

# PRESS RELEASE

## COCO PROJECT

Service provider in the sense of §5 TMG adelphi research gemeinnützige GmbH

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## SUPPORTING PASTORALISTS AND SUSTAINABLE COEXISTENCE IN 2026 AND BEYOND

### CoCo Welcomes International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists

28 January 2026

The CoCo project proudly announces its support for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) 2026, a United Nations initiative that officially launches this year. As a designated Friend of IYRP, CoCo joins a worldwide coalition of organisations committed to raising awareness about the essential contributions of pastoralists and rangelands to food security, biodiversity and sustainable land management.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) serving as the lead agency. This landmark year aims to highlight the often-overlooked role of over 500 million pastoralists worldwide who manage nearly half of the Earth's land surface.

“Pastoralists are the custodians of some of the world's most valuable landscapes,” said Katrina Marsden, CoCo Project Partner, adelphi, leading on dissemination and uptake of the project results. “The challenges they face, from economic hardship to climate change adaptation to wildlife damages, require integrated solutions that respect their traditional knowledge while embracing innovation. The International Year provides an unprecedented opportunity to bring these issues to the forefront of global policy discussions and demonstrate that sustainable pastoralism can be a solution to many of our environmental challenges.”

Rangelands and pastoralists globally play a crucial role in:

- Food provision: supplying meat, milk, and other animal products to billions of people
- Biodiversity conservation: maintaining ecosystems that support countless plant and animal species
- Climate action: managing landscapes that store significant amounts of carbon

- Cultural heritage: preserving traditional practices and knowledge systems developed over millennia

The IYRP 2026 International Support Group has emphasised the importance of collaborative efforts in achieving the year's objectives. "We are delighted to count the CoCo project among our Friends of IYRP," noted Pablo Manzano, member of the Steering Committee of the Latin American network of IYRP. "Their research on human-wildlife coexistence directly addresses one of the key challenges faced by pastoral communities globally, and their evidence-based approach will contribute valuable insights to our collective efforts."

The CoCo project, funded under Horizon Europe, brings together researchers, practitioners and pastoral communities across Europe to develop and test innovative approaches for living alongside large carnivores. The project's findings will directly contribute to IYRP objectives by demonstrating how science and traditional knowledge can work together to address contemporary challenges in pastoral landscapes.

Throughout 2026, CoCo will participate in IYRP events and activities, sharing research outcomes and best practices for supporting pastoral communities in their coexistence with wildlife. The project will also contribute to policy dialogues aimed at ensuring pastoralists' voices are heard in decisions affecting their livelihoods and landscapes.

Follow the project's progress and stay informed about new findings at <https://cocoproject.eu/>.

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### **About the CoCo Project**

CoCo (Cocreating Coexistence) is a Horizon Europe-funded research project working to develop sustainable solutions for human-wildlife coexistence across European pastoral landscapes. The project brings together diverse stakeholders to co-create knowledge and tools that support both thriving pastoral communities and healthy carnivore populations. Learn more at [cocoproject.eu](https://cocoproject.eu)

### **About IYRP 2026**

The International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026 was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly to raise global awareness about the importance of rangelands and pastoralism for sustainable development. The FAO leads the initiative in collaboration with governments, civil society, and research institutions worldwide. Learn more at [iyrp.info](https://iyrp.info) and [fao.org/rangelands-pastoralists-2026](https://fao.org/rangelands-pastoralists-2026)