



Pilot Project on monitoring of biodiversity

"We want to turn every hectare into an active ally of biodiversity."

At a key moment for the ecological transition of European agriculture, the project **"Monitoring key aspects of ecological sustainability – biodiversity, water, soil, and climate – and effectiveness of action plans in fruit and vegetable crops in Spain,"** is being promoted by the Environmental Sustainability (ESS) Working Group. The main task of the Environmental Sustainability Working Group is to develop a new environmental sustainability solution. This group is led by **GLOBALG.A.P** and includes members from organizations such as the **Global Nature Fund and Quality & Adviser (Biodiversity Grow)**, among others.

The three entities are part of the **ESS working group**, contributing their experience in sustainability and facilitating the farmers' transition to ESS. Now they started a pioneering model for agricultural sustainability in Spain. With **157 hectares** of fruit and vegetable crops serving as a living laboratory, the initiative aims to turn biodiversity into a competitive advantage.

The participating companies, in alphabetical order, are **Agroiris, Albenfruit, Exportaciones Aranda, S.L.; Frutas Beri, Frutas Gragón, Indasol, Nufri, Sat Cítricos Valencianos, Sat Hortichuelas, Sat Las Primicias, Sat Versol**; with the participation of commercial partners **Cinatur Group, Greenyard Fresh Spain, and Iberiana Frucht**.

"With the [Environmental Sustainability Working Group](#), we are developing – in collaboration with a broad alliance of partners in a multi-stakeholder initiative – a sustainability solution that is currently being piloted in real-world settings," explains Dr. René Capote, Senior Technical Expert at GLOBALG.A.P.

For **Global Nature Fund**, the collaboration contributes to the monitoring and improvement of the Basic-Set of Biodiversity Criteria. This set, elaborated by the sector initiative Food for Biodiversity, is an orientation for the whole food sector. For **BioDiversity Grow (Quality & Adviser, S.L.)**, it means continuous improvement of its already proven system for monitoring key indicators of biodiversity and sustainability and offers support for its standard.

"Monitoring based on meaningful key data and indicators is key and will demonstrate positive outcomes for biodiversity and climate protection as well as for the farmers emphasizes Marion Hammerl, President of the Global Nature Fund.

For farmers, this pilot project is a national program measuring the environmental impact across **157 hectares** of open-field and greenhouse-grown fruits and vegetables located in the **Valencian Community, Andalusia, Aragon, and Murcia**. More than **30 indicators** are analyzed in crops such as **tomatoes, broccoli, citrus fruits, and melons**, combining field visits, laboratory tests, and continuous monitoring over three years.

This is not about abstract sustainability, but rather about **concrete metrics** regarding biodiversity, **biological and chemical soil indicators, vegetation cover, soil fauna, mite fauna, beneficial insects, pesticide use, carbon footprint, water footprint**, and the support of **protected species as well as the control of invasive species**, all related to the crops and its pests. “The project will elaborate and test a meaningful and practical monitoring system for the ESS Standard, Basic Set and BioDiversity Grow in a joint approach” underlines Carlos Martinez, Comercial Director for Quality & Adviser and BioDiversity Grow.

Within joint meetings, the producers will elaborate an **Action Plan**, and in the end, the implementation of **simple and effective practical recommendations** will be documented. The goal is to obtain a **baseline** and track the progress or lack thereof of the tested indicators regarding production methods in Spain, taking into account the risk derived from the geographical areas where the farms are located. This provides an **overall risk assessment** for these production systems.

In addition to contributing to the objectives of the **European Green Deal** or the **Nature Restoration Law**, the farmers will be **evaluated and rated** annually based on their sustainability levels. This enables access to markets that require advanced certifications, such as **ESS from GLOBALG.A.P. or BioDiversity Grow**, which improves not only sustainability but also **commercial competitiveness**.

The indicators will be aligned with the **7 risks identified at the European level** including: **water scarcity, water pollution, changes in land use/cover, species loss, soil health, climate change, and toxicity**.

In the short term, we expect to see improvements in agroecological infrastructures or increased presence of **auxiliary fauna and flora**, and a **reduction in herbicide applications**, among other benefits.

The final objective is to generate a **set of indicators valid across Europe**, and to demonstrate that **biodiversity is not a constraint**, but a **driver of profitability**.

Quality & Advisor (Q&A) is working with the **Polytechnic University of Valencia**, involving **biologists, soil scientists, chemists, and sustainable agriculture experts**, also maintaining connections across the country through a university network. **Everything is based on science**, from fauna sampling to carbon footprint assessments. Even the **action plans are academically validated to avoid any greenwashing**.

“It is about **positive impacts verified by specialized professionals**, because we believe the **audit system must evolve** toward models that provide greater value to production. It is necessary to obtain objective data to evaluate the real risk of these productions, to elaborate a strategy and implement corrective actions. The development of the plantations in the 3 years of the pilot project will demonstrate that practical monitoring is not a cost but an investment,” says Carina Mazzuz, Technical Director of Q&A and BioDiversity Grow and coordinator of the Piloto Project in Spain.

The main challenge is the **wide diversity of starting points among farms**. Some have experience in sustainability, while others have never worked with environmental indicators. Furthermore, there are **no magical solutions**: each farm needs a **personalized plan**, though they may share effective common practices. There is also a **cultural shift**

needed: Convincing people that enhancing **biodiversity will improve profitability, but requires time and evidence.**

A key role: Major retailers are demanding **verifiable metrics** from their suppliers to comply with regulations such as the **CSDDD** or **CSRD**. They want to ensure that their fruits and vegetables are not only fresh but that their production protects and **restores ecosystems** rather than **destroying them**.

In summary, this is not just about **complying with regulations** or **boosting sales**, but about **securing the future of our own resources**. We now know that a farm rich in biodiversity is **more resilient to climate change**, requires **fewer inputs**, and provides **more sustainable food**. **Biodiversity is not a luxury; it is a strategic asset**. We must **restore trust in ecosystems and recover resources**, and **the time to act is now**.

GLOBALG.A.P. certification solutions aim to promote safer and more responsible farming practices in agriculture, aquaculture, and floriculture. Producers, retailers, and supply chain stakeholders in over 130 countries use our internationally recognized standards to support the production of food and other farmed products in a manner that addresses today's needs while preparing for future demands. Nearly 200,000 producers operate under GLOBALG.A.P. certification – covering more than four million hectares of plant production and almost three million metric tons of farmed seafood production annually.

With a mission to provide industry-leading, cost-effective, and value-adding assurance and benchmarking solutions, GLOBALG.A.P. supports a more socially and environmentally responsible and resilient sector for the benefit of future generations.

To learn more about our activities and what responsible farming means to us, visit www.globalgap.org GLOBALG.A.P. is owned by FoodPLUS GmbH, Cologne/ Germany.

Global Nature Fund is an environmental NGO engaged in the protection of nature – especially lakes and wetlands – and the support of sustainable economic development and livelihoods. GNF works in the improvement of biodiversity protection in the food sector since many years and is founding member of the sector initiative Food for Biodiversity. <https://globalnature.org/en/>

Food for Biodiversity is an initiative of the food sector with the objective to improve biodiversity performance of food companies and their supply chains. Food companies and retailers are working together with standard organisations, suppliers, NGOs and scientific institutions on how to improve biodiversity management and agricultural practises on farm level, incentives for farmers, training for managers in the companies and improvement of the political framework towards more biodiversity protection.

All project partners are members of Food for Biodiversity. <https://food-biodiversity.de/en/>

For more information, please contact:

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Citrus Farm. Cañamás Hnos (SAT Citricos Valencianos)- Valencia





Our Field Technical Coordinator Ana Cristina Olmeda with the tv valencia APUNT in a visit to the fields putting the traps







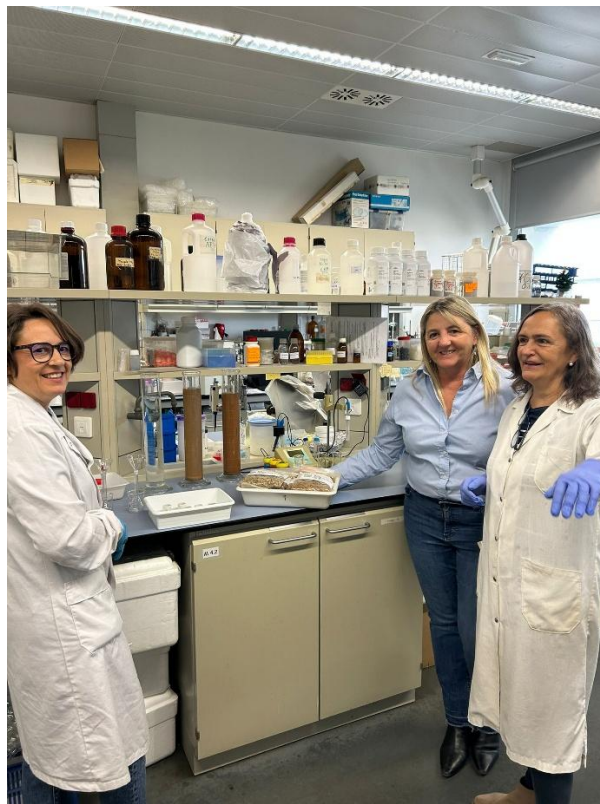


Carina Mazzuz and Carlos Martinez (Technacall Director for the Pilot Project in Spain)

In the laboratory of Agricultural Chemistry of Politechnicall University of Valencia with



Loles Garcia and Lola Raigón



Soil and water samples

