



Project ID: ITHR0200457

GECO2.2

Green Economy and CO2

International Conference on Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Action: GECO2.2 Carbon Market Opportunities

March 27, 2025

WP1 – Comparative and survey studies

Activity 1.4 Communication

D.1.4.1 International meeting on voluntary carbon market implementation
strategies follow-up report

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Event abstract

This international event is organized under Work Package 1 titled *Comparative and Survey Studies*. WP1 plays a foundational role in the project by providing a comprehensive overview of current research, legal frameworks, and organizational structures related to agriculture, carbon removals, and climate change mitigation. The outcomes of WP1 will directly inform the upgrading strategies of WP2 and strengthen the design and implementation of the pilot actions in WP4.

By facilitating knowledge exchange and policy dialogue, this event supports the WP's specific objective to build a knowledge base and policy context that enables the development of effective regional and national strategies for voluntary carbon markets, in line with EU climate objectives.

The speaker's presentation

Ivana Radić from DNR welcomed the attendees and emphasized the importance of the project for all involved. She expressed her happiness at hosting everyone in Dubrovnik and shared her enthusiasm for the project's future development.





Dr. Marotta's presentation effectively bridged the past and future of the GECO2.2 project, demonstrating how foundational collaboration and experimentation are opening doors to new policy, economic, and environmental opportunities. The integration of technical tools with EU policy frameworks positions GECO2.2 as a model for sustainable carbon farming practices in Europe.

Antonio Cinti concluded by reiterating GECO 2.2's pivotal role in demonstrating the practical application of the EU carbon farming framework. Through coordinated technical, institutional, and educational efforts, the project aims to lay the foundation for a certified carbon credit market that empowers agricultural stakeholders and enhances environmental sustainability.



Cinti emphasized that the new EU Regulation (Reg. 3012/24) provides a fundamental framework for the GECO 2.2 approach. It sets forth:

- Quality criteria for carbon farming activities;
- Verification and certification rules;
- Guidelines for certification scheme functioning and recognition;
- Regulations for issuance and use of certified units.

The coming months will focus on finalizing key studies, deepening institutional partnerships, validating tools and methodologies, and launching training programs—all leading toward the pilot market phase in 2026.



Ivan Vrdoljak opened his presentation by placing the GECO 2.0 and GECO 2.2 projects in the broader context of climate change. He reminded the audience that greenhouse gases



(GHGs)—including CO₂, methane, and nitrous oxide—are driving global warming, largely due to industrial-era human activities. The global scientific community, governments, and international bodies have responded with emissions targets and frameworks, such as the Kyoto Protocol and EU directives.

A key sector in this fight is agriculture, which contributes around 10–12% of direct global GHG emissions, rising to nearly a quarter when forestry and land-use changes are included. Ivan emphasized that agricultural practices must become part of the climate solution—and GECO is designed to make that happen.

The original GECO 2.0 project laid the foundation by:

- Educating farmers, civil servants, and companies about emissions and carbon offsetting;
- Introducing at least three GHG-reducing practices per farm;
- Conducting audits to gather soil and farm management data;
- Using a custom-built web-based calculator to measure emissions and reductions;
- Launching a Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM) platform and a carbon credit registry;
- Completing several transactions between farmers and industrial partners.

These achievements marked the first steps toward an experimental carbon market for agriculture.

Now, GECO 2.2 builds upon this success by scaling and enhancing the model with new tools, strategies, and regulatory alignment. It is designed to move from prototype to policy-ready system, while staying grounded in regional agricultural realities.



The vision for GECO 2.2 includes:

- Creating a regional, agriculture-based voluntary carbon market;
- Supporting farmers to:
 - Store more carbon in soil and biomass;
 - Improve resilience to floods and drought;
 - Reduce risks across entire river basins;
 - Strengthen biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- Aligning with EU climate and agricultural policies, especially the *Farm to Fork Strategy*;
- Encouraging sustainable farming through economic incentives

Vrdoljak detailed several strategic pillars behind GECO 2.2:

1. Education & Engagement: Workshops target farmers, officials, and companies to improve understanding of emissions and carbon finance.
2. Data-Driven Action:
 - Soil sampling, fuel use, and land practices are documented per farm.
 - Emissions are calculated through an upgraded calculator.
3. Technological Upgrades:
 - Integration of blockchain for transparent and traceable carbon credit tracking;
 - Improved user interfaces to ensure farmer accessibility;
 - GIS tools and decision support systems to guide sustainable practice choices.
4. Institutional and Market Readiness:
 - Development of a formal certification scheme;
 - Planning of a registry that aligns with the future EU Union Registry for Certified Units (operational post-2028);



- Focus on self-sufficiency, aiming for a market system that operates without long-term public funding.

Expected outcomes:

Ivan Vrdoljak concluded with the anticipated impact of the project:

- Increased public and stakeholder awareness about climate-smart agriculture;
- Additional revenue streams for participating farmers through carbon credits;
- A verified, transparent system for local companies to offset emissions;
- A scalable and replicable market model applicable across the EU;
- A functioning certification scheme and compatible registry ready for integration with EU systems after 2028.

GECO 2.2, as presented, is not just a research project—it is a practical and forward-looking initiative that bridges science, farming, technology, and policy. Ivan’s presentation clearly communicated that this is a crucial step toward building resilient, low-carbon rural economies in Croatia and beyond.





One of the key sessions of the conference was a round table discussion involving representatives from public institutions, farmers, and prospective carbon credit buyers. The conversation focused on the practical, regulatory, and market-related challenges of developing a regional voluntary carbon market. Experts in the field of carbon markets and sustainable agriculture also participated in the discussion, providing valuable feedback on the GECO 2.2 project. They acknowledged the project's potential impact and recommended maintaining continuous dialogue to ensure its development aligns with evolving best practices and regulatory standards.



Following the session, all participants joined an informal networking coffee break, where they took the opportunity to continue discussions, ask further questions, and establish direct contacts across sectors.



Participants

The International Conference on Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Action: GECO2.2 Carbon Market Opportunities was successfully convened, bringing together key stakeholders—including institutional representatives, farmers, buyers, and subject-matter experts—to discuss and explore the intersection of sustainable agricultural practices and emerging opportunities within carbon markets.

The conference was attended by a total of 32 participants.

Representation included delegates from:

- 10 regional public authorities
- 5 representatives from business support organizations/farmers
- 14 project partners
- 3 members of the media



Conclusions

This international event (IT-CRO) aimed to bring together national and international authorities, institutional partners, experts, and local actors to:

- Increase awareness of agriculture's role in GHG emissions and its potential contributions to climate mitigation;
- Present and discuss the GECO2 project's main ideas and methodologies;
- Compare the GECO2 approach with the EU Proposal for a Regulation on a Union certification framework for carbon removals;
- Establish high-level communication channels to support future project development and collaboration;

Lay the groundwork for co-creating regional and national policy proposals in collaboration with institutional partners.

This event will contribute to the overall communication strategy of the WP by targeting behavioral and knowledge shifts across several stakeholder groups. The specific communication goals of this activity are to:

- Inform national and regional public authorities about the potential of regional voluntary carbon markets and how to implement them effectively;



- Raise awareness among firms, business support organizations, and research institutions about climate change challenges and the opportunities in carbon farming and nature-based solutions;
- Improve the general public's understanding of climate risks, ecosystem services, and mitigation/adaptation strategies.

The event was complemented by targeted dissemination tools such as press releases, website updates, social media outreach, ensuring wide visibility and engagement.

The GECO 2.2 Project Conference in Dubrovnik proved to be a highly valuable event, offering both strategic alignment and practical insight for all stakeholders involved in the development of a regional voluntary carbon market. It served as the first opportunity for many participants to gain a comprehensive understanding of the project's objectives, tools, and regulatory context. Presentations from project coordinators and technical experts provided clarity on the evolution from GECO 2.0 to GECO 2.2, outlined the challenges addressed, and introduced upgraded systems aligned with EU climate goals.

The round table discussion enabled open, multi-perspective dialogue between institutions, farmers, buyers, and experts—surfacing concerns, validating priorities, and strengthening cooperation. The presence and input of recognized field experts added credibility to the initiative and opened the door for continued professional engagement. Informal networking opportunities further encouraged collaboration and exchange of practical ideas.



Importantly, the outcomes of the conference directly support the next phases of the project by reinforcing institutional partnerships, clarifying stakeholder expectations, and confirming the relevance of the project’s planned activities—particularly the development of the certification scheme, operational plan, and training programs. The insights gathered will help refine the project’s implementation strategy and ensure that future steps remain both technically sound and stakeholder-driven.

Quality assessment

We conducted interviews with a few participants, asking them about the project and their experience during the conference. The recorded interviews are available and visible through the provided link :

<https://www.facebook.com/LibertasTelevizija/videos/projekt-geco-22-pokrenut-je-kao-nastavak-p-rethodnog-istoimenog-uspje%C5%A1nog-projekt/673892351766900/>

The interview was conducted with Leonardo Marotta, Expert in CO2 markets ecosystems and farming at Legacoop Romagna.

“This is one of the most important projects in agriculture, but also in the fight against climate change in Europe, because we combine agricultural work and the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.”

Antonio Cinti, Project Scientific Coordinator at Legacoop Romagna.

“This project is important for all of us, it involves the implementation of a voluntary market and allows everyone to participate and progress, in terms of the agricultural economy.”

Roman Danko, CEO at Humana Zagreb.



“Instead of buying on external markets, we decided to buy GECO2 credits after calculating our carbon footprint.”

Čedo Vučković, member of the team at Dubrovnik Neretva Region.

“In this new project, we are working on improving and certifying the methodology, a new EU regulation has come out and we are working to comply with it. “

Communication

To ensure effective outreach and visibility of the conference, a structured communication strategy was implemented before, during, and after the event. This included coordinated efforts across social media (including Facebook and LinkedIn), the official website, and external media coverage. Additionally, various branded materials such as gadgets, posters, roll-ups, and other visual elements were used on-site to enhance the event's visibility and recognition.







Before the Conference:

A countdown campaign was launched on social media to generate interest and engage the public in the days leading up to the conference. Posts were published both on Facebook and LinkedIn to reach a wider and more professional audience.

- Facebook posts:

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=960480112894906&id=100067987783636&mibextid=w wXlfr&rdid=sfkryGRPNMIQxm1h#

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=963768292566088&id=100067987783636&mibextid=w wXlfr&rdid=tyKko3VF3rIHcYDc#



 GECO 2.2
March 17 · 🌐

Only 10 days left until the #GECO2.2 International Conference “Sustainable agriculture and climate action: the GECO 2.2 carbon market opportunities” organized by our project partner Dubrovnik-Neretva Region.

📅 March 27 | 📍 Dubrovnik 🇩🇪 Hotel Adria, Radnicka ulica 46-

? Did you know? The GECO2.2 project is building on the success of the first experimental voluntary carbon market for agriculture! This conference will explore how farmers, institutions, and buyers can collaborat... See more



**Sustainable agriculture and climate action:
the GECO2.2 carbon market opportunities**

27 March 2025

- LinkedIn post:

https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7309907044650655745?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAADW-G5IBzTCquZFmaEy7Rcq1dICmc7cuXUc

An official announcement was also published on the Dubrovnik-Neretva County website:

<https://www.dnz.hr/medunarodna-konferencija-u-sklopu-projekta-green-economy-and-co2-2/>



During the Conference:

On the day of the conference, a highlight video was shared on social media, capturing key moments and conveying the event's energy in real time.

- Social media post and video:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/16DTMfQGFL/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

After the Conference:

A post-event article and summary were published on the county's official website:

<https://www.dnz.hr/odrzan-v-projekt-ni-sastanak-i-medunarodna-konferencija-u-sklopu-projekta-green-economy-and-co2-2/>

In addition, a local TV outlet, Libertas Televizija, covered the conference and published a video report on their social media and news portal, helping extend the reach of the event to a wider audience:

<https://www.facebook.com/LibertasTelevizija/videos/projekt-geco-22-pokrenut-je-kao-nastavak-prethodnog-istoimenog-uspje%C5%A1nog-projekt/673892351766900/>

<https://mail.liberportal.hr/vijesti/svijest-o-utjecaju-klimatskih-promjena-predstavljen-projekt-sustainable-agriculture-and-climate-action-the-geco22-carbon-market-opportunities-fotovideo>



We shared a gallery of photos from the conference on our social media platforms, highlighting key moments and engaging visuals from the event. Successfully showcasing the conference's impact and activities.

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=983579703918280&id=100067987783636&mibextid=wXlfr&rdid=Ke29BlmCQZcNHi7K#

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ciheambari_agriculture-greentransition-carbonmarket-activity-7318632999917412353-RUit?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAADW-G5IBzTCquZFmaEy7Rcq1dICmc7cuXUc

This multi-channel approach—enhanced by professional outreach and on-site branded materials—helped ensure strong visibility and audience engagement before, during, and after the conference.

Agenda

International Conference: Sustainable agriculture and climate action: The GECO2.2 carbon market opportunities

- 08.30 – 09.00 Registration of participants
- 09.00 – 09.15 Welcome speech
(Dubrovnik Neretva Region)
- 09.15 – 9.35 GECO 2.2 : The projects roots and the new opportunities
(Antonio Cinti, Scientific coordinator – Legacoop Romagna)
- 9.35 – 10.00 The evolution of the project in the light of new European legislation
(Ivan Vrdoljak – Dubrovnik Neretva Region)
- 10.00 – 10.45 Round table: institutions, farmers and buyers
(All participants)
- 10:45 – 11:00 Wrap up





Link to the presentations

- Leonardo Marotta - Legacoop Romagna :“ The projects roots and the new opportunities”
- Antonio Cinti - Legacoop Romagna:“ The projects roots and the new opportunities”
- Ivan Vrdoljak- Alcina d.o.o. on the behalf DNR: “The evolution of the project in the light of new European legislation”

Link to the presentations:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1HxUp-SWeX1CLyVqNUZJgr6AY4bZu8ulw>

