

# FOREST4EU

## Connecting forestry and agroforestry partnerships across Europe



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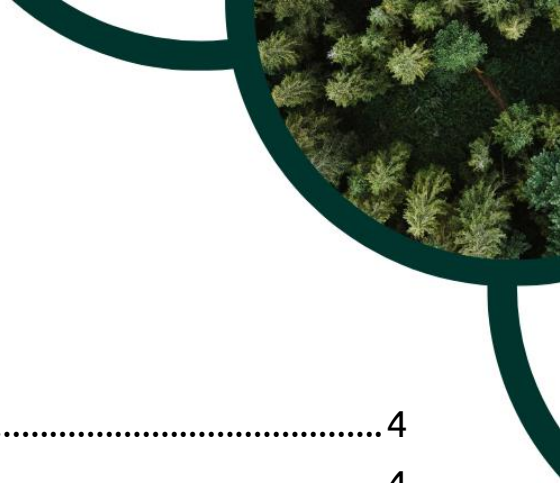
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## Operational Group (OG)



## OG funding

Rural development 2014-2020 for  
Operational Groups



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# **NEWTON - NETWork Operational Group for agroforestry in Tuscany: criteria and indicators for the certification of the sustainable management of an agroforestry system PEFC**

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## **1. Introduction**

The NEWTON - NETWork Operational Group for agroforestry in Tuscany is one innovative operational group (OG). The main objective was the promotion of an innovative system for "sustainable agricultural intensification" of agroforestry and its practices through participatory dissemination of innovative technical and scientific knowledge among all stakeholders, in order to enhance traditional Agroforestry (ASC) agroforestry systems (mixed olive growing; Mantino et al., 2016) and to promote innovative ASC agroforestry systems (silverable systems with polycyclic rows; Mantino et al., 2017). This objective was achieved through activities focused on the transfer of knowledge and the activities focused on demonstration and dissemination of innovations.

## **2. Methodology**

The specific objectives of the OG were:

- the creation of the regional knowledge network for ASC agroforestry systems,
- the development of the innovation network based on case studies in private and public companies,
- the dissemination of knowledge and innovations through a web portal dedicated to ASC agroforestry systems in Tuscany ([www.gonewton.it](http://www.gonewton.it)) and

- the identification of innovative strategies for the valorisation of agro-forestry and agro-silvicultural production.

The knowledge transfer has been implemented through the network of farmers and stakeholders, based on the participatory approach and the use of interactive information tools such as the web-GIS portal and gamification tools/techniques for learning. Furthermore, knowledge transfer was supported by the implementation of the training tools such as seminars, meetings, courses and study visits and finally the establishment of the first Agroforestry School.

The activities in agriculture and forestry companies carried out by the PEFC Italia (OG Newton project partner), played an important role in the recognition of NEWTON efforts. The innovations proposed by PEFC Italia concerned economic, environmental and social spheres of agro-forestry companies. These segments can be pursued by implementing systems with lower emissions of greenhouse gases, conserving the biodiversity and fertility of the soil, having greater stability and giving greater added value in the market and at the same time having products with sustainability certification; all issues that fall within the membership of certification schemes. The transfer of these innovations occurred through direct communication with the project's partner companies on the quality and quantity of the products deriving from their management potentially subject of the certification. For companies not participating in the project, the innovations deriving from the project will flow into the Standard of "Sustainable management of an agroforestry system" adapted and refined in the companies of the GO-NEWTON project and replicable in other regional and national contexts.

The PEFC Italia analysed the data on traceability and sustainability of agro-silvicultural production and related transformations implemented by the project partner companies (CIRAA Pisa). Time was devoted to the analysis of the data provided by the companies, and in parallel, identification of the type of certifiable products deriving from the agricultural, livestock, forestry and agroforestry component was conducted, plus the identification of certification schemes potentially implementable to provide guarantee of the sustainability and traceability of the identified products.

For the purpose of implementing these activities was essential to identify the process or product certification standards that have a national value, knowing that some are also recognized on a global scale (such as the ISO standards or the PEFC-FSC standards, Global Gap, BRC, etc.).

In the study carried out in the partner companies, 48 products or product categories and 13 transformed and processed products were identified. These 61 products are potentially the subject of a certification (both of quality and product, but also ethics and sustainability) that has recognition of the certification on an Italian, European or global scale.

The final result is 35 certification schemes applicable on an international scale for the 61 products and products processed by the partner companies of the NEWTON project.

During the project implementation, as a supplementary and initially unforeseen activity, various reference Certification Bodies in the national sector were involved for the validation of the data and the certification type initially identified by PEFC Italia. Involvement was as consequence of receiving positive feedback from experts consulted regarding the methodology and market consistency of the certifications initially identified by PEFC Italia. For this research, PEFC Italy initially used an online platform (<https://sustainabilitymap.org>) capable of simultaneously analysing the different processes and requirements of the various certification standards identified and suitable to be reported on a global scale for each product/product categories.

For action "Application of internal checks (audits) for the integration of the different certification standards in OG companies" PEFC Italy, within the process of drafting the certification standard of "Sustainable management of Agroforestry" closely connected to the NEWTON project, organized and conducted seven official online meetings throughout the entire process of writing the standard, involving twenty-two bodies and institutions representing the agroforestry sector in Italy through 38 active participants in the process, including researchers and the partner companies of the NEWTON Project. These meetings dedicated to the topic of Agroforestry in Italy saw the application of the requirements issued by the International

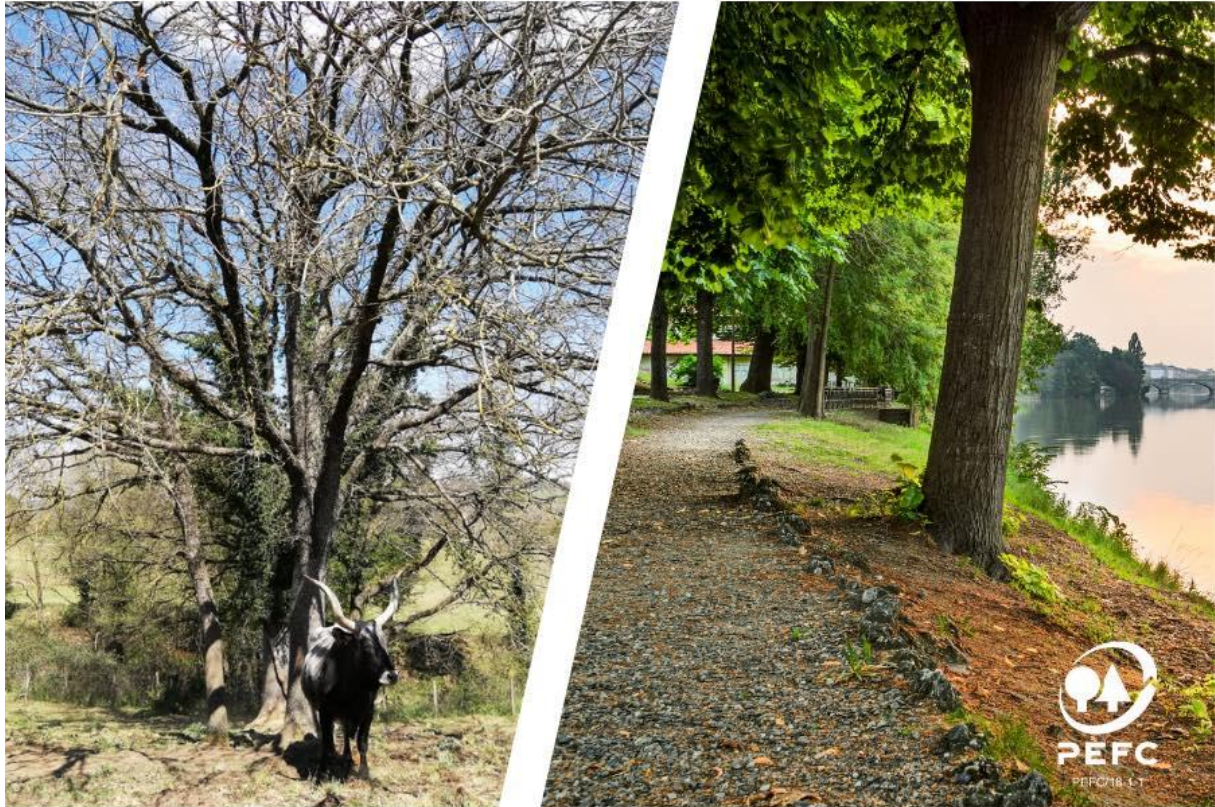
PEFC, translated and discussed with the experts participating in the Forum, and of the national legislation, treating as case studies in particular the management systems of partner companies of the NEWTON project.

The PEFC Italia conducted the pilot tests for the Sustainable Management standard of an Agroforestry system (PEFC ITA 1001-5) in autumn 2022 which enabled the company's technicians to analyse the guidelines and indicators established during the process of drafting the standard, highlighting the difficult application of some and improving others. The experience and the knowledge acquired during the project will be regionally and nationally taken through a document easily implementable in any company for the certification of products deriving from sustainable agroforestry management.

The economic repercussions will be visible in companies willing to invest in the certification of products coming from agro-forestry-pastoral systems or through the certification of the sustainable management of an agroforestry system according to the PEFC Italia scheme, which in both cases would allow access to the market with product and system traceability certifications, to give the end consumer a guarantee of the correct management of the company system. As a consequence of the economic repercussions, product and system certifications will have an impact on companies more prudent and respectful of the mandatory environmental requirements required by the certification schemes, implementing corporate sustainability in social and environmental terms and opening up to new market channels.

### 3. Conclusions

The GO-NEWTON project contributed in fundamental matters to the first Agroforestry certification system in Europe, and one of the first worldwide, available as early as March 2023 and applicable in an accredited manner in the first months of 2024.



## About our project

Horizon Europe funded project **FOREST4EU** (<https://www.forest4eu.eu/>) aims at connecting existing operational groups from different countries across Europe (Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Austria, Slovenia, Latvia, Sweden, Netherlands, Germany) in order to encourage the transfer of knowledge and experience in innovative approaches implemented in forestry and agroforestry. The NEWTON - NETWork Operational Group for agroforestry in Tuscany is one of those exemplar innovative OGs.



## Sources

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Relazione tecnica finale del Gruppo Operativo NEWTON - NETWork per l'agroselvicoltura in TOscaNa

- <https://www.innovarurale.it/it/pei-agri/gruppi-operativi/bancadati-go-pei/network-lagroselvicoltura-toscana>

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