



LIFE+ NATURE PROJECT

LIFE 08 NAT/E/000072

Recovery of the riverbank habitats of the River Ter

POST-LIFE CONSERVATION PLAN Meadows and orchards (Salt and Girona) Ter2

November 2013

Promoted by



BESCANÓ TOWN COUNCIL



SANT GREGORI TOWN COUNCIL



SALT TOWN COUNCIL



GIRONA CITY COUNCIL



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Fundación Biodiversidad

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BACKGROUND:

The LIFE+ NATURE Project “Recovery of the riverbank habitats of the River Ter” (Riparia-Ter) project has been carried out from 2010-2013 by the Ter Consortium in four areas of action in the mid and lower stretches of the Ter included in the Natura 2000 Network (specifically “Baix Ter Riverbanks”). This project has been carried out in the territorial areas of Bescanó, Sant Gregori, Salt, Girona and Jafre, whose municipal councils have actively cooperated with the project.

The main aim of the project has been to recover riverbank habitats on the River Ter, particularly: alder groves (91E0*), willow and white poplar gallery woodland (92A0) and temporary Mediterranean lagoons (3170*). The project also provided for the organisation and control of access to the areas of action to prevent the degradation of these habitats. In addition, many activities were carried out to publicise and inform the public of the rich natural heritage of the River Ter.

Work was done through the project to improve the riverbank woodland. Actions were carried out on invasive plant species, making an in-depth study of the most effective methods for managing and controlling them. Public use actions were carried out to organise the accesses and prevent the degradation of these most vulnerable habitats, publicising those in the least vulnerable areas. Many activities were organised (visits, an exhibition, bird ringing...) to raise awareness and publicise the natural values of these areas.

OBJECTIVES:

In order to ensure the maintenance of the actions carried out over the next few years and in the future, it is intended to approve this Post-LIFE Conservation Plan, which includes the actions that must continue to be carried out to ensure proper management of these areas, making it possible to continue the tasks carried out during the four years of the project LIFE 08 NAT/E/000072.

It must be taken into account that a large part of the actions carried out require a certain level of maintenance over the years, especially in the early “Post-LIFE project years”, as they are actions directly linked to improving the riverbank woodland. Firstly, the elimination of foreign species needs to be overseen to ensure its continuity until the riverbank woodland can develop for itself without regrowth from removed stumps or new saplings. The reed removed could still have more colonisation nuclei, despite the repeated aggressive action to reduce its presence. The newly created ponds must also be kept in good condition (bank slopes, shade, colonising plants, cleaning, etc.), especially if there is severe flooding on the river during their early years in operation. Finally, the routes, signing, boards, viewpoints and other elements created to encourage public use must be maintained in the best possible condition for their function: to bring the public to the recovered natural areas so that they become centres for active education and increased environmental awareness.

The four areas of action form part of the Natura 2000 Network, specifically the “Lower Ter Riverbanks” area (ES5120011). This is designated as an area of continental waters. These areas have no other specific protection system with an allocated management body. However, they are publicly owned areas, so it is viable to ensure their proper management in the future with the participation and goodwill of the different public authorities making up the project. That is why this Post-LIFE Conservation Plan includes the involvement of the municipal councils and the Ter Consortium in order to ensure proper future management.

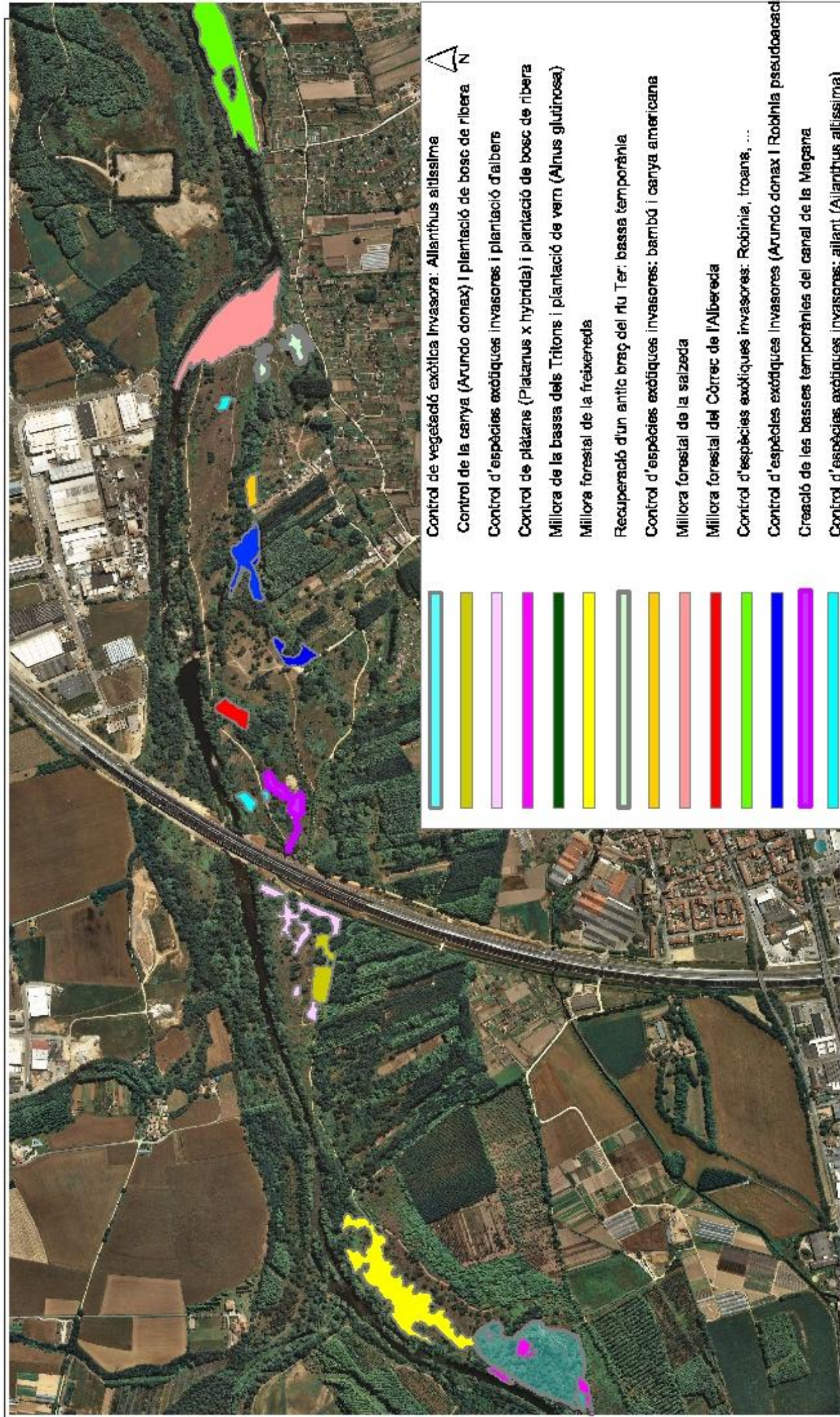
Along these lines, the involvement of the councils has specifically been shown with the commitment to make a particular effort, either in budgetary terms, through the contracting of gardening companies that carry out tasks in the public municipal sphere or through the use of teams of the councils’ own employees.

CURRENT SITUATION:

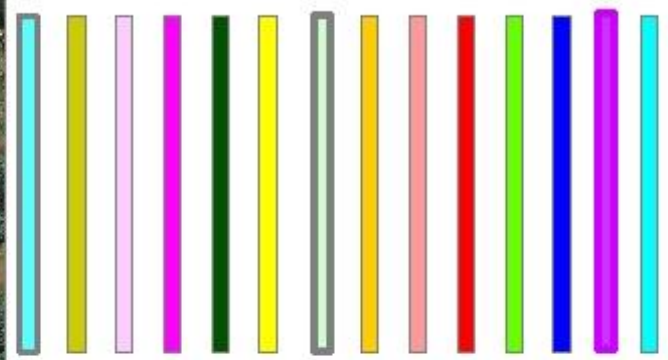
At the end of autumn 2013, all the forestry work, the control of exotic species and the recovery of temporary wetlands are practically finished.

Work has been carried out to improve the riverbank woodland present in Les Deveses Park in Salt and the willow groves below the Santa Eugenia wetlands, invasive species have been controlled in the places where there was great potential for recovering the native vegetation and planting of riverbank trees has been carried out to strengthen the native species. Meanwhile, two temporary wetlands have been created: two ponds in the area of La Massana channel and the expansion of Gorga d'en Quirze. It now only remains to install the information and direction signs to make it easier to discover the natural values of the area. Maintenance is also being carried out on these actions (planting and invasive species control).

Below, the specific conservation actions carried out in the meadow and orchard area are detailed on a map.



- Control de vegetació exòtica invasora: *Alliathus altissima*
- Control de la canya (*Arundo donax*) i plantació de bosc de ribera
- Control d'espècies exòtiques invasores i plantació d'albers
- Control de plàtans (*Platanus x hybrida*) i plantació de bosc de ribera
- Millora de la bassa dels Tritons i plantació de vern (*Alnus glutinosa*)
- Millora forestal de la freixeneda
- Recuperació d'un antic braç del riu Ter: bassa temporal
- Control d'espècies exòtiques invasores: bambú i canya americana
- Millora forestal de la salzeda
- Millora forestal del Còrrec de l'Albereda
- Control d'espècies exòtiques invasores: Robinia, troana, ...
- Control d'espècies exòtiques invasores (*Arundo donax* i *Robinia pseudoacacia*)
- Creació de les basses temporànies del canal de la Magrana
- Control d'espècies exòtiques invasores: ailant (*Alliathus altissima*)



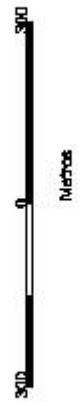
RECUPERACIÓ
D'HÀBITATS
RIPARIS DEL RIU TER
LIFE08 NAT/E/000072



PLÀNOL:

ACTUACIONS EXECUTADES A HORTES I DEVESES
SALT GIRONA(TER2)FINS A NOVENBRE DE 2013

NÚMERO DE PLÀNOL:
DATA: NOVENBRE DE 2013
ESCALA:



SWOT ANALYSIS

WEAKNESSES

- *Lack of finance from the organisations involved.
- *Smaller sources of finance for nature projects and more competition for existing resources.
- *Uncontrolled public use in some areas or massive crowds participating in some activities, particularly on the Pla dels Socs.
- *There are natural factors (soil, climate, etc.) that make the results of chemical treatments vary, which mean the results are not the same everywhere.

THREATS

- *Lack of specific political agenda concerning nature at high-level institutions.
- *Infrastructures that could affect the area: GAS PIPELINE, VHV line...
- *Proliferation of new invasive species.
- *Lack of environmental criteria in the management of the water of the Ter and water spillages, the reversed flow system negatively affects the temporary ponds.

STRENGTHS

- *High level of public interest in the publicity activities.
- *Better knowledge of the control of invasive species makes the treatments more effective.
- *Involvement of the competent administrations in the project, both the municipal councils and ACA and the Environment Department, and predisposition to continue working together.
- *Existence of Les Deveses Park in Salt.
- *Salt and Girona have municipal environmental officers.

OPPORTUNITIES

- *Great potential for recovering the riverbank communities and their rapid response to disturbances.
- *The Natura 2000 areas are priority action areas and will increasingly be so for European Union finance instruments.

MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVES FOR THE AREAS IN THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK:

In 2006 the Catalan Government approved the Catalan Natura 2000 Network proposal. In appendix 8, the Government Agreement 112/2006 approving it includes the document with the Directives for the management of Natura 2000 areas. This document defines the directives for the management of the areas in the Natura 2000 Network, which have been grouped into eight types of management. They include general management requirements specific to each type of area and specific for certain important elements.

In the case that concerns us, the type of area is continental waters. The management directives can be consulted at this link:

http://www20.gencat.cat/docs/dmah/Home/Ambits%20dactuacio/Medi%20natural/Espais%20naturals/Espais%20naturals%20protegits/La%20planificacio%20dels%20espais%20naturals%20protegits/Xarxa%20Natura%202000/Xarxa%20Natura%202000%20a%20Catalunya/Documents/directrius_gestio.pdf

Management measures deriving from the inclusion of an area in the Natura 2000 Network.

MANAGEMENT

- Instruments mobilised with the establishment of Natura 2000 include management plans, species and habitat conservation plans, monitoring and observation of the state of conservation of biodiversity and the restoration of the most threatened habitats.

ASSESSMENT

- The environmental monitoring of the plans and projects in the network's areas is intended to ensure that their ecological coherence is maintained and that they meet their conservation objectives.

PARTICIPATION

- The involvement of a large number of interested sectors (local administrations, foundations, land custody bodies, consortiums, farming organisations...) in the management should make Natura 2000 management a major joint objective of society through participation, dialogue and consensus.

COMPATIBLE USES

- The uses and activities of Natura 2000 areas continue to be developed normally, in some cases with more opportunities for progress. The integration of Natura 2000 into the Plan for Areas of Natural Interest also ensures the application of Catalonia's own regulatory framework.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

PROPOSED ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	COSTS	SOURCES OF FINANCE	NOTES
ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS:					
ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION BETWEEN THE AGENTS INVOLVED	NECESSARY	Ter Consortium Bescanó, Sant Gregori, Salt, Girona and Jafre Municipal Councils Government of Catalonia: ACA and Environment Department	Staff from the administrations involved	-	The executive committees have made it possible to develop the project by getting all the agents involved to agree, taking into account the points of view and criteria of the different administrations. This dynamic has been positive and has made it possible to resolve difficulties easily.

PROPOSED ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	COSTS	SOURCES OF FINANCE	NOTES
SEARCH FOR FINANCE TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSED ACTIONS	CRITICAL	Ter Consortium	Ter Consortium staff	-	<p>The current economic situation means the resources needed for carrying out all the actions proposed in this Post-LIFE Conservation Plan are not available. For this reason it is vitally important to be able to have alternative finance and/or resources to be able to carry them out.</p> <p>Every year the Government of Catalonia invites bids for lines of specific aid for conservation and restoration projects, for public use of areas and for publicity and interpretation in the network's areas. In addition, Natura 2000 is becoming a priority criterion for aid for sustainable forest management, among other things. There are also other annual bidding processes that must be exploited, such as the Biodiversity Foundation, the EU...</p>

PROPOSED ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	COSTS	SOURCES OF FINANCE	NOTES
HABITAT MAINTENANCE ACTIONS:					
MAINTENANCE OF RIVERBANK WOODLAND IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS	IMPORTANT	Ter Consortium	Outside assistance:	Aid from the Government of Catalonia	The actions to improve the ash grove have involved initial work to improve this woodland which will be assessed over the next few years as the ashes that have now been encouraged grow while the stumps of black poplar and other species are removed to encourage a vigorous ash grove structure, with the plant community typical of this formation. In addition, the willow grove area must be monitored to promote its gradual transformation into an alder/willow grove, carrying out the appropriate forestry work.
		Salt Town Council	€10,000/year Personnel from the Salt Les Deveses Park maintenance teams	EU aid Miscellaneous aid Private companies Salt Town Council via the Park maintenance teams.	

PROPOSED ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	COSTS	SOURCES OF FINANCE	NOTES
MAINTENANCE OF ACTIONS TO CONTROL INVASIVE SPECIES: Chemical control of the regrowth of tree of heaven, black locust, box elder and glossy privet, especially in the most sensitive areas: the sand pits, the white poplar groves, the willow grove area below the Santa Eugènia wetlands, etc.	CRITICAL	Ter Consortium	Outside assistance for plant health treatment: €3,000 2014 €2,750 2015 €2,000 2016 €1,000 2017 €1,000 2018 Own resources: manual weeding team, waste removal...	Aid from the Government of Catalonia Salt Town Council: via the Les Deveses Park maintenance team Girona City Council Fundación Biodiversidad EU funds	Over the next few years it is likely to be necessary to carry out a degree of control of exotic vegetation, either because there will be some regrowth or because the seed bank will continue to be active. These actions are likely to decrease over the years. Work to control other invasive species must also be begun, as their presence has been noted and damage has been shown.

PROPOSED ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	COSTS	SOURCES OF FINANCE	NOTES
MAINTENANCE OF PLANTATIONS CREATED especially in the areas to the west of the motorway and the typical island countryside of willow groves	NECESSARY	Ter Consortium Salt Town Council	Outside assistance: €1,500 2014 €1,000 2015 Personnel from the Salt Les Deveses Park maintenance teams	Aid from the Government of Catalonia Salt Town Council: via the Les Deveses Park maintenance team Other aid	During the early years of the plantations it is important to carry out brushwood clearance, watering and maintenance to ensure their vitality. It is proposed to carry out these actions over the next 2 years.
MAINTENANCE OF THE TEMPORARY PONDS CREATED	CRITICAL	Ter Consortium Salt Town Council	€4,000/year Park maintenance team Salt Town Council staff	Aid from the Government of Catalonia Salt Town Council: via the Les Deveses Park maintenance team Other aid	If there is flooding, the stability of the pond banks, clogging and the existence of fish-eating species in the area must be checked. The maintenance of water capture must also be carried out. Control of reed on the edge of the ponds created and in the surrounding area must also be ensured. Salt Town Council staff will manage the water gates.
MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC USE:					

PROPOSED ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	COSTS	SOURCES OF FINANCE	NOTES
MAINTENANCE OF SIGNS (IN THE CASE OF FLOODING OR VANDALISM)	NECESSARY	Ter Consortium Salt Town Council Girona City Council	Depending on the state of conservation	Miscellaneous aid Own staff	
Control of motor vehicle access to the most vulnerable areas. Control of animal (horse) access to the temporary ponds	NECESSARY	Ter Consortium Salt and Girona Municipal Councils	Municipal police	-	Salt Town Council already has a mechanism for controlling motor vehicle access to Les Deveses Park in Salt. It is also necessary to be quick to ensure compliance with access restrictions in the most vulnerable areas. Care must also be taken that the animals that often graze and drink at the temporary ponds created do not become a problem for these habitats.

PROPOSED ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	COSTS	SOURCES OF FINANCE	NOTES
<p>Development of activities aimed at the public.</p> <p>(OVERALL FOR ALL AREAS)</p>	IMPORTANT	Ter Consortium in cooperation with the agents from the region and Salt Town Council	<p>Staff: €2,500/year</p> <p>Native plant seedlings: €350/year</p> <p>Other materials: €300/year</p>	<p>Aid from the Government of Catalonia</p> <p>EU aid</p> <p>Private companies</p>	<p>Activities with the general public were very well received.</p> <p>Some of the activities that can be developed every year are:</p> <p>Bird ringing; amphibian listening; guided tours of the area, etc.</p>
MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING:					
<p>MAINTENANCE OF THE PROJECT WEBSITE</p> <p>(OVERALL FOR ALL AREAS)</p>	IMPORTANT	Ter Consortium	<p>Staff: Ter Consortium staff communication officer. €1,000/year</p> <p>Outside assistance: domain + others €150/year</p>	<p>Aid from the Government of Catalonia</p> <p>EU aid</p> <p>Private companies</p>	<p>Over the next 5 years (2014-2018), the website: http://www.liferipariater.com must be operational. This activity must be carried out by the consortium's own staff. On the website, the activities aimed at the public held in these areas can be publicised to raise awareness and improve knowledge of the environment.</p>

PROPOSED ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	COSTS	SOURCES OF FINANCE	NOTES
SCIENTIFIC MONITORING (OVERALL FOR ALL AREAS)	IMPORTANT	Ter Consortium Environmental volunteering Professorial Chair in Mediterranean Coastal Ecosystems University of Girona	€15,000 period 2014-2018	Aid from the Government of Catalonia EU aid Private companies	<p>The initial RIPARIA TER document already considered that, once the project was over, a review should be carried out of the state of the vegetation and the bird, amphibian, reptile and mammal populations every 5 years, to which must be added the state of temporarily flooded areas.</p> <p>Salt Town Council gives aid to environmental bodies for monitoring birds, butterflies, Daubenton's bats and prospecting for odonata and coleoptera.</p>
COORDINATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS IN THE POST-LIFE CONSERVATION PLANS (OVERALL FOR ALL AREAS)	NECESSARY	Ter Consortium	Organisation staff Salt and Girona Municipal Council staff		<p>An agreement will be signed, if necessary, with the municipal councils detailing the contributions in cash or in kind they will make in relation to the actions defined and in order to commission the Ter Consortium to manage the coordination, implementation and monitoring of the Post-LIFE conservation plan actions.</p>