

# AgrEcoMed

FOSTERING AGROECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

*“New AGRoecological approach for soil fertility and biodiversity restoration to improve ECONomic and social resilience of MEDiterranean farming systems”*

Deliverable 5.6  
Two workshops

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## Acronym and abbreviations

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## Summary

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## **Executive summary**

Within the framework of AgrEcoMed, two thematic workshops were organized under Task 5.2 of Work Package 5 to foster agroecological transition, knowledge sharing, and stakeholder engagement across the Mediterranean.

The first workshop, *“Piano di formazione di laboratorio agroecologico: Rotazione delle colture cerealicole e aromatiche – Verso la rete”*, took place in Oppido Lucano and Genzano (Italy) in July 2024. It focused on hands-on training for farmers and local stakeholders on cereal–aromatic crop rotations, soil fertility management, and circular resource use. Through field activities and technical sessions, the event strengthened practical capacities, encouraged knowledge co-creation, and laid the foundations for an agroecological network linking research institutions and farming communities.

The second workshop of AgrEcoMed, *“Il Mediterraneo che nutre: Donne, grani, memorie e connessioni da coltivare”*, took place in Matera on 15 October 2025. Organized by the Council for Agricultural Research and Economics (CREA), the event combined technical training with cultural and social dialogue. The morning session featured agroecology and precision agriculture labs, demonstrations on digital applications in the brassica supply chain, and a craft beer workshop. The afternoon included institutional talks on cereal farming development, a panel on women and cereal cultivation, and the awarding of the “Agroecologia. Paesaggi Mediterranei” photo contest. Experiential labs and networking activities closed the event, fostering exchanges among farmers, researchers, institutions, and women’s associations. This workshop highlighted the intersection of innovation, tradition, and gender inclusion in Mediterranean agroecology, reinforcing the network initiated during the first workshop.

Together, these workshops demonstrated how innovation, tradition, and gender inclusion can be effectively integrated to advance Mediterranean agroecology. They strengthened networks among farmers, researchers, institutions, and civil society, laying the groundwork for broader and more inclusive agroecological transitions in the region.

**Keywords: workshops, agroecology, Matera, precision agriculture, women, cereals, Mediterranean, networks, AgrEcoMed**

### **Project basis**

AgrEcoMed is a 36-month Research and Innovation Action (RIA) project under Grant Agreement No PRIMA21\_00018 aiming to fill the research gaps for implementing a biodiversity-based strategy for primary crops as cereal farming systems through an Agroecological approach adapted to environments in Mediterranean countries, efficient use of natural resources, reduction of pollution, circular economy. The

effective start of the project is 23/05/2022 and the project ends 36 months later, on 31/05/2025. The AgrEcoMed consortium consists of 8 partners from 4 countries (including two EU and non-EU countries). The project is coordinated by the University of Basilicata (UNIBAS, Italy). The list of Project Participants is included in the Grant Agreement, in the Consortium Agreement, and presented in Table 1. The project has an overall budget of 1,308,051.15 €. The budget detailed per beneficiary and the corresponding EU contribution of each beneficiary is detailed in Annex 2 to the Grant Agreement – Estimated budget of the action.

**Table 1. Partners of the AgrEcoMed project and representatives.**

Participant No *	PI name	Organization	Short name	Country	Type
P1	Michele Perniola	University of Basilicata	UNIBAS	Italy	Higher Education Institution
P2	Luigi Roselli	University of Bari	UNIBA	Italy	Higher Education Institution
P3	Maria Assunta D'Oronzio	Council for Agricultural Research and Economics	CREA	Italy	Public Research organization
P4	Ines Yacoubi	Centre of Biotechnology of Sfax	CBS	Tunisia	Public organization
P5	Hanine Hafida	University Sultan Moulay Slimane Beni Mellal	USMS	Morocco	Higher Education Institution
P6	Said Ennahli	National School of Agriculture	ENAM	Morocco	Public Research Organisation
P7	Julio Berbel	Universidad de Córdoba	UCO	Spain	Higher Education Institution
P8	Neus Sanjuan Pellicer	Universitat Politècnica de València	UPV	Spain	Higher Education Institution

## Introduction

The Mediterranean region faces growing threats from climate change, soil degradation, and water scarcity, endangering agriculture and rural livelihoods. Adopting agroecology—linking ecological principles with local knowledge—offers a sustainable path to restore ecosystems and sustain production ([Gil et al., 2022](#); [Negri et al., 2025](#)). However, fragmented collaboration among farmers, researchers, and policymakers often hinders progress.

In the Mediterranean context, the transition toward agroecological systems is often constrained by fragmented collaboration among farmers, researchers, policymakers, and civil society organizations. This fragmentation limits knowledge exchange, innovation, and collective responses to environmental and socioeconomic challenges. Capacity-building initiatives are therefore essential, as they strengthen technical skills, empower stakeholders with adaptive management tools, and promote knowledge co-creation to enhance local innovation and resilience ([Duff et al., 2017](#)). Equally important is stakeholder engagement, which ensures inclusivity, shared responsibility, and participatory decision-making in agroecological transitions. Multi-stakeholder platforms and participatory frameworks foster trust, social learning, and co-designed solutions that bridge scientific knowledge and local experience (EIDidi et al., 2025; Zawalińska et al., 2022). Structured engagement has been shown to enhance innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability in agricultural systems by creating stronger linkages between research, practice, and policy (Dumont et al., 2019). Moreover, participatory action research deepens collaboration between farmers and researchers, enabling experiential learning and empowering local actors to co-develop context-specific solutions ([Méndez et al., 2017](#)). Together, capacity-building and stakeholder engagement form the foundation of successful agroecological transitions—driving innovation, strengthening community resilience, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of Mediterranean farming systems.

The AgrEcoMed project aims to promote sustainable farming systems in the Mediterranean by restoring soil fertility, enhancing biodiversity, and improving the social and economic resilience of rural communities. A key component of this effort is Work Package 5, which focuses on strengthening knowledge systems, encouraging farmer cooperation, and facilitating agroecological transition through capacity-building initiatives and stakeholder engagement.

In this context, two thematic workshops were organized under Task 5.2 to foster dialogue between farmers, researchers, policymakers, and civil society actors. These events were designed to provide both : i) Technical and practical capacity building, through hands-on training in crop rotation, soil fertility management, and resource efficiency. ii) Cultural and social empowerment, highlighting the role of women, traditional knowledge, and community networks in driving systemic change.

By bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders across the Mediterranean, these initiatives contributed to building a shared vision of agroecological transition—one that integrates innovation, tradition, and inclusiveness.

## First workshop

The first AgrEcoMed workshop focused on practical and theoretical training in agroecology, with a particular emphasis on cereal–aromatic crop rotations and biodiversity-friendly farming systems. Special attention was given to farms led by young people and women, supporting inclusive participation in agroecological transition. An overview of the main workshop details is provided in Table 2, summarizing the location, dates, organizers, participants, and thematic focus.

**Table 2. Overview of the first AgrEcoMed workshop.**

Item	Details
<b>Title</b>	<i>Agroecological Laboratory Training Plan   Rotation of Cereal Crops and Aromatic Plants   Toward the Network</i>
<b>Location</b>	Oppido Lucano & Genzano (Potenza, Italy)
<b>Date</b>	25–26 July 2024
<b>Organizers</b>	Council for Agricultural Research and Economics (CREA) – Centro di Ricerca sulle Politiche e la Bioeconomia, in collaboration with the University of Basilicata
<b>Participants</b>	40 stakeholders (Puglia, Basilicata, Molise, Sicily)
<b>Focus</b>	Agroecology training, crop rotations, biodiversity, women, and youth engagement
<b>Key Activities</b>	Introductory session, technical training, field visit, focus group on agroecological networks
<b>Communication</b>	Call and agenda published on AgrEcoMed website; article in Pianeta PSR

The two-day program included:

- **Welcome and introductory session** with presentations of the AgrEcoMed project and the agroecological laboratory concept.
- **Technical training sessions** on agroecology tested in the field, focusing on cereal–aromatic crop rotations, biodiversity, and sustainable practices.
- **Field visit** to the experimental plots of *Soc. Coop. Agricola “La Generale”*, with practical demonstrations.
- **Focus session** on *“The Agroecology Network: Farms’ Needs and Development Opportunities”* to stimulate stakeholder dialogue and cooperation.

The first day included a classroom session presenting the AgrEcoMed project, its objectives, and the operational structure of the training laboratory. Core agroecological principles and initial research results from the *Società cooperativa agricola “La Generale”* were illustrated, encouraging discussion and knowledge exchange in an open and informal setting.

The second day featured a field visit and practical demonstration of agronomic practices aimed at enhancing biodiversity in farming systems. The workshop concluded with the Focus session *“La rete dell’agroecologia: Fabbisogni delle aziende agricole e opportunità di sviluppo”*, which brought together farmers from Lucania and Puglia (including members of the *Distretto Agroecologico delle Murge e del Bradano*), local cooperatives, agro-food districts, professors, and researchers.

The call and agenda for the workshop were published on the AgrEcoMed website ([25 – 26 JULY 2024 | Training laboratory agroecological transition](#)), ensuring transparency and broad stakeholder outreach.

This workshop represented a concrete step toward building a regional agroecological network, facilitating dialogue, building trust, and co-creating knowledge among diverse actors in the agricultural sector. Its impact was further amplified through an [article in the Magazine PIANETA PSR](#), helping to disseminate its outcomes and raise awareness of agroecological initiatives at the national level.



Figure 1. Photo evidence of the first AgrEcoMed workshop.

## Second workshop

The second AgrEcoMed workshop, *“Il Mediterraneo che nutre: Donne, grani, memorie e connessioni da coltivare”*, was held in Matera on 15 October 2025, in the framework of Cerealia 2025. Organized by the Council for Agricultural Research and Economics (CREA), the event combined technical training with cultural and social dialogue, highlighting the intersection of innovation, tradition, and gender inclusion in Mediterranean agroecology. An overview of the main workshop details is provided in Table 3, summarizing the location, date, organizers, participants, and thematic focus.

**Table 3. Overview of the second AgrEcoMed workshop.**

Item	Details
<b>Title</b>	<i>The Mediterranean that nourishes: women, grains, memories and connections to cultivate</i>
<b>Location</b>	Matera (Italy)
<b>Date</b>	15 October 2025
<b>Organizers</b>	Council for Agricultural Research and Economics (CREA) – Centro di Ricerca sulle Politiche e la Bioeconomia
<b>Participants</b>	N. 60 - Farmers, researchers, women’s associations, local authorities, NGOs, and other stakeholders from the Mediterranean region
<b>Focus</b>	Innovation, tradition, gender inclusion in agroecology; precision agriculture; digital applications; women in cereal farming
<b>Key Activities</b>	Agroecology and precision agriculture labs, digital agriculture demonstrations, craft beer lab, panel on women and cereal cultivation, photo contest
<b>Communication</b>	Call and agenda published on AgrEcoMed website; promotional materials and communications shared via CREA channels

The program included:

- **Agroecology and precision agriculture lab** (Michele Perniola, UNIBAS – Diego De Luca, CREA PB) and **digital agriculture demonstrations** (Francesco Lillo - farmer, Corrado Costa, Federico Pallottino, Lavinia Moscovini – CREA IT);
- **Craft beer laboratory** (Tommaso Padula, Birrifico Matarè);
- **Talk: “women and cerealiculture: stories, challenges, and good practices” (Maria Assunta D’Oronzio, Lucia Briamonte. Barbara Zanetti, Michela Ascani, CREA PB)**, featuring researchers, producers, and representatives from women-led farms and cooperatives ;
- **Award ceremony** for the photo contest *“Agroecologia. Paesaggi Mediterranei”* (Domenica Ricciardi – CREA PB) and **experiential labs** with Slow Food Basilicata.

The event brought together farmers, researchers, women’s associations, local authorities, NGOs, and other key stakeholders. It showcased innovative approaches in agroecology and digital technologies, while valuing traditional knowledge and the central role of women in cereal cultivation.

The detailed agenda is provided in Annex 2, and the official call and program were published on the AgrEcoMed website (The Mediterranean that nourishes: women, grains, memories and connections to cultivate).

This workshop strengthened the network initiated during the first workshop, reinforcing cooperation between research and practice, promoting gender-inclusive agroecology, and supporting the co-creation of innovative, sustainable farming strategies across the Mediterranean.



Figure 2. Photo evidence of the second AgrEcoMed workshop.

## Conclusions

The two workshops organized under Task 5.2 of WP5 represented key milestones in advancing the objectives of the AgrEcoMed project. By combining technical training, field demonstrations, cultural dialogue, and network-building activities, these events effectively supported knowledge transfer, stakeholder engagement, and the co-creation of agroecological practices in Mediterranean farming systems.

The first workshop provided a hands-on learning environment, focusing on crop rotation and biodiversity-friendly farming practices, particularly targeting young farmers and women. The second workshop expanded this foundation by integrating digital agriculture, gender perspectives, and social and cultural dimensions, thus reinforcing the agroecological network initiated in the first event.

Together, these workshops have:

- Strengthened collaboration between farmers, researchers, institutions, and civil society;
- Promoted inclusive and participatory approaches to agroecological transition;
- Enhanced awareness and visibility of agroecological innovation at the local and Mediterranean scale;
- Laid the groundwork for the upscaling of sustainable farming systems through capacity building and community engagement.

In line with WP5 objectives, these activities have contributed to developing an enabling environment for agroecological innovation—one where technical knowledge, traditional practices, and gender inclusion are integrated into resilient and sustainable Mediterranean farming systems.

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