



LIFE+ NATURE PROJECT

LIFE 08 NAT/E/000072

Recovery of the riverbank habitats of the River Ter

POST-LIFE CONSERVATION PLAN Illa de Pedret and Can Salvatella woodland (Girona) Ter3 November 2013

Promoted by



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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.

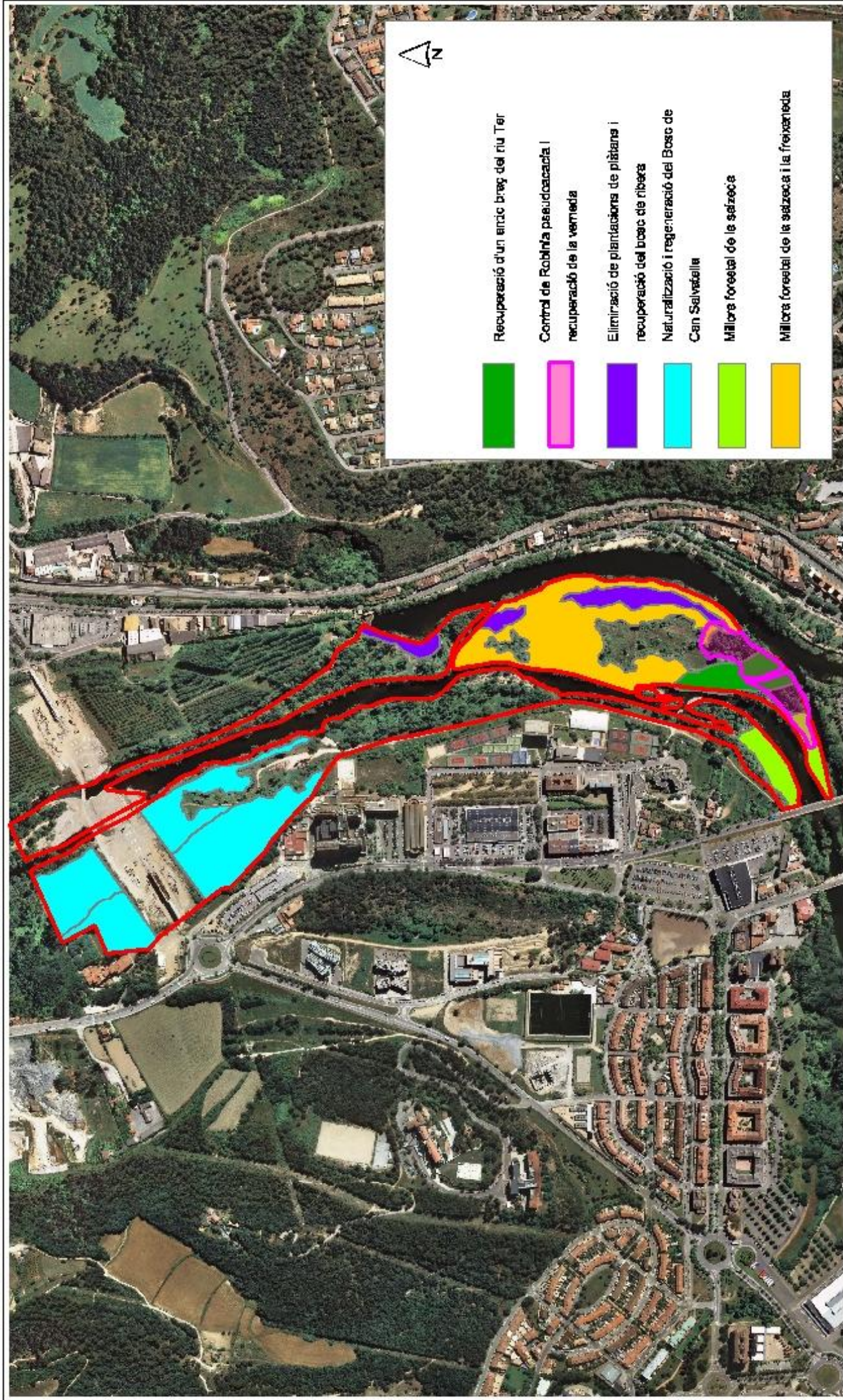
Along these lines, the involvement of the councils has specifically been shown with the commitment to make a particular effort, either in budgetary terms, through the contracting of gardening companies that carry out tasks in the public municipal sphere or through the use of teams of the councils’ own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

CURRENT SITUATION:

At the end of autumn 2013, all the forestry work, the control of exotic species and the recovery of the gullies on the island is finished.

Work has been carried out to improve the riverbank woodland present on Illa de Pedret and in the Can Salvatella woodland, 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. It now remains only 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 (plantations and invasive species control).

Below, the specific conservation actions carried out in the Illa de Pedret and Can Salvatella woodland area are detailed on a map.



NÚMERO DE PLÀNOL:
DATA: NOVENBRE DE 2013

ESCALA:

PLÀNOL:

ACTUACIONS EXECUTADES A L'ILLA DE PEDRET
I EL BOSC DE CAN SALVATELLA (TER3)
FINS A NOVENBRE DE 2013



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

SWOT ANALYSIS

WEAKNESSES

- *Lack of finance from the organisations involved.
- *Smaller sources of finance for nature projects and more competition for existing resources.
- *Urban area with a great deal of public use.
- **There are natural factors (soil, climate, etc.) that make the results of chemical treatments vary, which means the results are not the same everywhere.

THREATS

- *Lack of specific political agenda concerning nature at high-level institutions.
- *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 good predisposition to continue working together.
- *Girona City Council has municipal environmental officers, a municipal team and financial provision for the banks of the Ter.
- * Illa de Pedret has been declared a wildlife refuge.

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.
- *New Girona rivers project – the City Council has commissioned a project for working on the urban sections of the municipality's rivers.

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 forestry management, among others. There are also other annual bidding processes that must be exploited, such as the Fundación Biodiversidad, the EU...</p>
HABITAT MAINTENANCE ACTIONS:					

PROPOSED ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	COSTS	SOURCES OF FINANCE	NOTES
MAINTENANCE OF RIVERBANK WOODLAND IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS	IMPORTANT	Ter Consortium Girona City Council	Outside assistance: It must be evaluated after a time	Aid from the Government of Catalonia EU aid Miscellaneous aid Private companies	<p>Forestry improvement work has been carried out in the Can Salvatella woodland and on Illa de Pedret both in the abandoned poplar grove area and in the interior of the island to encourage willow and ash groves. These actions, especially in the Can Salvatella woodland, must be complemented with more forestry work to gradually replace the old plantation with riverbank woodland with native species and optimum structure and density in order to have as rich and diverse a flora and fauna community as possible.</p> <p>So, an assessment must be made of whether more interventions are required to reduce the risk of trees falling due to the existence of the heliport and the proximity of some hospital buildings.</p> <p>Colonisation of the trees in the area by Virginia creeper (<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>) must also be monitored because, as well as suffering competition for light, water and nutrients, the trees can suffer mechanical damage due to the weight of the creepers and can even be asphyxiated by them. Once a tree is asphyxiated by a creeper it falls, leading to a clearing which encourages the growth of the species and its propagation even further. Tree falls can cause damage or injury to users of the area.</p>

PROPOSED ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	COSTS	SOURCES OF FINANCE	NOTES
MAINTENANCE OF ACTIONS TO CONTROL INVASIVE SPECIES: Chemical control of regrowth of locust and plane trees on Illa de Pedret	CRITICAL	Ter Consortium Girona City Council	Outside assistance:	Aid from the Government of Catalonia	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.
			€1,250 2014	Girona City Council	
			€1,250 2015	Biodiversity Foundation	
			€1,000 2016	EU funds	
			€750 2017		
		€500 2018			
MAINTENANCE OF THE PLANTATIONS CREATED	NECESSARY	Ter Consortium Girona City Council	Outside assistance:	Aid from the Government of Catalonia	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.
			€3,000 2014	Girona City Council: via the Ter riverbank maintenance team	
			€2,000 2015	Other aid	
			Or the Ter riverbank maintenance teams		

PROPOSED ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	COSTS	SOURCES OF FINANCE	NOTES
MAINTAINING THE FUNCTIONALITY OF THE OLD GULLIES RECOVERED ON ILLA DE PEDRET	NECESSARY	Ter Consortium Girona City Council	Staff from the administrations involved	-	With the recovery of two river channels on Illa de Pedret, the circulation of water in these gullies has been ensured, preventing eutrophy and ensuring the survival of the alder grove. However, particularly if there is flooding, the remaining water circulation and the effects on the ash grove and the Aurora lock must be seen as the flow in the River Ter varies. Monitoring must be carried out to see whether these arms close or whether they become a larger channel.
MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC USE:					
MAINTENANCE OF SIGNS (IN THE CASE OF FLOODING OR VANDALISM)	NECESSARY	Ter Consortium Girona City Council	Depending on the state of conservation	Miscellaneous aid Own personnel	
DEVELOPMENT OF ACTIVITIES AIMED AT THE PUBLIC (OVERALL FOR ALL AREAS)	IMPORTANT	Ter Consortium in cooperation with the agents from the region	Staff: €2,500/year Native plant seedlings: €350/year Other materials: €300/year	Aid from the Government of Catalonia EU aid Private companies	Activities with the general public were very well received. Girona City Council has shown an interest in continuing to offer activities both for residents of the city and for visitors. Some of the activities that can be developed every year are: Bird ringing; amphibian listening; guided tours of the area, etc.

PROPOSED ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	COSTS	SOURCES OF FINANCE	NOTES
MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING:					
MAINTENANCE OF THE PROJECT WEBSITE (OVERALL FOR ALL AREAS)	IMPORTANT	Ter Consortium	Staff: Ter Consortium staff communication officer.	Aid from the Government of Catalonia	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.
			€1,000/year	EU aid	
			Outside assistance: domain + others	Private companies	
			€150/year		
SCIENTIFIC MONITORING (OVERALL FOR ALL AREAS)	IMPORTANT	Ter Consortium	€15,000 period 2014-2018	Aid from the Government of Catalonia	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.
		Environmental volunteering		EU aid	
		Professorial Chair in Mediterranean Coastal Ecosystems		Private companies	
		University of Girona			

PROPOSED ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	COSTS	SOURCES OF FINANCE	NOTES
COORDINATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS IN THE POST-LIFE CONSERVATION PLANS (OVERALL FOR ALL AREAS)	NECESSARY	Ter Consortium	Organisation staff		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.