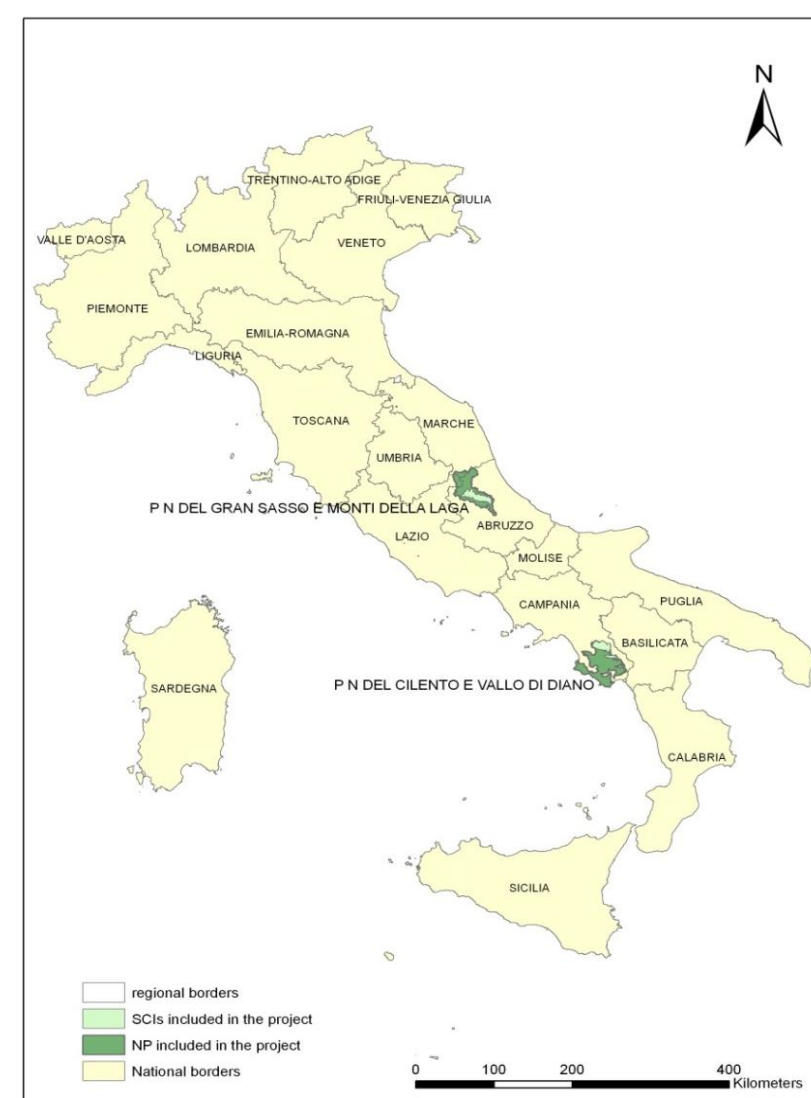


3.1. LIFE FAGUS: A PROJECT FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF STRUCTURAL HETEROGENEITY AND BIODIVERSITY IN APENNINE BEECH FORESTS (HABITAT 9210* AND 9220*)

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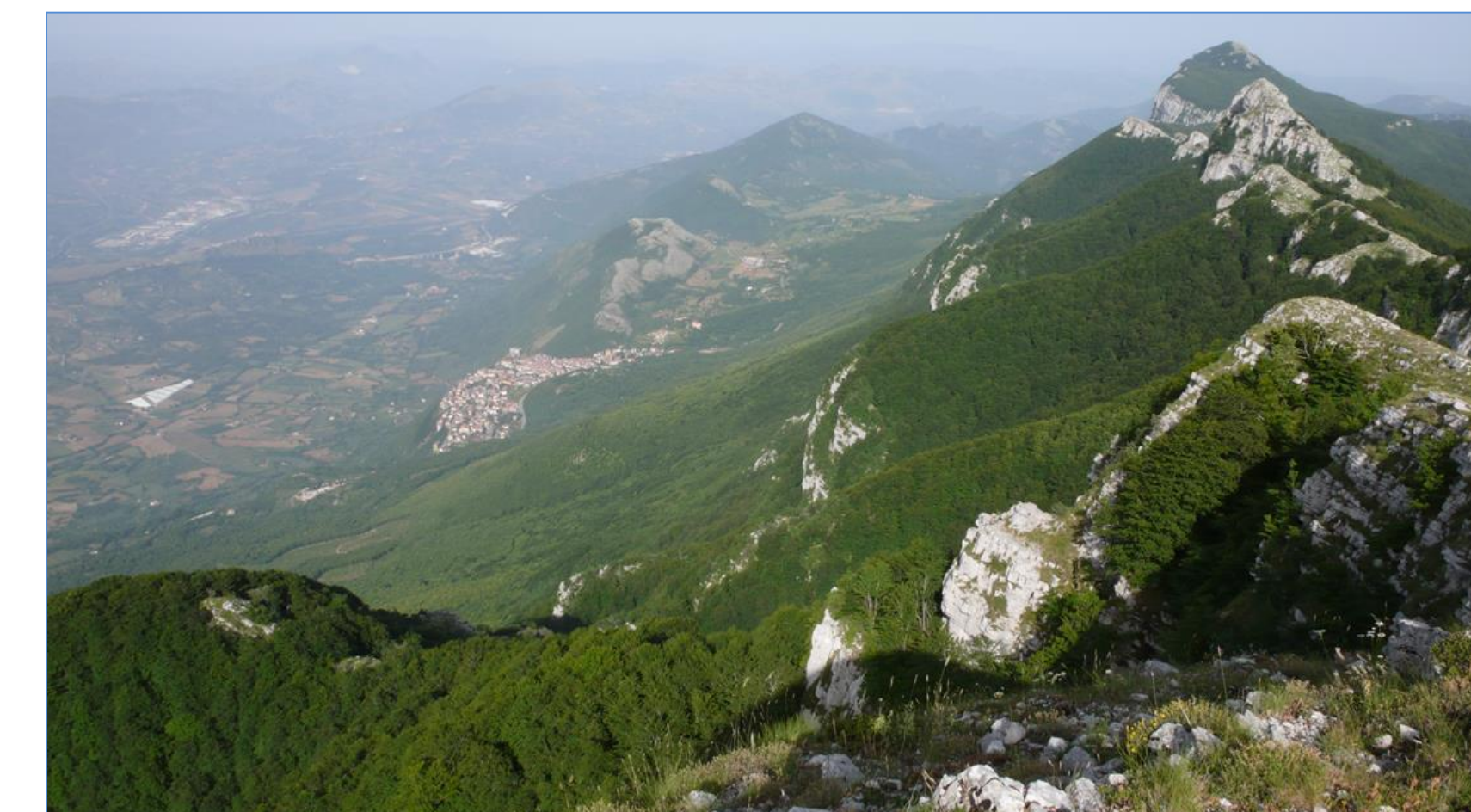
Project areas



SCI Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga



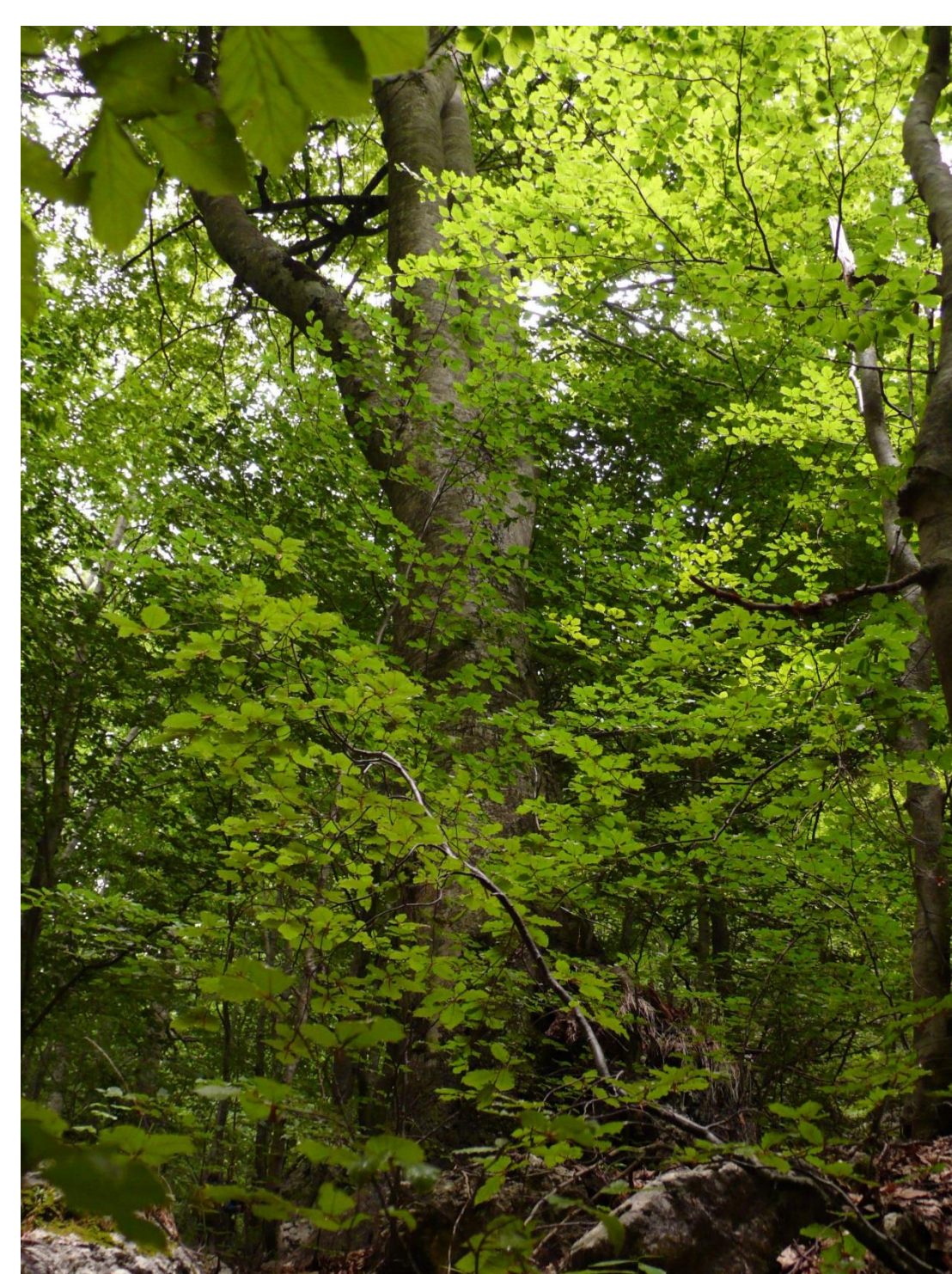
SCI Monte Motola



SCI Monti Alburni

Habitat 9210* Apennine beech forests with *Taxus* and *Ilex*

Beech forests with *Taxus baccata* and *Ilex aquifolium* in the shrub layer. These are spread along the Apennine chain and in the Maritime Alps.



In the Apennines, yew, holly and silver fir were much more spread than today. Their current limited distribution is also due to the impact on forest systems of human activities, such as harvesting, grazing and fire.

Conservation actions

Promotion of the regeneration of yew, holly and silver fir

Enhancement of the diversity of birds.



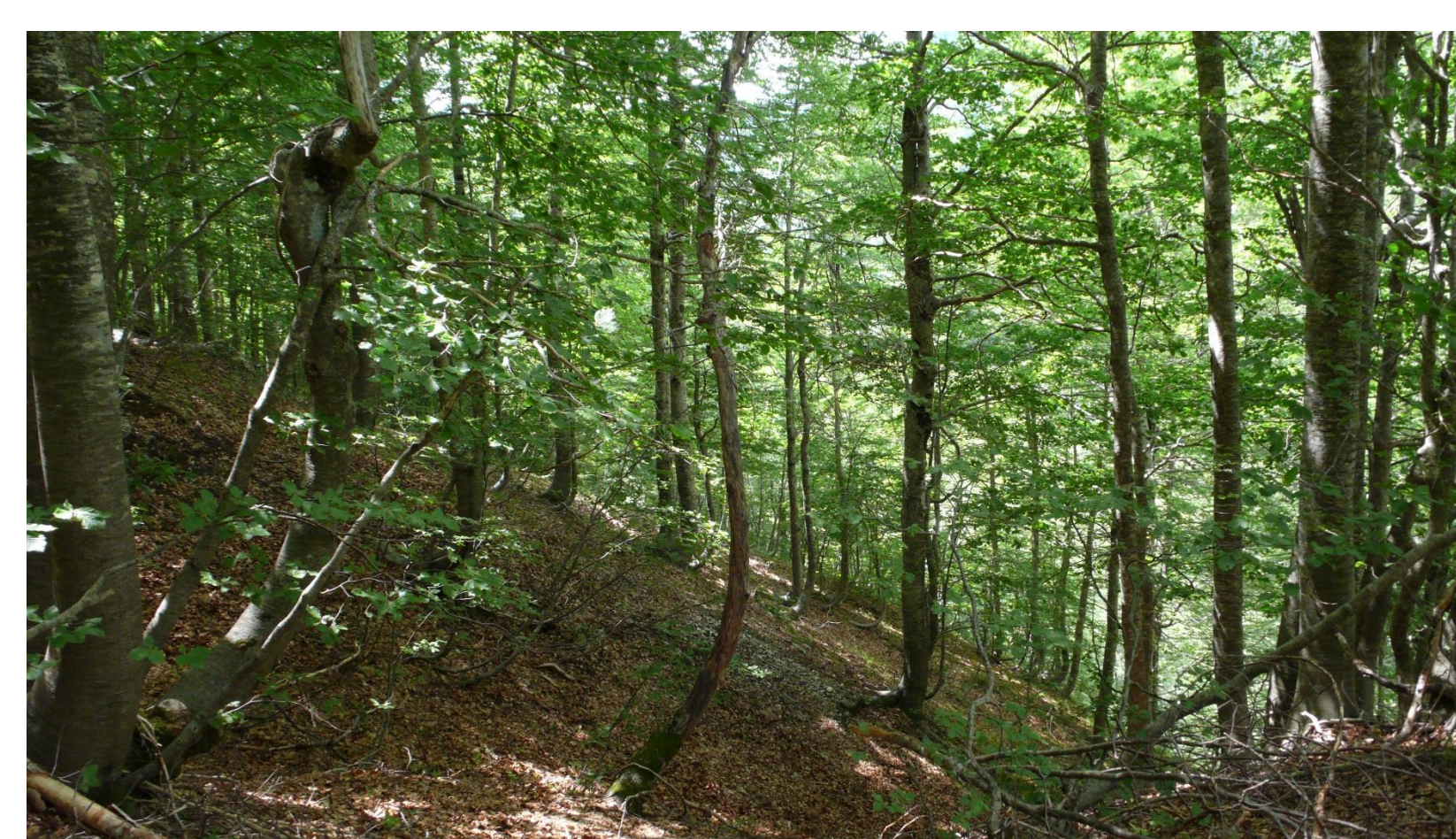
Fencing of regeneration patches



Creation of habitat trees

Habitat 9220* Apennine beech forests with *Abies alba*

Mixed woodlands characterized by numerous southern European orophilous species.



Enhancement of the diversity of saproxylic beetles and fungi



Release of deadwood

Diversification of understorey plants



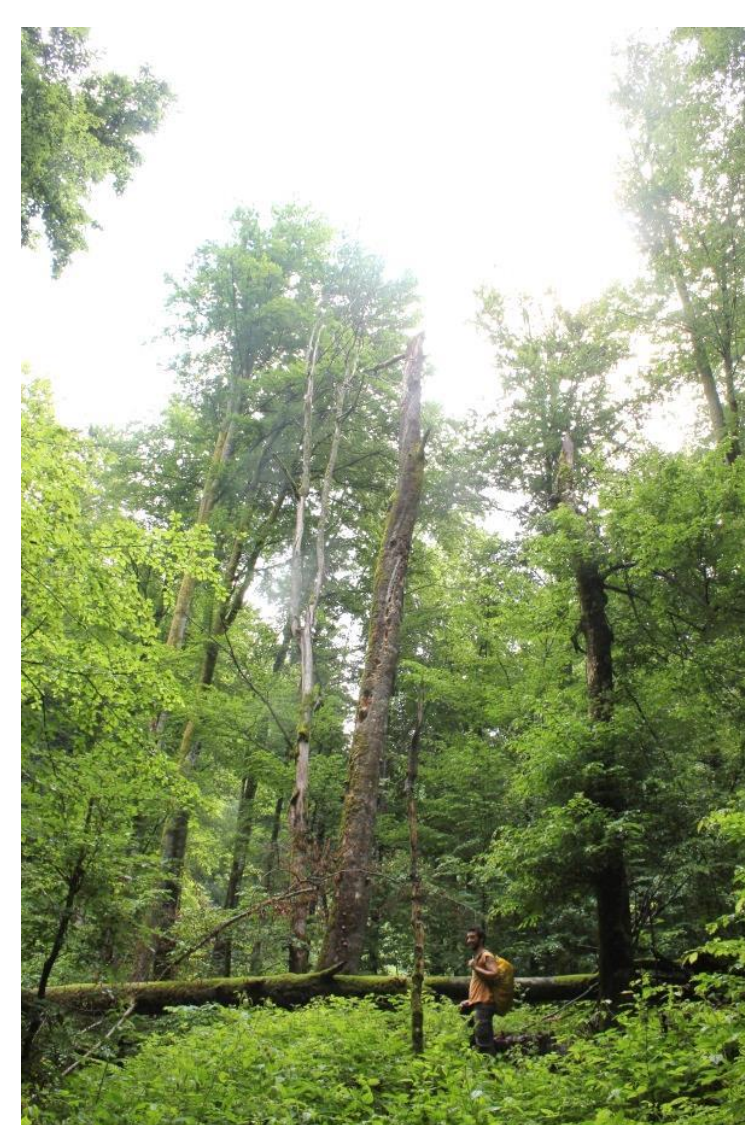
Creation of gaps

Creation of gaps

Gaps play a preminent role in forest horizontal heterogeneity and influence organisms through several mechanisms.

Many species of forest epiphytic lichens of conservation interest are related to gaps.

Also the diversity of vascular plants is enhanced by gaps that allows for the presence of species with highly diverse light requirements (Blasi et al. 2010).



Gaps will increase also the density of fleshy-fruited shrubs that favor yew and holly by (i) attracting frugivorous birds that act as disperser, (ii) maintaining a favourable microclimate (especially during the summer drought).

Fencing of regeneration patches

One of the main threats to the regeneration of *Taxus baccata*, *Ilex aquifolium* and *Abies alba* is grazing by livestock and rooting by wild boar.



In some project areas the seedlings of under-represented species may be particularly affected by herbivores. It is demonstrated that recruitment of yew and holly are favoured by enclosures (Farris et al. 2008 - Plant Ecol; Perrin et al. 2006 - For Eco Mng).

Where grazing or rooting is more intense fences will be built around groups of mother trees or of regeneration patches, especially in the newly created gaps in order to substantially favor the recruitment of the target species.