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## PRESS RELEASE

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### “NEL CUORE DEL SUD”: ENEL CUORE AND FONDAZIONE CON IL SUD HAVE SELECTED SEVEN PROJECTS TO GIVE A REAL BOOST TO THE INLAND AREAS OF SOUTHERN ITALY

**Rome, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022** – Seven projects are being implemented in order to contribute to social and economic growth in the inland areas of Southern Italy, rediscovering ancient crafts and traditions, and promoting social inclusion and employment for people in need. The projects were selected as part of the call for proposals “Nel cuore del sud” (“In the heart of the South”) promoted by Enel Cuore, the nonprofit organization owned by Enel Group, and Fondazione CON IL SUD, which is aimed at voluntary sector organizations in Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Apulia, Sardinia and Sicily. A total of 1.5 million euros will be allocated to fund the selected initiatives, which will foster programs to help individuals who are vulnerable or at risk of marginalization and social hardship to become independent, as well as promoting and enhancing the potential and excellence of the inland areas of Southern Italy, namely tourism, handicraft, agriculture, and food and wine (1,472 municipalities out of a total of 2,116).

*“We decided to launch the call for proposals “Nel Cuore del Sud” to support companies that make the South of Italy a region of excellence in the country, and we are very pleased to have achieved such great results,”* said **Michele Crisostomo**, Chairman of Enel and of Enel Cuore Onlus. He then added: *“The selected projects showcase the very best of Italian tradition and fully reflect values such as inclusion and innovation, which are crucial to give a boost not only to Southern Italy but also to the rest of the country. We are at a time in history where, now more than ever, we need to find unity of purpose, which is why we cannot afford to leave anyone behind, especially not people with disabilities, living in vulnerable situations, and who are experiencing social and economic marginalization.”*

*“These projects teach us a very important lesson, which is that even the smallest places in Southern Italy, located miles from anywhere and often overlooked, utterly undervalued and reluctantly abandoned by young people, actually have so much to offer if the right opportunities are provided,”* said **Carlo Borgomeo**, President of Fondazione CON IL SUD, which literally translates as “With the South”. *“Ancient crafts, local traditions, and the agricultural and food specialties of a region can become opportunities not only for economic and social redemption, but also for social cohesion and, consequently, even for growth. In this way, new life can be breathed into these areas.”*

Such projects will allow us to rediscover ancient traditions and crafts that may soon disappear, from building dry stone walls (Casarano, province of Lecce) to handcrafted “libbani” (Maratea, province of Potenza), which are ropes made out of plants by weaving the wild grass “tagliamani”, i.e. Mauritanian grass; from loom weaving to create a new line of women’s clothing using natural yarns (Squillace and Girifalco, province of Catanzaro) to weaving natural fibers (Cedrino valley, province of Nuoro) such as cattail – a marsh plant that grows spontaneously along rivers – which is used instead of plastic to make furnishing items; starting up a social tailor’s shop (Galatina, province of Lecce) in a seized property, promoting the ancient craft of the Salento seamstress and embroiderer, thus reinterpreting old knowledge and techniques through the use of modern technology. Several traditional local products will also be promoted, such as the “suscioglio” cannellini beans (from Sessa Aurunca, province of Caserta) and

cereals and legumes from the Alta Murgia region (Spinazzola, province of Barletta-Andria-Trani), which will be processed into products for people with dietary restrictions such as those who have coeliac disease or diabetes.

These projects will help people in need to find employment by participating in training programs held by masters who still carry on traditions and continue ancient crafts that may soon disappear, also by setting up new social cooperatives. A number of activities are scheduled, including initiatives to protect the landscape and monitor agricultural production using new technologies, setting up e-commerce platforms to sell products, training programs and workshops for tourists and students, and opening accommodation facilities and retail outlets.

**Enel Cuore** is a nonprofit organization owned by Enel Group, which supports projects and initiatives that have a huge impact on communities and territories. Such projects are implemented in cooperation with organizations operating in the voluntary sector, and are divided into four areas: culture and education for children and teenagers, job placement and social inclusion of individuals who are vulnerable, independence programs for people with disabilities, fighting social poverty, and ensuring access to healthcare for the elderly. Initiatives for present and future generations are implemented through projects aimed at people of all ages, young and old alike, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, promoting an inclusive and fair development model that creates value. Just like our energy does.

#### **Fondazione CON IL SUD**

Fondazione CON IL SUD is a private nonprofit organization formed by an alliance between foundations of banking origin, the third sector, i.e. the voluntary sector, to boost the development of Southern Italy by promoting social cohesion programs. The Foundation endorses “exemplary” initiatives aimed at teaching young people to respect the law and at addressing the problem of school dropout, at valuing young talented people and attracting human capital to Southern Italy, at protecting and promoting public assets (culture, the environment, social reuse of confiscated assets – for example seized from the mafia), improving social and health services, integrating immigrants, and supporting community welfare. Over the course of 15 years, it has supported more than 1,500 initiatives, among which the first six community foundations of Southern Italy were established (in the historic center and in the Rione Sanità neighborhood in Naples and in Salerno, Messina, Val di Noto, Agrigento and Trapani), involving as many as 6,500 organizations – including nonprofit organizations and public and private bodies – and distributing a total amount of €264 million. In 2016, the social enterprise “Con i Bambini”, wholly owned by the Foundation, was set up in order to implement the programs of the Fund for contrasting child educational poverty. [www.fondazioneconilsud.it](http://www.fondazioneconilsud.it)

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