

Emas application in the Euganean Thermal Basin

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The EMAS project was started at the beginning of 2003 as an initiative of the Euganean Hills Regional Park with the joint signing of a Commitment Protocol by the Euganean Hills Regional Park, as the activities coordinator and promoter, five municipalities in the Euganean Thermal Area (Abano Terme, Battaglia Terme, Galzignano Terme, Montegrotto Terme and Teolo), the Province of Padua, the Regional Agency for Environment Prevention and Protection (ARPAV) and the Regional Agency for Agricultural, Forestry and Food Sectors (Veneto Agricoltura). It represents an implementation of the requirements stipulated in European Regulation No. 761/2001 – EMAS (Eco Management and Audit Scheme).

The main objective is to implement five Environmental Management Systems in the five municipalities concerned, which are to adopt an Environmental Policy of observing legal prescriptions, commit themselves to introducing measures for the concrete and continuous improvement of environmental performance and put into effect transparent communication with stakeholders.

The first phase of the project provides for the Initial Environmental Analysis study applied to the five municipalities, identifying direct and indirect environmental aspects relating to municipal activities and evaluating their effects as potential impacts on the environment, checking environmental legislative conformity with the aim of precisely identifying the responsibilities and methods necessary to ensure conformity with the law.

The second phase of the project, which is based on the Initial Environmental Analysis results and on the strategic content of the Environmental Policy, provides for the organization and the implementation of five Environmental Systems, the definition of methods and responsibilities for managing activities relating to environmental aspects and the setting of specific indicators for monitoring environmental performance as it relates to municipal structures and to the territory, with the object of providing a complete picture in order to support decision-making and specific active programmes of action aimed at environmental protection and conservation.

The third project phase is intended to improve stakeholders' awareness through the circulation of the document called "Environmental Declaration". In fact, as the EMAS Regulation requires, the municipalities must guarantee to provide public information on their Environmental Policy, on environmental objectives and targets fixed in advance and on their own environmental impact and performance, by means of the periodic publication and distribution of a checked and validated document.

The environmental improvement finds its highest expression in the research into even more ambitious environmental objectives and in a commitment to the improvement of the territory's careful management which is why the project agreement has, as its ultimate aim, not only the achievement of EMAS registration of the 5 municipalities but also the growth of environmental awareness in the municipalities and the extension of the stakeholders' active involvement to encompass the entire territory.

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