



**MINISTERO DELLE POLITICHE AGRICOLE  
ALIMENTARI E FORESTALI**



**WORKING GROUP LANDSCAPE**

**NATIONAL OBSERVATORY OF RURAL LANDSCAPE**



**MINISTERO DELLE POLITICHE AGRICOLE  
ALIMENTARI E FORESTALI**

Gruppo di Lavoro Paesaggio

Coordinator: Prof. Mauro Agnoletti – [mauro.agnoletti@unifi.it](mailto:mauro.agnoletti@unifi.it)



**MINISTERIAL DECREE RELATIVE TO THE INSTITUTION OF A NATIONAL OBSERVATORY OF RURAL LANDSCAPE, FARMING PRACTICES AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE. Gazzetta Ufficiale – Anno 153 – N. 290 – 12A13051**

**HAVING SEEN** the Act of 6 April 1977, no. 184, entitled "Ratification and enactment of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," signed in Paris on November 23, 1972;

**HAVING SEEN** the Act of 23 August 1988, no. 400, entitled "Regulation of Government activity and organization of the Office of the Presidency of the Council" and its subsequent modifications and additions;

**HAVING SEEN** the Act of 9 January 2006, no. 14, entitled "Ratification and enactment of the European Convention on Landscape, made in Florence on 20 October 2000";

**HAVING SEEN** the Act of 17 July 2006, no. 233, entitled "Conversion into law, with modifications, of the Decree-Law of 18 May 2006, no. 181, containing urgent provisions concerning the reorganization of the functions of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and of the Ministries. Mandate for the Government to coordinate provisions concerning the functions and organization of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and of the Ministries";

**HAVING SEEN** the Act of 27 September 2007, no. 167, entitled "Ratification and enactment of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in Paris on 17 October 2003 by the 32nd session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)";

**HAVING SEEN** the Decree-Law of 4 June 1997, no. 143, entitled "Conferring on the Regions of administrative functions as regards agriculture and fishing, and reorganization of the central administration";

**HAVING SEEN** the Decree-Law of 30 June 1999, no. 300, entitled "Reform of government organization under the provisions of article 11 of the Act of 15 March 1997, no. 59," and especially Articles 33 and 34, relative to the functions and organization of the Ministry for Agricultural and Forest Policies;

**HAVING SEEN** the Decree-Law of 22 January 2004 and its subsequent modifications, entitled "Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape, under the provisions of Article 10 of the Act of July 6, 2002, no. 137";

**HAVING SEEN** Subparagraph 3 of Article 2 of the Decree of the President of the Republic of February 14, 2012, no. 41, entitled "Norms for the reorganization of the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forest Policies, under the provisions of Articles 2, Subparagraphs 8-bis, 8-quater and 8-quinquies of the Decree-Law of December 30, 2009, no. 194, converted, with modifications, by the Act of February 26, 2010, no. 25, and of Article 1, Subparagraph 3, of the Decree-Law of 13 August 2011, no. 138, converted, with modifications, by the Act of September 14, 2011, no. 148," as regards the part that assigns to the General Directory of Rural Development the task to draw up and coordinate the guidelines for policies relative to the rural landscape;



**HAVING CONSIDERED** the principles of the Declaration on Environment and Development and the Agenda 21 document of the United Nations Conference on environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and notably its references to the safeguarding of traditional landscapes and knowledge as connected to the sustainable development of the planet;

**HAVING CONSIDERED** UNESCO'S MAB (Man and the Biosphere) Program, adopted in 1971, and notably its Madrid Action Plan, adopted on the occasion of the 20th Session of the International Coordinating Council of the Program, held on 9 February 2008, concerning the conservation of biological and cultural diversity and the sustainable development of rural landscapes by the Global Network of Biosphere Reserves;

**HAVING CONSIDERED** Resolution no. 3 of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests held in Vienna in 2003, concerning the importance of social and cultural values in Sustainable Forest Management, notably as regards traditional landscape and knowledge;

**HAVING CONSIDERED** the Declaration on Bio-cultural Diversity adopted by the International Conference on Biological and Cultural Diversity (ICBCD) at Montreal (Canada) on June 10, 2010, stressing the need to protect traditional agricultural practices as an expression of the biological and cultural diversity of a community;

**HAVING CONSIDERED** Decision X/20 of the 10th Conference of the Parties on the Nagoya Convention on Biological Diversity, and notably Paragraph 16, with its invitation to Party States to increase global awareness of the close interconnection between cultural and biological diversity in rural contexts as well as elsewhere;

**HAVING CONSIDERED** the Bali Ministerial Declaration on the role of the FAO International Treaty on Phytogenetic Resources for Food and Agriculture adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Biodiversity, Food Security and Climate Change, held at Nusa Dua (Indonesia) on 11 March 2011;

**HAVING CONSIDERED** the conclusive document of the Consultative Meeting on World Heritage and Sustainable Development, organized by UNESCO at Ouro Preto (Brazil) from 5 to 8 February 2012, and notably point 39, where, given the close correlation and interdependence of biological and cultural diversity, and considered the need for a better integration and collaboration between the relevant Conventions, the definition of common tools and programs is auspicated, with the objective of a Universal UNESCO Declaration on Sustainable Development and Biocultural Diversity;

**HAVING CONSIDERED** the 2007-13 National Strategic Plan for Rural Development 2007-13, which at paragraph 1.2 underscores the importance of agriculture for the preservation of the Italian rural landscape and the need for actions aimed at guaranteeing the value of national rural heritage;

**HAVING CONSIDERED** the role played by measures for rural development in the enhancement and protection of the rural landscape;

**HAVING CONSIDERED** the results of the investigation conducted for the National Catalogue of Historical Rural Landscape, promoted by the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forest Policies as a means to promote the identification, conservation and dynamic management of historical rural landscape systems and traditional rural practices;

**HAVING DEEMED IT** advisable to single out some general objectives that would help promote the protection and enhancement of the rural landscape in view of the upcoming 2014-2020 programming cycle  
2 of the common agricultural policy.



**HAVING ACKNOWLEDGED** the importance of protecting and enhancing historical landscapes and traditional agricultural practices in order to preserve the biological and cultural diversity of Italian rural heritage and promote its sustainable development;

**HAVING OBTAINED** the approval of the permanent conference for the relations between the State, the Regions, and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano, formalized in the session of October 25, 2012,

## DECREES THAT

### **Article 1**

*(Institution of the National Observatory of Rural Landscape, Agricultural Practices and Traditional Knowledge)*

1. For the purposes of the programming of common agricultural policy and a better management of rural development measures for the enhancement and protection of the rural landscape and its agricultural traditions, as well as the associated food-producing heritage, the National Observatory of Rural Landscape, Agricultural Practices and Traditional Knowledge (henceforth “Observatory”) is hereby established.
2. The Observatory will be presided over by the Minister and be composed of the Chief of the Department of European and International Rural Development Policies, or his or her delegate, in the capacity of vice-president; five experts, of whom three appointed by the Minister upon proposal of the Chief of Department and two by the Permanent Conference for the Relations between the State, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano, within ninety days from the publication of the present decree; one representative of the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities; one representative of the Ministry of the Environment and Protection of Land and Sea; one expert appointed by the President of the Italian National Commission for UNESCO; one representative of the most representative agricultural associations; five representatives of the Regional Governments, designated by the Permanent Conference for the Relations between the State, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano; and the representative of the autonomous Region or Province interested in inclusion in or exclusion from the Register.
3. The General Directorate for Rural Development will perform the functions of technical secretariat of the Observatory compatibly with the human and economic resources available under current legislation.
4. Membership of the Observatory, even if granted to subjects outside the Administration, will be unpaid and will not under any circumstances involve allowances or refunding of expenses.

### **Article 2**

*(Definitions)*

For the purposes of the present decree,

- a) “traditional rural landscape of historical interest” designates portions of land classified as rural and/or linear or punctiform elements which, while still in the process of evolving, retain evident testimonies of their origin and history, maintaining all the while a role in society and the economy. These include cultivation systems and buildings or settlements used for agricultural, forest managing or pastoral purposes, which display traditional or historically interesting features;



- b) “landscape in need of restoration” means a traditional rural landscape of historical interest threatened by deterioration or abandonment, whose special significance makes it eligible for restoration;
- c) “traditional practices” means complex systems relying on ingenuous and diversified techniques based on local knowledge rooted in rural civilization, which have provided an important contribution to the shaping and maintenance of the traditional landscapes they are associated with. These practices are the result of continuous adaptation to diverse and changing historical and environmental conditions to provide a number of products and services and contribute to the quality of life of local populations;
- d) “traditional knowledge” means immaterial aspects such as language, spiritual and cultural values, folk ceremonies and traditions, fairy tales and legends, practical knowledge and techniques, and naturalistic and environmental knowledge relative to agricultural, forest managing and pastoral activities, as well as settlement forms and agricultural management systems;
- e) “community” means individuals, associations or organized groups practicing, enhancing, supporting, and handing down from one generation to the next, traditional knowledge and practices or activities that are part and parcel of their cultural identity in the rural context;
- f) “Minister” means the Minister of Agricultural, Food and Forest Policies;
- g) “Ministry” means the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forest Policies;
- h) “Department” means the Department of European and International Policies for Rural Development of the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forest Policies.

**Article 3** (*Functions of  
the Observatory*)

The Observatory will

- a) set general guidelines and strategies for the adoption of specific measures aimed at safeguarding, enhancing, planning, restoring and managing the rural landscape;
- b) take a census of landscapes, agricultural practices and traditional knowledge regarded as being of special significance;
- c) manage the National Register mentioned in Article 4, putting forth operative proposals to ensure the conservation, protection and enhancement of the landscapes and practices recorded in it;
- d) monitor the effects of agricultural policies and environmental, social and economic dynamics on rural landscapes, and the effects of their ongoing transformations;
- e) define the landscape quality objectives to be pursued by agricultural policies in collaboration with regional governments;
- f) ensure the exchange of knowledge and information with the regional governments and the other central administration;



- g) ensure the exchange of knowledge and information at the international scale;
- h) promote multidisciplinary training programs in landscape policy, safeguard and planning for public administrations, professionals, the concerned professional organizations, and citizens;
- i) promote collaborations with the regional governments to achieve a close integration between agricultural and rural development planning and landscape planning;
- j) promote research activities to investigate, within the boundaries of the different disciplines involved, values connected with the rural landscape, and its safeguarding, management and planning, with the intent, among other things, of preserving the bio-cultural diversity of the land;
- k) promote the dissemination of information to increase knowledge of functions and values connected with the rural landscape;
- l) set general principles and guidelines for the protection and enhancement of the rural landscape, with special regard to the actions prescribed by common agricultural policy.

#### **Article 4**

*(Institution of a National Register of Rural Landscapes of Historical Interest,  
Agricultural Practices and Traditional Knowledge)*

1. In order to attain the objectives described in Article 4, the National Register of Rural Landscapes of Historical Interest, Agricultural Practices and Traditional Knowledge (henceforth “Register”) is hereby instituted at the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forest Policies.

2. The Observatory will

- a) identify and catalogue in the Register traditional rural landscapes or landscapes of historical interest present within the national territory and connected traditional practices and knowledge, taking account both of the opinion of scholars and of the values ascribed to these landscapes, practices and knowledge by the concerned communities, subjects and populations;
- b) manage the collection, analysis and classification of the data, ensuring its conservation for future generations and accessibility to potential users through a dedicated website as well as other means;
- c) select among the rural landscapes recorded in the Register possible candidates for inclusion in UNESCO’s Representative List of World Heritage, as well as agricultural practices and traditional knowledge possibly eligible for inclusion in UNESCO’s Representative List of Immaterial Heritage; if circumstances allow, the Observatory will select from the Register rural landscapes to be included in the UNESCO Network of Biosphere Reserves in the framework of the MAB Program, in observance of currently in force international procedures.



## Article 5

### *(Procedures for inclusion in the Register)*

1. By March 1 of each year, the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forest Policies will collect and forward applications for inclusion in the Register to the Observatory. These applications shall use a form published on the Ministry's institutional website, drawn up by the Observatory and approved by all the Regions and autonomous Provinces.
2. In the application, the applicant shall prove the existence of the requirements indicated in the methodological guidelines published on the Ministry's official website.
3. Within 30 days of reception of the application, the Observatory will, should this be deemed necessary, request further information from the applicant to complete the application file.
4. Before rendering its decision about an application, the Observatory can request the scientific advice of research institutions placed under the surveillance of the Ministry, or consult other specialized institutions, sector experts, or operators of proven experience. Their assessments will be put on record, but will not be binding.
5. By 15 September of each year, the Observatory will take a majority vote to decide whether or not to include the applying area in the Register, on the basis of its origin, historical value, state of preservation, bio-cultural diversity, and aesthetic qualities.
6. Should a traditional rural landscape, agricultural practice or corpus of traditional knowledge lose the original characteristics that had determined its original inclusion in the Register, the Observatory, having consulted with the interested parties, will take a majority vote on its deletion from the Register.
7. By 30 September of every year, by decree of the Minister, the rural landscapes, agricultural practices and corpuses of traditional knowledge that have been positively assessed by the Observatory will be included in the Register; the deadline also applies to deletions. The Ministry will grant the Register adequate publicity, notably through an easily accessible dedicated section in its official website, or on the website of the National Rural Network.

### *(Final provisions)*

1. The coming into force of the present decree will involve no new or further burden on public finances.
2. The competent administrations will carry out the provisions of the present decree with the human and financial resources and equipment available under currently applicable law.