



EchoLoci



Zagori, Greece



Mountain area; Predominantly rural, remote regions



Led by: InnoPolis

Dynamo partner: D6 - Zagori



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**Nature-based and
cultural tourism**

**Destination
development**

Aim

The main aim of EchoLoci is to record the biodiversity and sound diversity of the transhumance routes of Zagori. The solution seeks to actively engage participants from the local community, in a collaborative process of learning and management of the natural environment, with the scientific and local communities as protagonists. To this end, a set of participatory research and artistic activities were implemented for the detection, recording, and conservation of the ecosystems of the local pastures. Through the analysis of objectives and the identification and demonstration of problems the project raises awareness of the traditional practice of mobile pastoralism and informs the local community about its contribution to the conservation of landscape biodiversity. Further, it indirectly will aid in the preservation of wild fauna and endangered species of the Zagori region and protect its habitats.

The critical role of mobile pastoralism in preserving biodiversity, maintaining cultural identity, and contributing to ecosystem balance. Local communities and the scientific community recognize its importance through initiatives such as mobile laboratories, which monitor and discuss grassland ecosystem management.

Mobile pastoralism, acknowledged as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2019, respects biodiversity and supports sustainable landscape management. It significantly contributes to maintaining High Natural Value (HNV) agricultural land, characterized by rich species diversity and habitats of conservation interest. This practice provides vital ecosystem services, positive externalities, and public goods, making it a cornerstone of ecological and cultural sustainability.



A citizen scientist in the field recording biodiversity data on Zagori's pastoral routes as part of the EchoLoci project, highlighting the role of transhumant pastoralism in ecosystem and cultural heritage conservation.



Stakeholders involved

- Policy stakeholders
- Researchers
- Stakeholders in the public/user domain
- Stakeholders from the third/voluntary sector

Story

The EchoLocI project emerged from a recognition of Zagori's abundant biodiversity along its transhumance routes, sparking a commitment to conserve it through novel, participatory means. This initiative was spurred by the imperative outlined in European and national biodiversity strategies, as well as the European Green Deal, to safeguard ecosystems while fostering sustainable development. Despite challenges like organising workshops and funding the EchoLocI app, the initiative succeeded with support from local communities, scientists, and cultural organizations, aided by mobile pastoralism's UNESCO designation.

At its core, EchoLocI embodies several key features designed to achieve its goals:

1. Citizen engagement, encouraging active participation in collaborative learning and management processes aimed at preserving Zagori's natural and cultural environment.
2. Biodiversity conservation, with a specific focus on recording and safeguarding the diverse ecosystems found along transhumance routes.
3. Cultural preservation, emphasising the unique identity of mobile pastoralists and celebrating their longstanding traditions.
4. Building social capital, fostering stronger networks and relationships among diverse social groups in the Zagori region.

5. Empowering community members through education and skill development opportunities, ensuring equal participation across all stages of the project.

EchoLocI has evolved to include technologies like the EchoLocI app for data collection and monitoring, while expanding into interdisciplinary research and soundscape art to deepen understanding of acoustic ecology and biodiversity. Notable milestones include the successful mapping of biodiversity through workshops, documentation of ecosystem services, and the creation of digital portraits of mobile pastoralists.

The EchoLocI app has maintained its relevance and continues to attract users who utilise it for various purposes related to biodiversity monitoring and conservation efforts along Zagori's transhumance routes. Moreover, the networking established during the project's implementation phase has endured, providing ongoing opportunities for collaboration and exchange of ideas among stakeholders involved in environmental conservation and cultural preservation initiatives. The project's success has also attracted new funding opportunities, enabling the implementation of additional projects that build upon the foundation laid by EchoLocI, addressing related issues and further advancing the goals of biodiversity conservation, cultural preservation, and community engagement in Zagori and beyond.

CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES

Biodiversity



Social justice and inclusion



INNOVATION

Social, organizational and governance



Financial and business models innovation



Technical innovation



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