

According to the International Union for Nature Conservation,

Pastoreo en RED, a pioneering example of a “nature-based solution” in Spain

Maintaining vegetation under high-voltage power lines with extensive livestock farming, as Red Eléctrica is doing in La Rioja and León, is a 'nature-based solution' that protects, sustainably manages and restores ecosystems, according to the IUCN.

Red Eléctrica and the University of Alcalá are promoting the practice of grazing to energy companies by means of a guide that documents the benefits of grazing for the well-being of society.

Madrid, 23 June 2022

Red Eléctrica's control of vegetation under high-voltage power lines through the use of extensive livestock farming is a pioneering example of a “nature-based solution” (NBS) in Spain. This has now been acknowledged by the International Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN).

This practice, which the company, a subsidiary of Redeia responsible for the operation and transmission of the electricity system, is developing in La Rioja and León under the name of Pastoreo en Red (Grid Grazing), will soon be rolled out to other territories. It meets the criteria of the IUCN's Global NBS standard with a high level of compliance, thanks to the services it provides to society, the economy, and the environment.

NBS projects exist to benefit both biodiversity and human well-being. The Pastoreo en Red project contributes, according to the IUCN standard, to disaster risk reduction and supports a region's economic and social development, while avoiding rural abandonment and depopulation, as well as the loss of traditional knowledge that lies behind extensive livestock farming. It also slows the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems, as it improves soil fertility and increases the richness and abundance of herbaceous plants and other species.

Redeia and the University of Alcalá today held a conference to promote the use of grazing in the infrastructures of energy companies as the most sustainable alternative for the maintenance of vegetation and the preservation of natural

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and agricultural heritage. Present at the event were several energy companies, the IUCN, social organisations, and livestock associations.

"Thanks to grazing, we turn energy infrastructures into spaces of opportunity and innovation, where we can try out different uses inspired by traditional systems and with a regenerative impact on the territory," said Redeia's Director of Sustainability, Antonio Calvo Roy, during the conference.

Antonio Troya, Director of the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, explained that "nature-based solutions are actions that harness the tools that nature already provides to protect, sustainably manage, and restore ecosystems, bringing benefits for human well-being and biodiversity. The NBS standard is therefore a tool for governments, communities, businesses, and NGOs to implement sound, sustainable, and ambitious projects that safeguard people and the planet".

A guide to grazing services in energy grids

Today's gathering saw the presentation of the [Guide for the evaluation of ecosystemic services](#) of grazing in the transmission grid environment. The document has been prepared by the University of Alcalá, and shows how grazing can contribute to sustainable development through the services it offers for human well-being.

Thus, in addition to being confirmed as a suitable tool for clearing vegetation under power lines, grazing offers a series of regulating ecosystem services: it increases soil fertility and biodiversity (especially of herbaceous plants and arthropods, including pollinating insects), facilitates soil carbon storage, and prevents forest fires by limiting the accumulation of highly combustible undergrowth.

It also offers supply services; it promotes extensive livestock farming and its products; and it maintains native breeds of livestock. And finally, it offers cultural services: it contributes to preserving local ecological knowledge, environmental education and nature-related tourism.

In order to make it easier for other companies, livestock farms, shepherd schools and public administrations to replicate this solution in natural spaces containing different types of infrastructure, Red Eléctrica also prepared [another guide](#) that summarises the knowledge and methodologies required to put it into practice.

Red Eléctrica is controlling the vegetation at its facilities through extensive livestock farming with the help of a company called Agrovidar in the mountainous area of Los Agudos, La Rioja, thanks to the support of the Government of La Rioja and the Calahorra town council; and in the Alto Bernesga Biosphere Reserve, in León, in a joint project with Enagás.

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