not only preserve Sicily's rich heritage but also build a more inclusive and resilient economy, benefiting both locals and visitors alike.



# THE L.A.G Metropoli EST: cultivation of cultures

*by Salvatore Tosi and Flaminia Tribuna*

The L.A.G. Metropoli Est covers a territorial area of 561.5 square kilometres east of Palermo, including 14 municipalities and a total population of approximately 149,500 inhabitants. Situated between the coast and mountain ridges exceeding 1,600 metres, the territory of the L.A.G. has five Nature Reserves.

The economic sectors range from fishing to seaside activities, to quality agricultural production and gastronomic offerings based on the short supply chain. Despite being well connected to the cities of major tourism development, the L.A.G. rural area maintains its traditions, lifestyles and attachment to traditions. The L.A.G. Metropoli Est has chosen as its primary mission to recover the social function that agriculture had in rural society as an instrument of solidarity, integration, and enhancement of the relational dimension by putting places of agricultural life at the disposal of community's services.

The L.A.G. Metropoli Est is using the EU funds allocated in the 2014/2022 Rural Development Programme of Sicily to support innovative Social Farming projects that integrate agricultural activities with health care, environmental and food education activities; thus promoting, on the one hand, cooperation between agricultural operators and other public and private entities and, on the other, the diversification of farm activities towards social, therapeutic, enabling and rehabilitative activities that favor the social and labour inclusion of fragile people.

Four projects recently financed by the L.A.G have a significant immediate result in providing services to the area; but more importantly, they will have medium-term effects, because they will nurture the creation of new job opportunities, cores of new operators fostering local networks and facilitating stable partnerships between farmers, public bodies and other private entities that will strengthen employment, ethical, social and tourism growth in that portion of the territory covered by the L.A.G, counteracting the depopulation of rural areas in the long term.

With around 100,000€ of EU grant, the association Di.Pi. a.l.l.c provides assistance to people with autism spectrum disorders as well as to individuals in vulnerable and socially and culturally marginalised conditions in the municipalities of Bagheria, Casteldaccia, Santa Flavia and Misilmeri. Likewise, the Centro Studi Aurora, through its AGRIS project, operates in the municipalities of Bagheria, Trabia, Santa Flavia and Misilmeri to create an observatory on the social inclusion of disadvantaged persons, with the task of raising community awareness on environmental and food education issues within agricultural and sports activities and the establishment of professional teams.

With similar funding, the Facitur Cultural Association implements the ECOM.A.S. project in the territories of Ciminna, Villafraati, Ventimiglia di Sicilia, and Mezzojuso to enhance quality agricultural production, experiment and innovate sustainable agricultural practices, and integrate the production of goods and services with the creation of informal networks of relations, involving farms and educational farms.

Finally, with €100,000.00, the Drago Arte contemporanea Association, with its Terra Mia project, promotes cooperation between agricultural operators and other public and private operators in the rural areas of the municipalities of Altavilla Milicia, Trabia, Bagheria and Baucina. **[continued on the next page]**



Masanobu Fukuoka, the Japanese botanist and philosopher father of natural agriculture, argues that 'the ultimate goal of agriculture is not the cultivation of crops, but the cultivation and perfection of human beings'.

Perfectly in line with this thought, the L.A.G. Metropoli Est has always been sensitive to the needs and vocation of its territory, and supported, therefore, paths of social justice through agriculture with the aim of fostering the integration into society of children and adults with various types of diseases, as active players, bearers of skills, rights and duties of the community in which they live.



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