

# Co-operative “La Ramegna” Small Social Cooperative of Guardiaregia (CB)

## Contact name

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## Institution name

Oasi WWF-Riserva naturale regionale Guardiaregia-Campochiaro

## Region & country

Regione Molise - Italia



## Summary

Creation of a local Cooperative for the management of tourist activities, logistics and administrative management of fixed and seasonal staff of the WWF OASIS Guardiaregia-Campochiaro.



*WWF Oasis Educational Signs. Photo by N. Merola*

### **Background of the project**

At the time of the creation of the WWF OASIS of Guardiaregia-Campochiaro, there were no private or other facilities locally to manage the direct or induced activities related to the protection of the territory and its eco-tourism promotion.

The management of a complex protected area such as Guardiaregia-Campochiaro cannot be delegated almost exclusively to volunteers. For this reason, WWF Italia's need was above all, as was the case in other protected areas managed by the Association in Italy, to encourage the entry of local structures for the management of all activities of the protected area mentioned before.

### **Solution and actions taken**

WWF Oasis, the operating arm of WWF Italia for the Natural Oasis, and the Managing Authority of the Protected Area, has entered into a contract with the Cooperativa "La Ramegna", which was born in the meantime in Guardiaregia to support the management of social, tourism and environmental protection activities.

Twenty years ago the Social Cooperative La Ramegna was established, with the significant contribution of the WWF Molise. The cooperative is currently involved in the management of other public services, but the core activity is the management of welcome services to tourists of WWF Oasis, using also public granting for the furniture and technological equipment of the Visitors Centre. Guardiaregia Municipality has also assigned to the cooperative the maintenance of the San Nicola Path in the Oasis. Specifically, the next actions have taken place:

- Direct contacts with WWF Molise's directors, citizens, and volunteers;
- Creation of the Social Cooperative "LA RAMEGNA";

- Setting up a first Visitor Center resulting from a self-financing combined with a public contribution;
- Equipped paths have been also implemented through a financial contribution of the Municipality and it has been made the recruitment of full-time and seasonal guides;
- Achievement of proper operating tools;
- Increase of contacts with other structures in neighbouring regions.

### **Other institutions or parties involved**

RAMEGNA COOP. took advantage of the support of LEGACOOOP, GAL Molise experts, and for a short period, it was in an ATI, a temporary enterprise association. Also, the municipalities involved in the protected area such as Campochiaro and Guardiaregia, and WWF Italia and WWF Oasis.

### **Results**

Today, the “Ramegna” Cooperative is responsible for all WWF Oasis naturalistic and tourist activities. The Coop carries out hundreds of guided tours per year accompanying over 2000 people on all the trails of the Reserve. For this management of the WWF Oasis, Coop today uses n.1 permanent and n.2 seasonal operators. Activities in other services such as the Guardiaregia Municipal Library and cleaning services have produced 2 fixed-term and 3 permanent-time employees

### **Challenges**

The delay in public administration payments has created considerable difficulties for the Cooperative in its ordinary management and consequently for all those activities of protection, maintenance of structures and the promotion of the protected area delegated to the Cooperative itself.

### **Lessons learned**

The La Ramegna Cooperative was the first Coop of the Molise Region to be entrusted with the naturalistic management of a protected territory. WWF Oasi’s assignment and being within WWF Italia’s secure management network have positively facilitated their business. Financial difficulties have also taught that public-private partnerships, and thus the involvement of private individuals in the management of the protected area, require early and mid-term planning and financial resources that are proportional to the volume of activities necessary for the management and enhancement of the Oasis.

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<http://www.oasiguardiaregiacampochiaro.it>