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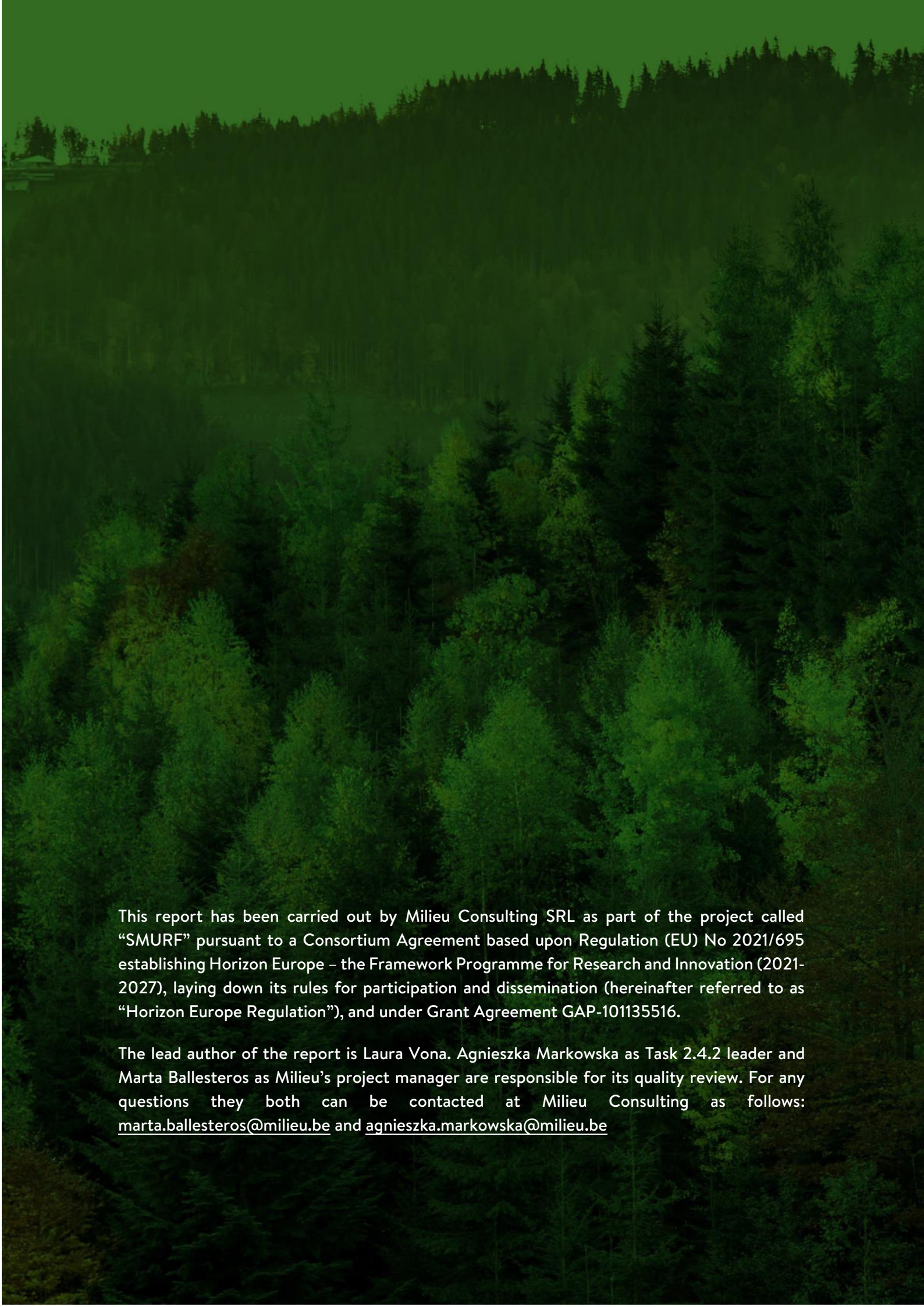
Financial incentives applicable to Small Forest Holdings and their impacts

Country Fact Sheet
Italy

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THE FOREST OWNERS' PROJECT

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary 4
1. Financial incentives based on EU funding 6
1.1. The European Regional Development Fund 6
1.2. Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 9
1.3. LIFE and Horizon Europe 12
2. Financial incentives based on MS funding 13
2.1. State aid 13
2.2. Taxes and tax exemptions, subsidies 16
2.3. Funding provided by regional and local authorities 18
2.4. Funding provided by foundations, business associations, educational or other institutions 21
2.5. Innovative funding sources 23
2.6. Other funding sources 25

Financial incentives applicable to Small Forest Holdings

WP2, Task 2.4.2

Executive Summary

Italy benefits from a diverse mix of EU-funded, national, and regional mechanisms that – together with private and innovative funding – may support small forest holdings (SFHs), though direct and targeted aid remains limited. The Italian National Forestry Strategy states that the financial landscape underpinning the sector is diverse, yet fragmented, and highlights the central role of European and regional funding, which are the most commonly cited sources and often the most accessible for projects in the forestry sector.

At the EU level, major instruments include the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The ERDF supports broader green and digital transitions and there is limited direct targeting of SFHs (who can however benefit indirectly from the support actions). However, selected regional ERDF programmes may be relevant for SFHs, such as the grants given to SMEs by the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, aimed to strengthen the forest-wood value chain. The CAP Strategic Plan (2023–2027) has several rural development measures relevant to forestry (e.g., afforestation, biodiversity maintenance, and start-up support) potentially benefiting SFHs.

At the national level, no centralised forestry financing mechanism currently exists. However, ad hoc initiatives – such as the 2025 wood chain incentive – may offer targeted support to SFHs. State aid records available in June 2025 suggest limited engagement with SFHs, primarily addressing post-disaster recovery or infrastructure improvement. However, it should be considered that, in general, State aid can indeed benefit SFHs, covering investments in forestry infrastructure, development and enhancement of forest areas, prevention and restoration after natural disasters, conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management, training and forestry advisory services.

Regional authorities play a pivotal role in supporting SFHs, both through ERDF-linked initiatives and independent schemes. Examples include Emilia-Romagna's forest management planning support and Friuli Venezia Giulia's detailed and accessible funding programmes for forest infrastructure and equipment.

Innovative funding mechanisms are gaining traction, particularly Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES). Italy is establishing a national registry of voluntary carbon credits for agroforestry activities to ensure transparent certification and trading of credits from afforestation and sustainable land management; the registry is expected to launch in early 2026. On top of this, specific projects like *Sustainability Credits* and *LIFECO2PES&PEF* illustrate Italy's growing commitment to monetising ecosystem services, although the involvement of SFHs remains marginal. Similarly, while philanthropic entities like the Cariplo Foundation fund

environmental initiatives, the projects seem to be targeted to other beneficiaries rather than SFHs. In this context, consultancies such as Etifor or Walden srl play a facilitative role in assisting forest managers and owners in accessing public and private funding, bridging the gap between funding availability and its practical uptake by SFHs.

In sum, despite a growing portfolio of incentives and some interesting projects/initiatives, fragmentation across funding sources and lack of targeted SFH-specific schemes remain.

1. Financial incentives based on EU funding

1.1. The European Regional Development Fund

At **national level**, thanks to the adoption of the Cohesion Policy Partnership Agreement1 between the Commission and Italy, Italy will receive €42.7 billion from the EU in 2021-2027 to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, with a particular focus on the Southern regions2. The strategic policy objective no. 2, "A greener Europe", receives an amount of EUR 8.776.062.322 from the ERDF fund3. The Agreement further specifies that in order to contribute to the 'green challenge' of the policy objective no. 2, "areas in which strong operational coordination between the various programming instruments will have to be ensured concern climate change mitigation, hydraulic and hydrogeological risk prevention through sustainable forest management, rural land maintenance, soil conservation and the dissemination of practices that contribute to sound land management"4.

There are several national programmes funded with the ERDF fund, divided per topic (e.g. National Programme Capacity for Cohesion 2021-2027, National Programme Research, innovation and competitiveness for green and digital transition 2021-2027) and the calls connected to these programs are publicly available within the same website5. The calls have been scanned, but this initial mapping shows little to no direct support for SFHs. The most suited national programme that may provide some kind of financial support to SFHs is the "National Programme Research, innovation and competitiveness for green and digital transition 2021-2027" (total public contribution of EUR 5.561.584.807 – divided per EUR 3.723.000.000 from the ERDF EU investment and EUR 1.838.584.807 of national public contribution). Although considered 'national', it targets only southern regions and the two islands: Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Molise, Puglia, Sardegna and Sicilia. News on the calls available are published within a specific website which is update three times per year6.

At **regional level**, multiple regions have programmes that are financed with the ERDF fund and specifically mention biodiversity financing and protection of nature and biodiversity as key

1 European Commission, Partnership Agreements on EU funds 2021-2027, 2021, https://commission.europa.eu/publications/partnership-agreements-eu-funds-2021-2027_en
2 European Commission, EU Cohesion Policy: €42.7 billion for Italy to support sustainable growth, employment and modernisation while reducing regional disparities, 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_4562
3 European Commission, Partnership Agreement with Italy – 2021-2027, 2022, p. 52, https://commission.europa.eu/publications/partnership-agreement-italy-2021-2027_en
4 European Commission, Partnership Agreement with Italy – 2021-2027, 2022, p. 47, https://commission.europa.eu/publications/partnership-agreement-italy-2021-2027_en
5 Coesione Italiana, Opportunità di finanziamento 2021-2027 – Programmi nazionali, https://opencoesione.gov.it/it/opportunita_2021_2027/ This is a dedicated webpage where it is possible to find the advance notice calendars and the list of funding opportunities from the European resources of the Cohesion Policies 2021-2027, as published by the individual Managing Authorities of the Regional, National and Territorial Cooperation Programmes on their respective websites.
6 Ministero delle Imprese de del Made in Italy, Calendario degli inviti a presentare proposte del PN RIC 2021-2027, last update May 2025, https://www.pnric.gov.it/calendario-degli-inviti-presentare-proposte-del-pn-ric-2021-2027

priorities, which may be beneficial for the forestry sector7. Some examples of regional ERDF 2021-2027 programmes are:

- **Abruzzo**: The Regional Programme Abruzzo ERDF 2021-20278 presents Objective RSO2.7 “Protection of nature and biodiversity, natural heritage and resources, green and blue infrastructure” which includes the sub-objective “improve the quality of forest ecosystems through targeted interventions that also contemplate renaturalisation by favouring the establishment of native species”. The budget allocated to this objective is EUR 7.420.000.
- **Toscana**: The Regional Programme Toscana ERDF 2021-20279 clearly states that it will contribute to the key Union priorities in the area of green growth and climate contribution and also commit to increasing biodiversity. The programme presents Objective RSO2.7 “Strengthen the protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reduce all forms of pollution”. The budget allocated to this objective is EUR 11.250.000. An association consulted confirmed that the programme allocates resources to forests and biodiversity through various interventions, financing investments for sustainable management, damage prevention, and the promotion of ecosystem services. The resources aim to mitigate climate change, promote sustainable development, and combat biodiversity loss by supporting actions such as productive and non-productive investments in forestry, and cooperation for innovation in the sector.
- **Basilicata**: The Regional Programme Basilicata ERDF ESF+ 2021-20210 presents Objective RSO2.7 “Strengthen the protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reduce all forms of pollution”. The budget allocated to this objective is EUR 7.000.000.
- **Calabria**: The Regional Programme Calabria ERDF ESF+ 2021-202711 presents Objective RSO2.7 “Strengthen the protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reduce all forms of pollution” which includes “measures to maintain and restore the good status of sites, implemented within and outside Natura 2000 sites” (including forests). The budget allocated to this objective is EUR 17.744.005.

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7 See list of OPs at: EU regional and urban development website

8 Coesione Italia 21-27, Norme e document FESR, https://coesione.regione.abruzzo.it/fondi/fesr/norme-documentazione-FESR-21-27

9 Coesione Italia 21-27, Programma regionale Fesr 2021-2027: i documenti del programma, https://www.regione.toscana.it/pr-fesr-2021-2027/documenti-del-programma

10 Programma SFC2021 finanziato a titolo del FESR (obiettivo Investimenti a favore dell'occupazione e della crescita), del FSE+, del Fondo di coesione, del JTF e del FEAMPA - articolo 21, paragrafo 3, https://europa.regione.basilicata.it/2021-27/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Programma-Regionale-2021_2027.pdf

11 Coesione Italia 21-27, Calabria – Programmazione 2021-2027, https://calabriaeuropa.regione.calabria.it/programmazione-2021-2027/

- **Friuli Venezia Giulia**: Regional ERDF fund may be relevant for SFHs also when it is not directly connected to biodiversity. For instance, Friuli Venezia Giulia funded forestry-related projects through its Regional Programme ERDF Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia 2021-202712, using the fund related to priority 1 "Research and innovation, competitiveness and digitalisation". The budget allocated to this priority is EUR 186.000.000.

A consulted forestry association13 affirmed that the ERDF (both at national and regional level) does not directly finance the forest sector, but it can support actions that can benefit also the forest sector. Examples are improvement of forest road network and paths, economic support to activities that give values to natural resources, restoration of degraded area and management of hydrogeological risks, funding for attraction of investment in a specific region.

Another association added that the EU-Italy Partnership Agreement offers great opportunities for sustainable forest management, especially in the South. There are positive signs in regional programs that fund biodiversity and rewilding. However, direct support for SFHs is still limited, and for this reason the association advocates for more coordination and attention to the forestry sector.

Example of specific project funded through ERDF regional funds (Friuli Venezia Giulia)

The Region **Friuli Venezia Giulia** used its ERDF programme to give **grants to SMEs** located in the Inner Areas of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region ("Alta Carnia," "Dolomiti Friulane," "Val Canale - Canal del Ferro," and "Valli del Torre - Valli del Natisone")14. These grants aimed to strengthen the forest-wood value chain by supporting the adoption of new technologies, innovation, internationalisation, and the shift towards greener production methods. The initiative forms part of the 2021–2027 Regional Programme co-funded by the ERDF, under Specific Objective RSO 1.3, which focuses on promoting sustainable growth, competitiveness, and job creation in SMEs through productive investment—particularly through Action A3.2.3 supporting businesses in the forest-wood sector. The beneficiaries were SMEs with primary or secondary activities in the sector of wood processing and utilisation of wood products. The grant's applications could be sent between 14.10.2024 and 31.01.2025.

The following investment expenses were eligible, relating to the purchase of tangible and intangible assets:

> a) land, within the limit of 10% of the eligible total of items referred to in letters d), e), f) and g);

12 Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia, Europa FVG – Il Programma Regionale FESR del Friuli Venezia Giulia, 2023, https://europa.regione.fvg.it/it/programmi-36605/coesione-italia-21-27-friuli-venezia-giulia-36659/pr-fesr-friuli-venezia-giulia-39934/il-programma-regionale-fesr-del-friuli-venezia-giulia-66497

13 Consultations with forestry associations from Italy took place in September 2025.

14 All information on this grant is available at Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia, PR FESR 2021-2027 - Interventi a sostegno della filiera bosco-legno in Aree Interne, last update January 2025, https://www.regione.fvg.it/rafvg/cms/RAFVG/economia-imprese/sviluppoimpresa/FOGLIA3/#id2

b) purchase of properties within the limit of 20% of the eligible total of items referred to in letters d), e), f) and g);
c) costs for construction works within the limit of 40% of the eligible total of items referred to in letters d), e), f) and g);
d) new or reconditioned machinery, systems, tools and equipment;
e) sensors (study, design and implementation);
f) hardware;
g) intangible assets such as software, patents, user licences and know-how or other forms of intellectual property;
h) specialist and technological consultancy services for planning business reorganisation and restructuring processes, within an overall limit of 20% of the eligible total of items referred to in letters d), e), f) and g).

The following expenses were also eligible, within an overall limit of 20% of the eligible expenditure of the above-mentioned items referred to in letters d), e), f), g):

a) salary costs relating to jobs created as a result of the investment project;
b) advertising and promotional costs;
c) lease/rental fees calculated for the duration of the project.

Only expenses that comply with the accompanying/mitigation measures indicated in Annex D, in accordance with the DNSH (Do No Significant Harm) principle, were admissible.

The minimum limit of eligible expenditure was EUR 100,000. The maximum limit of contribution that could be granted to each single enterprise is EUR 300,000. The contribution was granted up to 50% of the eligible expenditure.

1.2. Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

Before 2023, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) was implemented in Italy through 22 Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) – one at national level and 21 regional RDPs for the period 2014-202215. From 2023 onwards, all new rural development actions are incorporated into national CAP strategic plans16. On 2 December 2022, the Commission approved the **CAP Strategic Plan for Italy**17. Over EUR 10 billion of the Plan's budget is earmarked for interventions in climate and environment18.

15 All documents available from Ministero dell'Agricoltura, della Sovranita alimentare e delle Foreste, PROGRAMMA SVILUPPO RURALE NAZIONALE (PSRN), https://www.reterurale.it/psrn
16 https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/cap-my-country/cap-strategic-plans_en
17 Commission Implementing Decision of 2 December 2022 approving the 2023-2027 CAP Strategic Plan of Italy for Union support financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, C(2022) 8645 final, available here
18 European Commission, At a glance: Italy's Strategic Plan, available here https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/document/download/34058aa4-eee5-4579-99af-0e7c100d40ba_en?filename=csp-at-a-glance-italy_en.pdf

There are several rural development interventions within the Italian CAP Strategic Plan that are relevant for the forestry sector19 listed right below. The total allocated budget is EUR 535.155.492 (information on the budget for SRG09 is missing):

- SRA27 - Payment for forest-environmental and climate commitments (indicator: number of hectares (forest land) or number of other units subject to climate-environmental commitments that go beyond the mandatory requirements). Budget allocated EUR 34.956.296.
- SRA28 - support for maintenance of forestry and agro-forestry systems (indicator: number of hectares or number of other units subject to maintenance commitments for afforestation and agroforestry). Budget allocated EUR 66.080.718.
- SRA31 - support for conservation, use and sustainable development of forestry genetic resources (indicator: Number of operations or units in support of genetic resources). Budget allocated EUR 8.728.148.
- SRC02 - compensatory payment for Natura 2000 forest areas (indicator: Number of hectares supported under Natura 2000 or Directive 2000/60/EC). Budget allocated EUR 8.756.296.
- SRD05 - forestation/afforestation and agroforestry systems on agricultural land (indicator: Number of operations or units related to non-productive investments subsidised outside agricultural holdings). Budget allocated EUR 47.387.972.
- SRD10 - forestation/afforestation systems on non-agricultural land (indicator: Number of operations or units related to non-productive investments subsidised outside agricultural holdings). Budget allocated EUR 11.050.000.
- SRD11 - non-productive forestry investments (indicator: Number of operations or units related to non-productive investments subsidised outside agricultural holdings). Budget allocated EUR 74.220.668.
- SRD12 - investments for prevention and restoration of forest damage (indicator: Number of operations or units related to non-productive investments subsidised outside agricultural holdings). Budget allocated EUR 194.250.235.

19 The text of the plan is available here https://www.reterurale.it/downloads/sfc2021-2023IT06AFSP001_4.1_202501291155_16130673482812078073.pdf The total amount allocated for each intervention is not clearly indicated (a complex manual calculation would be needed, summing the single voices under the same intervention). All of the individual amounts for each subsection of each intervention can be found within the text of the Plan. However, more specific information has been found in a PPT presented during a meeting held on 18.03.2025 on Status of implementation of forestry interventions of the CAP Strategic Plan 2023/27. Information on this meeting can be found here Stato di attuazione interventi forestali del Piano Strategico della PAC 2023/27-PSP 2023-2027. The direct link to the PPT is the following: https://www.reterurale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeAttachment.php/L/IT/D/d%252Fe%252Fb%252FD.6c95e103612597b9f5e7/P/BLOB%3AID%3D26460/E/pdf

- SRD15 - productive forestry investments (indicator: Number of operations or units related to productive investments subsidised outside agricultural holdings). Budget allocated EUR 79.668.859.
- SRE03 - Start-up of new forestry-related enterprises (indicator: number of rural enterprises receiving start-up support). Budget allocated EUR 10.056.296.
- SRG09 - Cooperation on innovation support actions and services for the agriculture, forestry and agri-food sectors (indicator: Number of European Innovation Partnership operational group projects). No info on budget found.

Support beneficiaries of the interventions listed above may include, among others, private landowners or holders and their associations, as well as other public or private entities and their associations, who manage agricultural and/or forestry land.

At regional level, the Regions and Autonomous Provinces prepare their respective **Regional Complements for Rural Development** (*Complementi regionali per lo Sviluppo Rurale*), i.e. regional implementation documents of the national Strategic Plan. The regional choices regarding the implementation of rural development, i.e. the interventions to be activated in their territories, come from an analysis that each region has carried out regarding its own needs and priorities, as well as from the comparison with the regional partnership20.

The Regional Complements can be used to support projects relevant for the implementation of the national CAP Strategic Plan. Some examples are given below:

- In 2023, the Lombardy Region, within its Regional Complement for the Rural Development 23-202721, opened the call for tenders in relation to the intervention SRA28 support for maintenance of forestry and agro-forestry systems, with a budget of EUR 150,00022. Intervention SRA 28 is aimed at ensuring the development and permanence, through adequate and continuous management, of afforestation systems established on agricultural and non-agricultural land with the relevant structural interventions of rural development. It is also aimed at increasing carbon uptake and storage, in stands, soil and woody biomass, and at improving the conservation of forest biodiversity. The notice regulated the application of SRA 28 in relation to the submission of support/payment applications for the 2023 marketing year. The beneficiaries eligible to apply for the SRA 28 measure included private landowners, landholders and their associations, who own agricultural or non-agricultural land and received support for medium- to long-rotation afforestation projects on such land, which were approved in

20 Piano Strategico PAC, Le scelte regionali nel PSP, https://www.reterurale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/24487 This page has a link for each Region and redirects to its Plan.
21 Regione Lombardia, Complemento per lo Sviluppo Rurale, https://psr.regione.lombardia.it/it/pc2127/psr-2023-2027/il-programma-6/complemento-per-lo-sviluppo-rurale
22 Regione Lombardia, PSN/PAC 2023-2027 “Sostegno per mantenimento della forestazione/ imboschimento e sistemi agroforestali” - bando 2023, https://ue.regione.lombardia.it/bando/RLM12023032343

2022. The call was also opened for 2025 (same beneficiaries and objectives, open from 8.04.2024 to 16.06.2025), but the budget is of EUR 1000023.

- Another example is a tender opened by the Autonomous Province of Trento (Trentino Alto Adige Region) within the implementation of SRD11 of its Regional Complement for the Rural Development, Action 2 'Improvement and realisation of infrastructures serving the multifunctional use of the forest'. It is a support measure for forest owners for the improvement and creation of infrastructure serving the multifunctional use of the forest (mainly forestry roads and yards); the aid consists of a contribution of 65% of the eligible expenditure for the realisation of the investment – the minimum amount of eligible expenditure per application is €20,000. The maximum amount of eligible expenditure is €250,000.00 per beneficiary. Applications for the grant could be submitted from 31.01.2025 to 30.04.202524.

A consulted forestry association stated that most of the Italian financing for the forest sector comes from regional funding, including through the Regional Complements for Rural Development. This type of funding is accessible also to private owners. However, most of the time the single owner is not able to apply for this line of funding. This can be caused by a lack of knowledge of the specific procedure or the excess of bureaucracy. In these cases, the single owner can ask support either to professionals (under payment) or to what in Italy is called "*associazione di categoria*" (association of category), an association that provide also consultancy services and support to apply for public fundings.

Another association affirmed that the new CAP Strategic Plan is a great opportunity for those working in the forestry sector, since there are significant funds dedicated to environmental and climate-related actions, including maintenance, reforestation, and forest infrastructure. However, with unclear calls and shifting budgets, more consistency and transparency are needed to help those on the ground plan effectively and make the most of these opportunities.

Similarly, another association stated that the extreme bureaucratic complexity of CAP funds often discourages small landowners.

1.3. LIFE and Horizon Europe

Projects relevant to SFH supported from LIFE, Interreg and Horizon Europe funding are analysed for the whole EU in a dedicated chapter and annex.

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23 Regione Lombardia, PSN/PAC 2023-2027 "Sostegno per mantenimento della forestazione/imboschimento e sistemi agroforestali" - Sviluppo Rurale/bando 2025, https://www.bandi.regione.lombardia.it/servizi/servizio/bandi/dettaglio/agricoltura-pesca/agricoltura/psn-pac-2023-2027-sostegno-mantenimento-forestazione-imboschimento-sistemi-agroforestali-sviluppo-rurale-bando-2025-RLM12025045463

24 More specific information are detailed in Provincia Autonoma di Trento, Intervento SRD11 - Investimenti non produttivi forestali - Bando 2025, 2025, https://www.provincia.tn.it/Servizi/Intervento-SRD11-Investimenti-non-produttivi-forestali-Bando-2025# See also, for other tenders, Provincia Autonoma di Trento – Servizio Foreste e Servizio Faunistico, Contributi allo sviluppo rurale psp 2023-2027, https://forestefauna.provincia.tn.it/Foreste/Attivita-forestali/Contributi-allo-sviluppo-rurale-PSP-2023-2027

2. Financial incentives based on MS funding

Information about MS funding should be gathered primarily for the years 2020-2025. You are also welcome to include some information about the most interesting financial incentives from previous years, especially if this is about a historical development of the incentives which are still available today.

2.1. State aid

Member States are obliged to report on State aid on the following State Aid Transparency Public Search website of the European Commission25. After having filtered by Member State (Italy) and NACE code (02 – Forestry and logging), 6 results are available.

The results below can be summarised as follows:

- 4 measures have been awarded to 4 SMEs under aid schemes to make good the damage caused by certain natural disasters.
- 1 measure has been awarded to a large enterprise for investment aid for local infrastructures.
- 1 measure has been awarded to a SME for training aid.

25 European Commission, Competition – State Aid Transparency Public Search, https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/competition/transparency/public?lang=en

Table 1: State aid results for Italy, NACE Code 02 – Forestry and logging

Aid Measure Title	Beneficiary	Beneficiary Type	Region	Aid Instrument	Objectives of the Aid	Aid elementexpressed as full amount	Granting Authority Name
M07.02 – support for investments in the creation, improvement or expansion of each type of small-scale infrastructure, including investments in renewable energy and energy saving	Ente Parco Antola	Only large enterprises	Liguria	Direct grant/ Interest rate subsidy	Investment aid for local infrastructures (Art. 56)	204326	GAL Verdemare Liguria
Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers of 27 February 2019 for damage to sites, activities and works relating to forests caused by weather events from 27 October 2018 to 5 November 2018 in the Veneto Region	REGOLA COMUNIONE FAMILIARE DI CANDIDE	Small and medium-sized entreprises	Veneto	Direct grant/ Interest rate subsidy	Aid schemes to make good the damage caused by certain natural disasters (Art. 50)	572948	AVEPA - Agenzia Veneta per i Pagamenti in Agricoltura
Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers of 27 February 2019 for damage to sites, activities and works relating to forests caused by weather events from 27 October 2018 to 5 November 2018 in the Veneto Region	REGOLA DI NEBBIU'	Small and medium-sized entreprises	Veneto	Direct grant/ Interest rate subsidy	Aid schemes to make good the damage caused by certain natural disasters (Art. 50)	375498	AVEPA - Agenzia Veneta per i Pagamenti in Agricoltura

Aid Measure Title	Beneficiary	Beneficiary Type	Region	Aid Instrument	Objectives of the Aid	Aid elementexpressed as full amount	Granting Authority Name
Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers of 27 February 2019 for damage to sites, activities and works relating to forests caused by weather events from 27 October 2018 to 5 November 2018 in the Veneto Region	REGOLA COMUNIONE FAMILIARE DI COSTALISSOIO	Small and medium-sized entreprises	Veneto	Direct grant/ Interest rate subsidy	Aid schemes to make good the damage caused by certain natural disasters (Art. 50)	84955	AVEPA - Agenzia Veneta per i Pagamenti in Agricoltura
Initial measures to compensate for damage to private individuals and to economic and productive activities as a result of the weather events in Piedmont in 2019/2020. Article 25 (2) (c) of Legislative Decree No 1/2018.	PRETTE PAOLO	Small and medium-sized entreprises	Piemonte	Direct grant/ Interest rate subsidy	Aid schemes to make good the damage caused by certain natural disasters (Art. 50)	101985	Regione Piemonte - Direzione Competitività del Sistema Regionale
Tax credit for KETs training — Industry 4.0	DI RUCCIO GERARDINA	Small and medium-sized entreprises	Campania	Tax advantage or tax exemption	Training aid (Art. 31)	133046	Agenzie delle Entrate

From the information available in this database, it is not possible to ascertain to what extent these interventions can be relevant to SFHs.

A consulted forestry association affirmed that this line of financing can indeed benefit SFHs. State aid may cover investments in forestry infrastructure, development and enhancement of forest areas, prevention and restoration after natural disasters, conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management, training and forestry advisory services. It is also possible to consult the "*Registro Nazionale degli Aiuti di Stato*" (State aid National Registry), that is the national register for all state aid measures26.

2.2. Taxes and tax exemptions, subsidies

No information on **tax exemptions** was found. Two consulted associations stated that there are no specific tax exemptions related to forests.

As per **incentives and subsidies**, at national level, to date, there is no specific and centralised financing instrument for forestry.

According to the text of the Italian National Forestry Strategy27, the main financial sources currently available to achieve the general objectives of the National Forestry Strategy, as well as, indirectly, the goals of key national and European strategic instruments relevant to the forestry sector – and to fulfil international commitments signed by the Italian Government that require active involvement of the forestry sector – can be grouped into the following categories:

- European structural funds (post-2020);
- Agricultural and rural development fund (post-2020);
- Recovery Fund – Next Generation EU;
- European programmes such as LIFE+, INTERREG, HORIZON 2020;
- Regular budgetary resources of central and regional administrations;
- Development and Cohesion Fund;
- Additional resources for mountain and inner areas, enterprises, natural disasters and extreme events, etc.;
- Framework Programme for Research;
- Private funding (from companies, foundations, trade associations, etc.);
- National Forestry Fund (Mipaaf).

The Operational, Specific and Instrumental Actions listed in the National Forestry Strategy are of strategic and preparatory importance for the development of the forestry sector, but they are currently either not adequately funded or only partially covered through various measures

26 The register is available here https://www.rna.gov.it/open-data

27 Available at Rete Rurale, Strategia Forestale Nazionale per il settore forestale e le sue filiere, p. 37, https://www.reterurale.it/foreste/StrategiaForestaleNazionale

and interventions within different regional and national planning instruments28. Annex I of the National Forestry Strategy summarises the potential financial sources currently in place or that could be activated for each individual action under the Strategy (*Strumenti di intervento e fonti finanziarie*)29. By reading this Annex, it is evident that European and regional funding play a particularly significant role, as they are the most frequently mentioned sources.

A consulted association highlighted that, although the National Forestry Strategy mentions several potential sources, in practice access remains complex and not very direct for SFHs. For those working on the ground, a clearer fiscal policy and financing tools truly designed to support active and sustainable forest management are needed. The same stakeholder added that coordinated national-level interventions are needed, rather than funding that originates from individual regional initiatives (see section 2.3.) and therefore depends on how sensitive each local administration is to the issue. This approach risks further widening an already existing gap in vision.

The above means that **national financing is given through ad hoc acts**.

A recent example are the incentives directed to the wood chain industries30 of 2025. The aim of the incentive is to support the furniture wood industry, also in relation to forest management and the nursery sector, by increasing the technological and digital level of companies and creating automated production systems along the production chain, from quality grading systems to gluing systems. There are two main objectives are: 1) Support sustainable forest management practices through certification of nursery and harvesting activities; 2) to increase the technological and digital level of forestry and primary wood processing enterprises by stimulating the adoption of advanced technologies for an efficient and automated production chain.

The incentives are divided in two groups.

INCENTIVES FOR FOREST NURSERY COMPANIES

The measure supports sustainable investment projects, aimed at the production and distribution of nursery material for reforestation, arboriculture and ecological land management, the implementation of which is left to the Regions. Investments must be made by enterprises or other entities operating for harvesting for the purpose of nursery production, production, transfer for any reason, marketing of forest reproductive or propagation material

28 The text of the National Foresrty Strategy is available at Rete Rurale, Strategia Forestale Nazionale per il settore forestale e le sue filiere, https://www.reterurale.it/foreste/StrategiaForestaleNazionale

29 The text of Annex I of the National Foresrty Strategy is available at Rete Rurale, Strategia Forestale Nazionale per il settore forestale e le sue filiere, https://www.reterurale.it/foreste/StrategiaForestaleNazionale

30 Ministero delle Imprese e del Made in Italy, Filiera del legno per l'arredo al 100% nazionale, 2025, https://www.mimit.gov.it/it/incentivi/filiera-del-legno-per-larredo-al-100-nazionale#:~:text=Sono%20previsti%205%20milioni%20di,superficie%20forestale%20di%20ciascuna%20Regione The incentive has been approved through the Interministerial Decree 20 February 2025, available here.

intended for reforestation, afforestation, arboriculture for wood production, renaturalisation and landscaping. 5 million euro in non-repayable grants are envisaged, subdivided so as to support all the regions concerned. This first group of incentives is managed by regions. No other specific information has been found.

INCENTIVES FOR FORESTRY AND PRIMARY WOOD PROCESSING ENTERPRISES

The measure is aimed at enterprises that provide support services for forestry and/or operate within the primary wood processing chain. The total budget for forestry and wood-processing companies amounts to EUR 20 million: 10 million for non-repayable grants, covering 40 to 60 per cent of eligible costs; 10 million for soft loans. This second group of incentive is managed by the State. Forestry and primary wood processing companies could submit applications from 15 May 2025. Due to the exhaustion of available resources, the application window was closed as of 12 noon on 21 May 2025. Investments must be started after the application is submitted and completed within 12 months of the grant reception.

2.3. Funding provided by regional and local authorities

Funding is regulated at regional level and thus it varies from one Region to the other.

As an example, the **Emilia-Romagna Region** has a specific Regional Law (L.R. 30/1981) on incentives for the development and valorisation of forest resources31. According to its Article 1 (Objectives) the law aims to enhance the ecological, productive, and social functions of forests, expand wooded areas for environmental and hydrogeological benefits, and support specialised plantations. It also promotes better forestry practices to boost rural employment, ensures proper management of forest resources, and encourages awareness, research, and innovation in the forestry sector.

Based on this law, targeted interventions can be established. For example, Regional Deliberation 1471/2022 of the Emilia-Romagna Region approved a call for the years 2022–2024, with a total amount of €120,071, to grant incentives to forest owners and managers for the planning of public and private forest resources, with the aim of adopting forest management plans, the detailed contents of which are outlined in Annex A of the same Deliberation32. Applications may be submitted by owners and managers of public and private forests, as well as by consortia and forestry associations. At the time of submitting the application for support, applicants must hold ownership or legal possession of the land for

31 LEGGE REGIONALE 4 settembre 1981, n. 30. Incentivi per lo sviluppo e la valorizzazione delle risorse forestali, con particolare riferimento al territorio montano. Modifiche ed integrazioni alle leggi regionali 25 maggio 1974, n.18 e 24 gennaio 1975 n.6. Available at https://demetra.regione.emilia-romagna.it/al/articolo?urn=er:assemblealegislativa:legge:1981;30

32 REGIONE EMILIA-ROMAGNA – Atti amministrativi Giunta Regionale. Delibera Num. 1471 del 05/09/2022. Available at https://servizissiir.regione.emilia-romagna.it/deliberegiunta/servlet/AdapterHTTP?action_name=ACTIONRICERCADELIBERE&operation=leggi&cod_protocollo=GPG/2022/1536&ENTE=1

which the planning contribution is being requested; failure to meet this requirement will result in the ineligibility of the areas concerned.

Eligible for support are activities related to the preparation of the Forest Management Plan, specifically: property inspections, field surveys, digital drafting of the Plan, the possible creation of sample areas, the drafting of preliminary versions of the Plan documents to be submitted for technical review, and the production of the final Plan documents to be submitted for authorisation, incorporating any corrections, amendments, or additions arising from the review process.

Another interesting example is the **webpage of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region**, that clearly lists all the contributions for forest owners (public and private) and forest holdings33. Funding is provided for forestry roads, forestry machinery and equipment, innovation in the forest-wood-energy sector, and other expenses for improved forest management or the restoration of abandoned mountain areas.

For instance, the grants for forest road works were adopted through the Regional Regulation issued by the President of the Region on 17 March 2023 (No. 057/Pres). The Regulation sets out the procedures and criteria for granting capital contributions for the construction and major maintenance of forest roads, in accordance with Article 41-ter, paragraph 4, letter d) of Regional Law 9/200734.

Applications for funding may be submitted by both private and public forest owners within the region, provided their forests are managed under an approved forest management plan. Those acting on behalf of multiple owners can also apply, as long as they hold a formal delegation from all property owners. Expropriating authorities may apply too, even for forests not currently managed under such a plan. If the applicant is a business, it must be listed in the Regional Register of Forestry Enterprises, must not be in financial difficulty, and must not qualify as a large enterprise.

Eligible works include major maintenance, upgrades, or new construction of main forest roads in line with technical guidelines; building stabilised or natural-surface log yards; restoring or closing non-compliant road sections; and maintenance for wildfire prevention in high- and medium-risk areas. Except for expropriation cases on unmanaged forests, interventions must take place on forest parcels within the region covered by an approved forest management plan. Access roads to pastures and mountain huts may also be eligible. Eligible costs include construction expenses, technical fees (up to 10% of the work value), removal of concrete or asphalt surfaces where roads are upgraded, and expropriation costs (also capped at 10%).

The maximum eligible amounts for works listed under Article 4 are as follows:

33 Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia, Contributi per proprietari di boschi (pubblici e privati), imprese boschive, last update May 2025, https://www.regione.fvg.it/rafvg/cms/RAFVG/economia-imprese/agricoltura-foreste/foreste/FOGLIA3/

34 Regulation and Regional Law are available at Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia, Leggi e Regolamenti, https://lexview-int.regione.fvg.it/FontiNormative/Dettaglio.aspx?id=6850

- €130,000 per kilometre for new forest road construction
  €100,000 per kilometre for major maintenance, upgrades, or road conversion
  €10,000 per hectare for maintenance aimed at wildfire prevention
  €50 per square metre for log yards

Each funding application must have a minimum eligible cost of €50,000. The maximum eligible cost per application is €300,000 per road route per applicant, within an overall maximum of €500,000 per applicant. A road route refers to a continuous stretch of road connecting two locations, including any minor side roads branching from it. The total budget dedicated to these grants is not specified.

Another example is the **Lombardy Region**. Article 26 of the Lombardy Regional Law 31/200835 stipulates that contributions are granted for the development of forestry interventions related to the conservation and protection of forestry (e.g., protection of slopes, biodiversity, preservation of landscape) and widespread maintenance of the territory. This article can thus trigger ad hoc measures.

It must be considered that **regions and local authorities often blend funding** from private entities with both direct and indirect support from the EU. In addition, depending on their specific policy priorities, they may also allocate part of their budgets36. This could be relevant for SFHs, since the project may be focused, inter alia, on biodiversity conservation, creation of green spaces, reforestation, or boosting competitiveness across various industrial sectors. This approach aligns with the concept of "financial engineering", which refers to the strategic combination of multiple funding sources for a single project. The importance of financial engineering was underlined in the Final Report on the National Biodiversity Strategy 2011–2020, which noted that 'just as ecosystems benefit from biological diversity, financial flows are made more stable and resilient over time by a diversity of funding sources'37.

It should also be considered that according to Article 6(9) of the consolidated law on forests and forestry sectors (2018 Forestry Law)38, to encourage forest planning and promote the active and sustainable management of forest resources, regions may give priority access to public funding in the forestry sector to public and private landowners, as well as to collectively

35 Legge Regionale 5 dicembre 2008 , n. 31 – Testo unico delle leggi regionali in materia di agricoltura, foreste, pesca e sviluppo rurale, https://normelombardia.consiglio.regione.lombardia.it/NormeLombardia/Accessibile/main.aspx?view=showdoc&iddoc=lr002008120500031

36 European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, 3 billion additional trees by 2030 – Financing guide, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, p. 208, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/41719

37 The Final Report (Rapporto conclusivo) is available at Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Sicurezza Energetica, Strategia Nazionale per la Biodiversità 2020, last update 2023, https://www.mase.gov.it/portale/strategia-nazionale-per-la-biodiversit%C3%A0-2020

38 DECRETO LEGISLATIVO 3 aprile 2018, n. 34. Testo unico in materia di foreste e filiere forestali. Available at https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto.legislativo:2018-04-03;34

or communally managed lands, provided they have a forest management plan or an equivalent planning tool in place.

It is however important to notice that, as raised by an association consulted, accessing regional and local funding can be challenging for forest owner associations. The main issue arises from the fact that these associations are formally recognised under regional forestry legislation only in certain regions. Thus, in regions where forest owner associations are not officially recognised – and are instead registered merely as standard civil associations – they are ineligible for regional forestry funding. By contrast, entities such as forestry consortia often qualify for such financial support. A clear example can be seen in the Lombardy Region, where, until only a few years ago, forest owner associations were not specifically included within the scope of regional funding schemes. Recent policy changes, however, have begun to address this gap by enabling both forest owner associations and forestry consortia to be eligible for regional financial support.

2.4. Funding provided by foundations, business associations, educational or other institutions

While not granting funding directly, consultancies/companies may help SFHs in applying to those funds. For example, the consultancy **Etifor** supports forest managers, owners and holdings in accessing funding sources for restoration, conservation and improvement projects. Their services include assessing forest and natural resources, preparing business plans, and identifying effective funding strategies. With experience across both national and international contexts, Etifor works with a wide range of financing options, from public grants at regional, national and EU level to private sources such as donations, sponsorships, crowdfunding, and impact investing39. On top of this, together with Benefit Corporation and University of Padua spin-off, Etifor manages the initiative WOWnature "a hub for nature lovers, managers of green areas, agencies and companies who want to team up and make our territory greener". The hub allows private citizens and/or businesses to support projects that improve the environment40.

Another example is **Walden srl**, a company that supports and works specifically with SFHs and SFOs on funding and collaboration opportunities for forest development41. In the field of forestry, agricultural and natural resource management, their services range from land-use planning and large-scale planning to technical assistance for small-scale interventions42. Walden is also managing the Robin Wood Project, a cooperative project in Piedmont that created a digital platform linking forest owners with businesses to market certified ecosystem services and support local, sustainable carbon offset initiatives (see section 2.5).

39 Etifor, Innovative funding for forestry projects, https://www.etifor.com/en/services/innovative-funding-for-forestry-projects/
40 WOWnature, FAQ, n.d., https://www.wownature.eu/en/faq/
41 Walden webpage available at https://www.walden.srl/#home
42 Specific activities listed on the website: Agro-forestry-pastoral resource management plans and design; Sustainable forest management and ecosystem services certification; Territorial development and governance: civic uses, land associations, territorial animation; Technical-bureaucratic assistance and territorial animation; Cartographic and GIS services.

The **Cariplo Foundation** sets the objective of 'Preserving, enhancing and passing on environmental and landscape heritage, generating opportunities for sustainable development and promoting the resilience of communities and ecosystems'43. The foundation supports initiatives implemented by non-profit organisations, and structures and implements its own projects, involving other partners and acting as a collator for the necessary resources. They also affirmed that they are 'committed to protect the forest heritage and enhance the ecosystem services that forests provide'44.

However, the projects presented on their website – while thematically relevant – appear to not involve directly SFHs. One example is the "Capitale Naturale" call, which aims to support the conservation of natural capital and ecosystem functionality within Natura 2000 sites and other areas of high importance for biodiversity in Fondazione Cariplo's target territory. The budget available for this call amounts to EUR 3.5 million. The eligible applicants for this call do not include SFHs; instead, they comprised managing bodies of protected areas, groupings of municipalities (such as unions or consortia composed exclusively of municipalities, or municipalities working through formal agreements), mountain communities, provinces, private non-profit organisations with proven experience in the relevant areas, and land reclamation and irrigation consortia45. The project can thus impact SFHs only indirectly. Similarly, the "Join Nature" projects – which seeks to involve businesses in protecting natural capital and biodiversity by encouraging them to co-finance ecological restoration projects within – targeted only public owned forest areas46.

An consulted association confirmed that the Cariplo foundation does not provide direct funding for the forest sector, but it finances project for the environment, that can indirectly involve SFHs47. It added also that other bank foundations48 provide indirect funding for forest ecosystems, for example **Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo**49, but that usually bank foundations are more focused on social issues and/or general environmental conservation issues.

Chambers of Commerce sometimes promote certification systems, including forestry ones. For instance, the Sondrio Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the Order of Agronomists and Foresters of the provinces of Como, Lecco and Sondrio, will make available a fund of EUR 100,000 to encourage responsible forest management practices that promote the

43 Fondazione Cariplo, Ambiente, https://www.fondazionecariplo.it/it/progetti/ambiente/ambiente.html
44 Fondazione Cariplo, Celebriamo la Giornata delle Foreste, 2019, https://www.fondazionecariplo.it/it/news/ambiente/giornata-internazionale-foreste.html
45 Fondazione Cariplo, Bando senza scadenza "Capitale Naturale", 2017, https://www.fondazionecariplo.it/it/bandi/ambiente/bando-senza-scadenza-capitale-naturale.html See also Capitale naturale (punto)net https://capitalenaturalenet.wordpress.com/
46 Fondazione Cariplo, Join Nature, https://www.fondazionecariplo.it/it/progetti/ambiente/join-nature.html
47 It also added that one of the forest owner association in Lombardy, the ASFO Valle del Lanza, was born and made its first steps thanks to the application and the positive results of two call for proposals from Fondazione Cariplo.
48 Similarly, another association mentioned that banking foundations can finance interventions aimed at the sustainable management of forests.
49 Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo webpage available at https://www.compagniadisanpaolo.it/it/

conservation and enhancement of wooded areas, contributing to environmental protection and the promotion of a culture of sustainability50.

2.5. Innovative funding sources

The Final Report on the National Biodiversity Strategy 2011-2020 stated that it will be important to intercept new flows of financing and involving private stakeholders with tax reforms, market strategies, funds, concessions, banking and insurance products based on environmental premiums and conditionality, bonds (sovereign or private, such as green and blue bonds, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG) bonds), and green51. This is stressed also within the National Biodiversity Strategy 2030, which states that the introduction of market-based instruments should also be promoted, starting with the adoption of fiscal incentive mechanisms and pricing systems through the creation of markets, such as payment schemes for environmental and ecosystem services52.

Italy is becoming notably active from 1997 onwards for the development of PES and the most recent initiatives have seen multiple schemes in Italy, reflecting an ongoing and expanding commitment to PES across the country53. It can be noted that Italy decided to establish its own national registry of voluntary carbon credits generated by sustainable agroforestry practices, in order to guarantee criteria and guidelines for the generation, certification and sale of national carbon credits54. The main objective of the Registry, which will be managed by CREA (Council for agricultural research and analysis of agricultural economics), is to ensure operational effectiveness and transparency for actors and users in the carbon credit market. At the request of agroforestry land managers, CREA will admit to the Register carbon credits generated and certified by afforestation, reforestation and sustainable agricultural and forestry management activities, in addition to those required by current sector regulations. The launch of the registry is scheduled for early 202655.

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50 This specific example is however limitedly relevant for SFHs, because to be eligible for the subsidies the wooded areas cannot be less than 100 hectares. PEFC, Provincia di Sondrio: in arrivo i contributi per la certificazione PEFC della gestione forestale sostenibile, 2025, https://www.pefc.it/news/provincia-di-sondrio-in-arrivo-i-contributi-per-la-certificazione-pefc-della-gestione-forestale-sostenibile See also Camera di commercio di Sondrio, Avviso per l'erogazione di contributi per la certificazione PEFC, 2025, https://www.so.camcom.it/bando/certificazione-gestione-forestale-sostenibile-PEFC

51 The Final Report (Rapporto conclusivo) is available at Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Sicurezza Energetica, Strategia Nazionale per la Biodiversità 2020, last update 2023, https://www.mase.gov.it/portale/strategia-nazionale-per-la-biodiversit%C3%A0-2020 See also European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, 3 billion additional trees by 2030 – Financing guide, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/41719

52 Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Sicurezza Energetica, Strategia Nazionale per la Biodiversità al 2030, 2023, p. 74, https://www.mase.gov.it/portale/strategia-nazionale-per-la-biodiversit%C3%A0-al-2030

53 LifeProForPES, D2.2 – Analysis of PES and PES-related mechanisms in Europe, 2024, https://www.lifeproforpes.eu/#results

54 Articles 45, paras. 2-quater to 2-octies, Law Decree No. 13 of 24 February 2023 (DECRETO-LEGGE 24 febbraio 2023, n. 13. Disposizioni urgenti per l'attuazione del Piano nazionale di ripresa e resilienza (PNRR) e del Piano nazionale degli investimenti complementari al PNRR (PNC), nonchè per l'attuazione delle politiche di coesione e della politica agricola comune. Available at: https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto.legge:2023-02-24;13)

55 Creafuturo, I crediti di carbonio, 2025, https://creafuturo.crea.gov.it/14583/

As per specific PES projects, it seems that only a limited number target directly SFHs. Some examples of these projects are given below.

The project **Sustainability Credits** (Crediti di Sostenibiltà) created a trading platform for sustainability credits[56]. The platform was conceived and promoted by the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines National Park. It aims to promote and support interventions and practices of sustainable/responsible forest management in the context of the fight against climate change. It started in 2020, with the first credits developed at the end of 2022. It is still ongoing. The Park fosters sustainable forest management and supports forests owners' interventions that enhance the forest's capacity to generate ecosystem services. The project is being implemented by the National Park in close cooperation with public forest management bodies (regional parks and unions of municipalities, 40,8%), collective properties (civic uses, communes and social assets, 34,6%), voluntary forestry consortia as well as private forest owners (3,3%). The project currently involves 34 forest managers and 41 forests covering a total area of almost 30,000 hectares. A forestry management plan is required to participate in the project and receive the certification of sustainable forest management (through PEFC and FSC certifications)57. According to the latest results, in 2024 the sustainable management of 28,869 hectares of certified forests led to 17,428 tonnes in annual CO_2 storage. The number of Sustainability Credits produced in 2024 rose by 13% compared to 2023, thanks to the growing number of forest managers and owners involved in the project, as well as the expansion of certified wooded areas58.

The project **LIFECO2PES&PEF** (financed, inter alia, by the **LIFE Programme**), conducted from 2020 to 2023, aimed to contribute to improving forestry management in the Alpine and Tosco-Emiliano Apennines regions in Italy and support the carbon sequestration function of forests and increase their resilience against wildfires and windthrow. Through this project, the project coordinators wanted to understand if the PFES could be an effective source of support for forestry interventions that aid climate mitigation and adaptation. One side of the project related to creating a system of PES. This is important because the translation of ecosystem services into 'saleable products' through the attribution of an economic value that places them on the market, although it has been tried and tested, did not yet have a defined and standardised procedure that allowed them to be placed on a broad and organised market. The LIFECO2PES&PEF project therefore aimed to create a service validation protocol that can be certified in order to translate the ecosystem services considered into 'products' with a monetary value59.

56 Crediti di sostenibilità website https://creditisostenibilita.it/

57 All information is available at Crediti di sostenibilità, Il Progetto, https://creditisostenibilita.it/il-progetto/

58 Crediti di sostenibilità, Più di 17 mila Crediti di Sostenibilità prodotti nel 2024!, https://creditisostenibilita.it/news/quasi-17-mila-crediti-di-sostenibilita-prodotti-nel-2024/

59 LifeProForPES, Obiettivi, https://lifeco2pefandpes.eu/obiettivi/

Finally, the company Walden srl leads the **Robin wood project** – a cooperative initiative aimed at creating a digital platform for the marketing of forest ecosystem services60. The project promotes sustainable, collective forest management by linking forest owners with companies and individuals seeking to offset carbon emissions through local, certified projects. Robin Wood offers forest owners support for forest certification, management planning, and the valuation of ecosystem services, while providing businesses with carbon accounting tools, emission offset opportunities, and green marketing support. The platform integrates economic, social and environmental goals, combining digital innovation (including blockchain for traceability) with local engagement, and serves as a replicable model for nature-based decarbonisation initiatives across Italy.

A consulted association affirmed that the concept of assigning economic value to ecosystem services holds significant potential yet remains in its early stages. Initiatives such as Sustainability Credits and LIFECO2PES&PEF demonstrate the feasibility of such approaches; however, clear regulatory frameworks and functioning markets are still required to move beyond pilot projects. Crucially, participation should not be limited to public bodies or large landowners. Without the genuine inclusion of small forest holders, these initiatives risk remaining theoretical, with limited impact on those managing forests on a daily basis.

2.6. Other funding sources

N/A

60 Robin Wood, https://robinwood.io/il-programma-di-sviluppo-rurale-psr/

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