


## news detail

# LIFE4FIR project: enhancing the genetic diversity and conservation status of the Sicilian fir

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The LIFE4FIR project (Life18 Nat/It/000164) "Decisive in situ and ex-situ conservation strategies to secure the critically endangered Sicilian fir, *Abies nebrodensis*" has reached its fourth year of activity. LIFE4FIR is funded by the Nature and Biodiversity sub-programme with the aim of improving the protection and

conservation status of the relic *Abies nebrodensis*, an endemic conifer of Sicily (Italy).

The project's main purpose is to increase the genetic diversity and improve the conservation status of the highly endangered *A. nebrodensis* population. Through this, it will contribute to implementation of both the Habitats Directive and the EUs biodiversity strategy.

The projects specific objectives include:

- sustaining and protecting the residual adult trees and the few young plants that have come from natural regeneration of *A. nebrodensis* in their natural habitat;
- restoring the dynamic structure of the population by implementing a reforestation plan using selected seedlings. This will involve: - nursery production of healthy, vigorous, genetically pure and outbred seedlings; - establishment of reforestation plots in suitable areas to act as re-diffusion cores; and - setting up a new, effective clonal orchard to promote the production of outbred seed in the future;
- ex situ conservation by developing a seed bank and a cryobank for long-term conservation of seeds, pollen, isolated embryos and embryogenic callus lines of *A. nebrodensis*; and
- developing a strategy for application of the LIFE4FIR methodology to other endangered conifer species in Europe.

Among the significant results accomplished, the project announces the starting of the cryo-bank for the ex-situ germplasm conservation foreseen the 14 June 2023 in Polizzi Generosa (Palermo, Italy).

Visit LIFE4FIR official website [1]

News      Events

[2]      [3]

► Watch now the latest EUFORGEN webinar: key topics on forest genetic resources up for debate!

16 June 2023

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► New EUFORGEN Webinar: Estimating Effective Population Size ( $N_e$ ) for forest genetic resources conservation

01 June 2023

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► Celebrating 30 years of the French Commission on Forest Genetic Resources