

## **THE *SUMFLOWER* LIFE+ PROJECT: AN EXAMPLE OF INTEGRATION BETWEEN RESEARCH AND PRODUCTION CHAIN**

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Floriculture and nursery production in Italy has an annual revenue of € 2.6 billion, 33,000 farms, 100,000 people employed. In Liguria, lies more than 20% of the Italian farms. In the Riviera di Ponente, floriculture is a key sector for the economy, has a strong impact and is generator of environmental problems in connection with the use of natural resources, the release of pollutants in all environmental media (water, soil and atmosphere), disposal of waste (large quantities of waste plastics, non-reusable).

The main objectives of the European project LIFE09 ENV IT 000067 *SUMFLOWER* (Sustainable Management of Floriculture in Western Riviera) are:

- to create a sustainable system of management for floriculture and ornamental horticulture, embracing social, economic and environmental impact, with particular attention to resource consumption, waste production, land use,
- to analyze, evaluate and reduce the main environmental impacts of the floriculture improving efficiency,
- to assist SMEs to apply best available techniques, technologies and innovative practices and ensure compliance with national and EU regulations,
- to show opportunities and benefits of sustainable floriculture, by quantitative measures,
- to test and improve current methods of certification.

With the coordination of the University of Genoa (Hanbury Botanical Gardens and DIPTERIS), three public research centers (CRA-FSO, IRF, CeRSAA), a regional coordinating body (Distretto agricolo florovivaistico del Ponente Ligure) and one category for assistance to farms (Impresa Verde srl) develop several project actions.

The main expected results are:

- Characterization of the critical phases of the chain
- Identification of best available techniques to reduce negative impacts
- Support for the integration of floriculture in the local context
- Guidelines for the sustainable management of floriculture
- Best knowledge of the industry on the environmental impact
- Advanced demonstrative multifunctional system of farms (an example of best practices for the entire industry of flower)
- Guidelines and best practices to be applied at Community level to promote sustainable management of the floriculture farms.

The project is divided into eight actions on the evaluation of territorial integration of the floriculture and its economic, social and environmental sustainability at the farm scale, biological safety, but also on the technical improvement for sustainability in different sectors (resource water, renewable energy, nitrates, wastes), technical support for business managers, guidelines and technical training.

It is expected to develop each action at level:

- operative as regards the implementation and testing of methodologies / techniques at farm level,
- of the production chain of whole floriculture,
- administrative, addressed to holders of local interest,
- European / international for replicable results in a wider context.

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