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Why Local Breeds Matter - Case studies from Europe

Case Studies Overview

- Poland: “Sheep Plus” Programme (Beskid Mountains)
- Hungary: Hortobágy National Park
- Serbia: Busha Cattle Conservation (Stara Planina)
- Czech Republic: Milovice Nature Reserve
- Netherlands: Slikken van de Heen Wetland Reserve

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Case studies from Europe - Poland

Poland’s “Sheep Plus” Programme reviving tradition in the Beskid Mountains

➤Breeds: Polish Mountain Sheep, Olkuska, Wrzosówka

➤Unique Traits: Hardy, slope-adapted, low soil impact


➤Impact:

➤Restored 600–700 hectares of pastures

➤Increased biodiversity and ecotourism

Visual: Map of Beskid Mountains + grazing sheep.

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Use of local breeds for Landscape Management and protected Areas

1. Country and Region

Vnesite svoj odgovor

2. Institution/Organization

Vnesite svoj odgovor

3. Contact Person (Name & Email)

Vnesite svoj odgovor

4. Provide a brief description of the area, including key geographic, ecological, and socio-economic characteristics

Vnesite svoj odgovor

5. Attach a map of the country, marking the defined area: (Neanonimno vprašanje:)

7. Briefly describe the climate and its relevance to landscape management:

Vnesite svoj odgovor

8. Mark the categorization of the area:

☐ Protected area

☐ Nature conservation

☐ Species protection area

☐ Area of cultural or historical aspects

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=35DMpoD13EmQP4evWnUzip6L1WEd0SFiv6GRIG5-tHIUM1JJVFpJUEZZUjFOV0hYOEc5QjJBVTc2SS4u&sharetoken=QZXI55U2BH5ab8O4oUmE>

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Case studies from Europe - Hungary

Organic Grazing on Europe’s Largest Grassland

- Breeds: Hungarian Grey Cattle, Racka Sheep
- Unique Traits: Drought-resistant, maintains open steppe
- Impact:**Hungary’s Hortobágy National Park**
- 6,800 hectares of grassland managed



- UNESCO World Heritage status preserved
- Local employment in park management and tourism

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Case studies from Europe - Serbia

Serbia’s Busha Cattle Conservation - Saving an Endangered Breed in Stara Planina

- Breed: Busha Cattle
- Unique Traits: Cold-hardy, small stature, scrub grazer
- Impact: Genetic diversity preserved
- Smallholder livelihoods supported



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Case studies from Europe - Czech Republic

Czech Republic's Milovice Reserve - Rewilding with Aurochs-like Grazers

- Breeds: Tauros Cattle, European Bison, Exmoor Ponies
- Unique Traits: Mimics extinct aurochs' grazing patterns
- Impact:
 - Restored 250 hectares of former military land
 - Increased biodiversity (e.g., rare butterflies)





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Case studies from Europe – The Netherlands

Netherlands' Slikken van de Heen - Bison and Horses in Wetland Management

- Breeds: European Bison, Konik Horses
- Unique Traits: Creates mosaic landscapes, controls invasive plants
- Impact:
 - Enhanced wetland biodiversity
 - Demonstrated bison adaptability to wet climates



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Why local breeds matters

➤ **Key Message:** Local breeds are critical for biodiversity, cultural heritage, and sustainable land management.

- Prevent habitat degradation
- Support fire prevention and soil health
- Boost rural economies and tourism



- Local breeds play a critical role in sustainable landscape management.

Initiatives across Europe demonstrate environmental and socio-economic benefits.

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Benefits of landscape management with local breeds (1)


Direct Economic Benefits:

- Job creation for farmers, shepherds, and local workers
- Growth in local products (meat, cheese, wool)
- New business opportunities (e.g., agritourism, crafts)
- Increased funding and investment in rural areas

Tourism and Local Services

- Growth in ecotourism and educational visits
- Increased demand for local accommodation and services
- Promotion of the region as a destination for nature and culture

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Social & Cultural Benefits

- Preservation and revival of traditional knowledge and practices
- Strengthening of community identity and pride
- Support for local festivals, crafts, and food traditions
- Intergenerational knowledge transfer

Environmental-Economic Benefits

- Improved biodiversity and landscape health boosts ecosystem services
- Healthy ecosystems support sustainable agriculture and tourism
- Reduction in land abandonment and maintenance of open habitats

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Common Success Factors


- Stakeholder collaboration (farmers, NGOs, governments)
- Financial incentives for traditional practices
- Science-based monitoring (e.g., biodiversity indices)

Key Takeaways

- Local breeds are “living tools” for ecosystem management.
- Cultural and ecological goals can align.
- Replication requires tailored policies and community buy-in.



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Program of Action for AnGR Strategy for Europe

➤ Animal Genetic Resources strategy for Europe

➤ Program of Action 2024 -2028

➤ What have we done up to now?

[Action Plan V1.xlsx](#)



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graph LR; A[GENETIC RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR EUROPE] --- B[GENETIC RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR EUROPE]; B --- C[GENETIC RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR EUROPE]; C --- D[ACTION PLAN]; D <--> E[ERFP MULTI-YEAR PROGRAM OF ACTION 2024-2028];
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ELGO-DIMITRA, Athens

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