Thematic area

Farming Systems

Section I

Topic 2 - Improving the sustainability of Mediterranean agro-ecosystems

Budget

1.913.450,00 €

Duration

48 months

Coordinating country

Spain

Participating countries/ 6

Partners/ 22

Project

6/SUSTAINOLIVE

Novel approaches to promote the SUSTAInability of OLIVE groves in the Mediterranean

Context

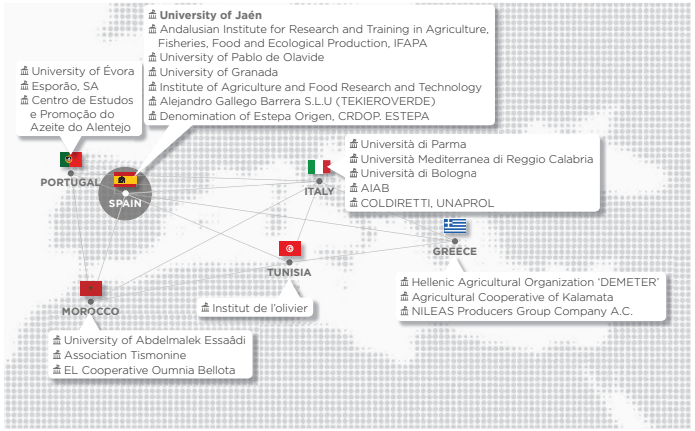
Olive grove cultivation is a key socio-economic asset, and is the dominant landscape, for a large fraction of the Mediterranean rural regions. Additionally, the olive oil sector represents an important source of healthy food and is highly appreciated worldwide, designated as UNESCO Intangible cultural heritage, becoming an imprint for Southern European and Mediterranean countries. Increased olive oil demand has acted as a catalyst for the intensification and expansion of olive groves. The intensification of low-input traditional olive groves implies systematic use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides with more aggressive weed control and soil management practices. Such intensification has resulted in simplified landscapes with olive groves with low-nature-value, driving greater negative environmental impacts such as soil erosion, run-offs to water bodies, soil fertility loss, degradation of habitats, and over-exploitation of water resources.

Objectives

The overall objective of SUSTAINOLIVE is to enhance the sustainability of the olive oil farming sector throughout the implementation and promotion of a set of innovative sustainable management solutions that are based on agro-ecological concepts, and on the exchange of knowledge and co-creation involving multiple actors and end-users.

Expected impacts

SUSTANOLIVE will foster the following targets: i) Development of low-input systems with high productivity and reduced environmental impacts. The design of novel olive cultivation methods based on the integration of concepts from agro-ecology, economics and the social sciences, geography and land-use management, and agronomy, and the subsequent adoption of sustainable technological solutions (STSs) will improve the system´s capacity to deliver multiple ecosystems functions and services, ii) A more diversified olive oil land-use system, which supports the delivery of multiple ecosystems services. The implementation and demonstration activities for various STSs within SUSTAINOLIVE is expected to underpin the delivery of multiple ecosystems services at farm and landscape levels, iii) Integration of ecological, agronomical, territorial and socio-economic knowledge to design and assess efficient productive systems that are based on agro-ecological principles. SUSTAINOLIVE aims to integrate ecological, agronomic, territorial, socio-economic and lay knowledge to design a set of STSs that are adapted to each major type of olive groves, and that help tackle existing technical and socio-economic challenges, and iv) Promote and develop the sustainable use of rare and new species and improved local species/ products and farming systems that were best suited to Mediterranean conditions. SUSTAINOLIVE will make use of underexploited herbaceous species and plant communities of cover crops (including local varieties and landraces of legumes, cruciferous, grasses and other wild species) in the inter-rows of olive groves that are best adapted to local conditions and may provide specific ecosystem services.



Coordinating institution

Universidad de Jaén

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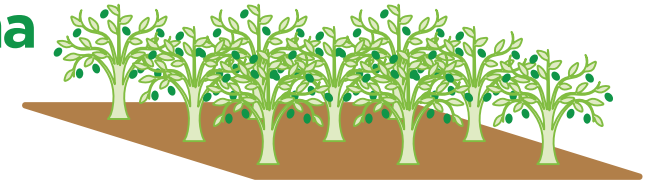
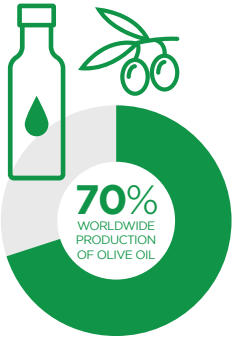
7,7 million ha

of olive groves in the Mediterranean area





2,5M t

of olive oil produced in the Mediterranean area

Olive oil production data (Harvest 2015/16)

1,3k t in Spain

350 k t in Italy

300k t in Greece

82k t in Portugal

140k t in Tunisia

130k t in Morocco

Source: UNAPROL - http://www.unaprol.it/images/stories/Scenari%20di%20economici/Filiera%20olivicola_Analisi%20di%20scenario%202015-2016.pdf