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Ri.Vi.Vi Valle d'Itria: a strategic project to relaunch the viticulture in an area with structural and phytosanitary problems

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ABSTRACT

Valle d'Itria, an internal hilly area of Apulia region, is an important touristic destination famous for the typical stone house called Trulli, and several very attractive historical city centres. The valley, also known and vocationed for the production of white wines with PDO and PGI denominations obtained from native and unique varieties, is characterised by a high fractionation of agricultural land that in the last 50 years, with the ageing of farmers, the impossibility of mechanising the vineyards and the increase of planting costs, suffered a dramatic loss of area under vines with a profound change in the agricultural landscape. The recent phytosanitary emergency of the xylella epidemic affecting olives in the area and the evident negative effects of climate change on the vineyards required an urgent strategic project for the future. The ambitious 3-years pilot project "RELAUNCHING OF VINE GROWING IN VALLE D'ITRIA - Viticultural zoning and development of tools for sustainability, valorisation of territorial resources and mitigation of

the effects of climate change", funded by the Puglia government for 3 years, will be implemented by 5 partners led by CNR through seven priority actions. The project, through a participatory approach open to the involvement of multiple territorial stakeholders, aims to achieve important innovative results: the first viticultural meso-zoning of the area according to the official OIV procedures; a new development strategy based on a SWOT analysis and the synergy among viticulture-tourism-landscape-environment; the creation of a widespread infrastructure with gemels experimental vineyards planted by farmers in all the homogeneous zones identified; the starting of a breeding program to obtain resistant germplasm from autochthonous grapevine cvs; the experimental evaluation of adaptation systems to reduce the impacts of climate change on grape quality; the valorisation of local germplasm through the development of communication tools to promote local foods and wines and to attract new investments.