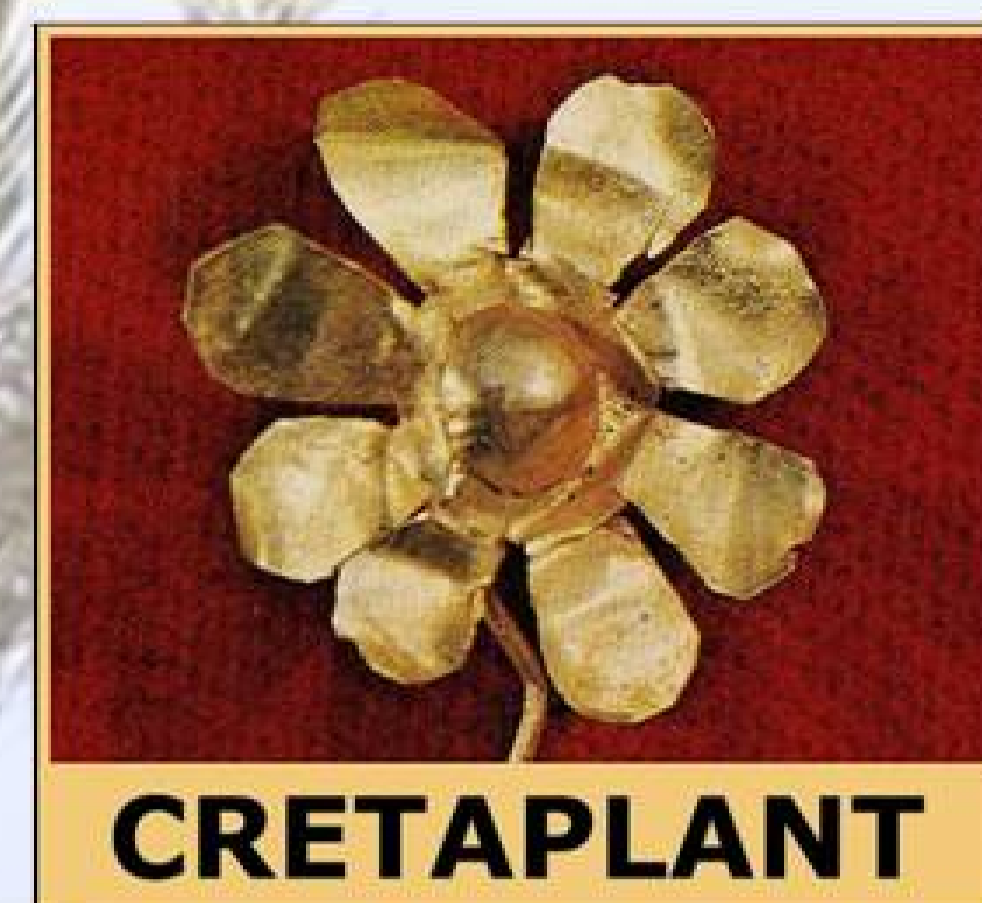


A Pilot Network of Plant Micro-Reserves in Western Crete

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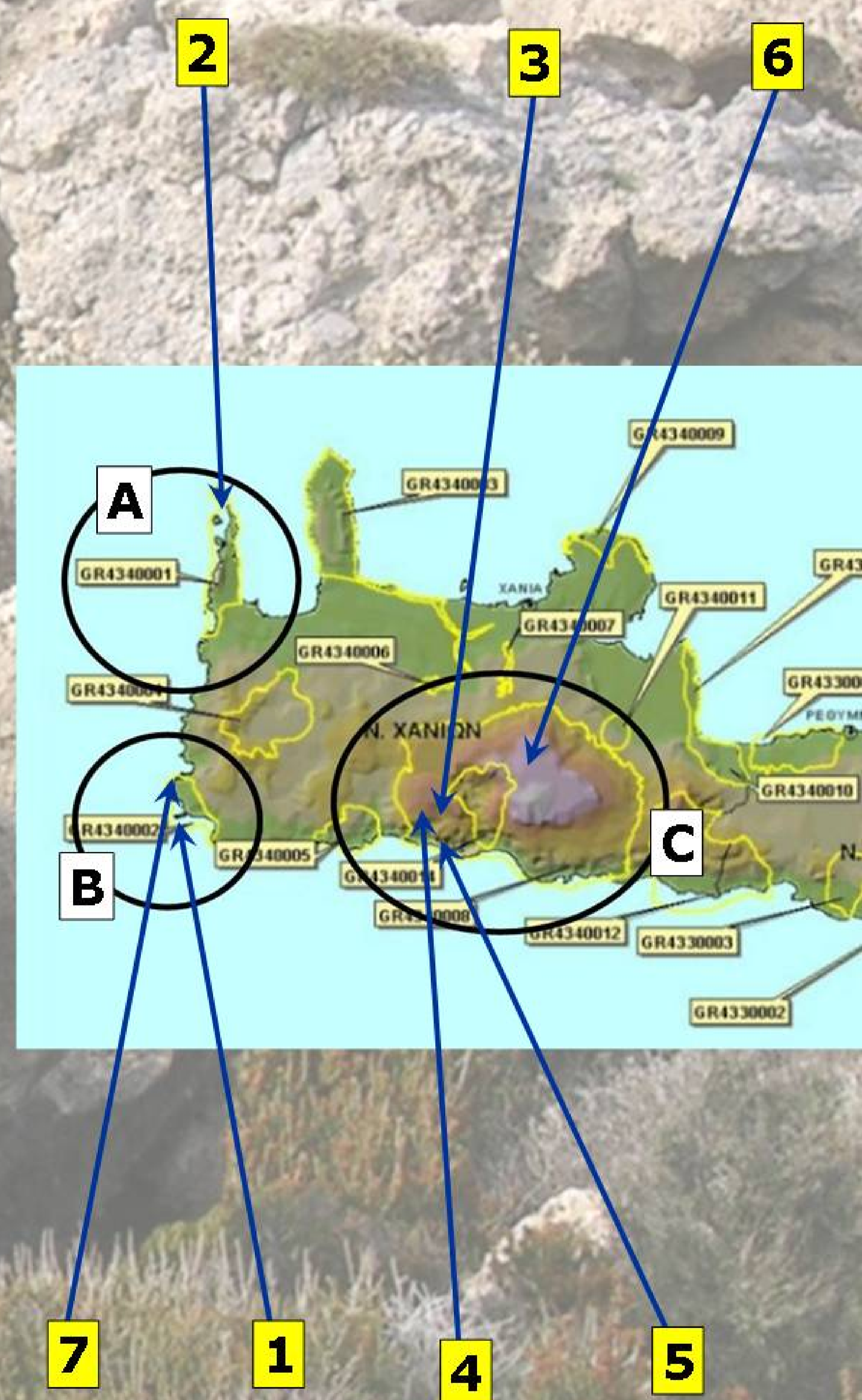
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Objective

CRETAPLANT (A Pilot Network of Plant Micro-Reserves in Western Crete) is a LIFE-NATURE 2004 Project funded by EU with a duration of 40 months (2004-2007). Partners are: the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (MAICh) and the Forest Directorate of Chania (Region of Crete).

The objective of the project is the creation of a Pilot Plant Micro-Reserves Network in Western Crete (Chania Prefecture). The network is comprised by 7 reserves (of an area less than 10 hectares each). Each reserve will be established on public land and will include a significant part (if not all) of either the single population or one among several for each targeted species. The specific, exact locations of the reserves have been selected among a total of 14 populations which are all situated within the boundaries of 3 pSCI (Natura 2000 sites), namely: (A) Gramvousa etc (GR4340001), (B) Elafonisos etc (GR4340002), (C) Lefka Ori (GR4340008). Each of the 6 out of 7 Micro-Reserves refers to each of the 6 plant species of Community priority (Directive 92/43/EEC) growing in Chania Prefecture, namely: 1. * *Androcymbium rechingeri* Greuter, 2. * *Anthemis glaberrima* (Rech. f.) Greuter, 3. * *Bupleurum kakiskalae* Greuter, 4. * *Cephalanthera cucullata* Boiss. & Heldr., 5. * *Hypericum aciferum* (Greuter) N.K.B. Robson, 6. * *Nepeta sphaciatica* P. H. Davis. The 7th reserve encloses part of the priority habitat type 9370, * Palm groves of *Phoenix* within GR4340002. In addition to the above mentioned priority species and habitat, the micro-reserves embrace a significant number of other important plants (endemic, rare and threatened species).



Actions and means involved

The creation of the Pilot Plant Micro-Reserves Network will be implemented by enclosures, wardening and on-site mild management measures. Permanent plots and automatic stations will be established in each reserve for the sake of long-term monitoring. In addition, complementary, ex situ management of the targeted species will take place.

An information campaign, based at the Visitor Centre at MAICh, near Chania (but also at the Alpine Botanical Garden to be created at Omalos) will complement the Network by disseminating the results and at the same time increasing the awareness and appreciation of the public and particularly the younger generations.

Expected results

1. The protection and the sound management of the pilot network of micro-reserves.
2. The implementation of an information system (database and applications) of quantitative data for the future sustainable management and enlargement of the network.
3. The active involvement of local populations as a result of increased awareness and appreciation to nature conservation. Dissemination and collaboration with the local communities and specific target groups: local authorities and administrators, shepherds, hikers, nature lovers, ecotourism operators and ecotourists, environmental education instructors, pupils and young people in general.
4. The investigation of the possibility for the development of the plant micro-reserves network, not only elsewhere in Crete, but also in other Greek phytogeographical areas of high ecological interest in the sense of the Directive 92/43/EEC.

