LIFE AGUEDA - AGUEDA - CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACTIONS FOR MIGRATORY FISH IN THE VOUGA RIVER BASIN

LIFE16 ENV/PT/000411

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Contact details:

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Project description:

Background

When the structure or natural water flow of a river or other watercourse is modified (for instance by dredging or the construction of a hydropower plant), it can have an effect on the ecological status of the watercourse. Such hydromorphological changes to retention structures, habitat/sediment composition, flow regime and bed gradient can modify the ability of rivers to retain pollutants and sediments, increase their vulnerability to pollution and cause the deterioration of habitats, with knock-on effects on fauna and flora. In particular, hydromorphological changes in watercourses that constitute migratory fish habitats can make it impossible for them to migrate.

Objectives

LIFE AGUEDA's main objective is to eliminate, or substantially mitigate, the hydromorphological pressures identified in the Vouga River Basin, in order to help re-establish good ecological status, as required by the Water Framework Directive and the applicable river basin management plan.

To achieve this target, the project will implement a series of solutions to renaturalise the river and restore or recreate its associated aquatic and terrestrial habitats. Actions will include the following:

- Building fish passes that mimic natural conditions;
- Translocating juvenile European eels;
- Restoring riparian habitat;

- Engaging with anglers on fish monitoring; and
- Setting up mobile fish auctions to create market differentiation for fish from the project area.

The expected benefits for migratory fish populations will not only contribute to meeting the WFD's ecological targets but also its multi-use objectives, encompassing the needs established under the Floods Directive. Habitats Directive, EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 as well as the eel management plans resulting from the 2007 EU Regulation on European eel stocks.

The project will assess the socioeconomic effects of the activities carried out, increasing their replicability potential.

Expected results:

- Better resilience to flooding for 35 ha of agricultural plains, due to the improvement of riparian woods and riverbanks along 9 km of river margins;
- Improved ecological structure for 30 ha of riparian galleries, due to restoration work with autochthonous species and control/eradication of invasive alien flora;
- 51 km of river stretches with improved ecological status, taking into account the mitigation of discontinuity, river morphology and conservation status of aquatic and terrestrial habitats;
- Improved structure and substrate for 68 ha of river bed and associated reduction of siltage along eight stretches of river, restoring lotic conditions;
- Removal of eight obstacles from the Águeda and Alfusqueiro rivers, creating the conditions for continuity in 34 km of river corridor;
- Design/installation of three prototype fish passes mimicking natural conditions to improve continuity in the Águeda and Alfusqueiro rivers, with an expected change of 30-75% compared to actual levels;
- Three areas of terrestrial habitats made suitable for multiple use (conservation, awareness raising and recreational/outdoor use);
- Sustainable management of fisheries along some 50 km of river, taking into account the implementation of regulations targeted at marine, estuarine and freshwater commercial fisheries;
- A pilot "mobile auction" system, aimed at market differentiation of fish from the project area. This is expected to lead to a 25% increase in the market value of the fish;
- Specific mitigation measures covering 25 km of the Vouga River, allowing for the translocation of 500 000 juvenile European eels through a pilot solution for capturing, transporting and releasing them in improved habitats;
- Direct benefits for a critically endangered diadromous fish species and four other endangered and protected species;
- 1 000 anglers using a pilot application for monitoring by volunteers;
- At least one replication/transfer project proposed in Portugal; and
- At least one replication/transfer project with other EU beneficiaries.

Results

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Environmental issues addressed:

Natura 2000 sites

Not applicable

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Beneficiaries:

Coordinator	Universidade de Évora
Type of organisation	University
Description	Universidade de Évora (UÉVORA) is a public university located in the Portuguese region of Alentejo.
Partners	Município de Águeda, Portugal DOCAPESCA – PORTOS E LOTAS, S.A., Portugal Município de Mora, Portugal AQUALOGUS – Engenharia e Ambiente, Lda., Portugal

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Administrative data:

Project reference	LIFE16 ENV/PT/000411
Duration	01-AUG-2017 to 31-JUL -2022
Total budget	3,324,804.00 €
EU contribution	1,989,992.00 €
Project location	Centro(Portugal)

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LIFE RELICT - LIFE RELICT - Preserving Continental Laurissilva Relics

LIFE16 NAT/PT/000754

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Project description:

Background

Portugal's Article 17 Report (2007-2012) of the Habitats Directive on the conservation status of the habitat type, Arborescent matorral with *Laurus nobilis*, concluded that it was "inadequate" for both the Mediterranean and Atlantic biogeographical regions. That report also considered the habitat area as "inadequate/declining". One of the main threats faced by this habitat is invasive alien species, especially plants in the genus Acacia and Hakea. The project area includes the most representative areas for the priority habitat in Natura 2000 network sites in Portugal: Monchique, which is one of the two unique areas of Rhododendron ponticum communities in Portugal; Serra da Estrela, including Casal do Rei one of the best-known areas of *Prunus lusitanica*; and Açor, with the largest area of Prunus lusitanica in the Iberian Peninsula.

Objectives

The main objective of the LIFE RELICT project is to substantially improve the conservation status of Arborescent matorral with *Laurus nobilis*, listed as a priority habitat for conservation in Annex I of the Habitats Directive, in three Portuguese Natura 2000 network sites. The project will target, in particular, two rare and unique habitat sub-types that include relic Portuguese laurel shrubland species: Portugal laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*) and pontic rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum ssp. baeticum*).

Specific project objectives are:

- To improve Arborescent matorral with *Laurus nobilis* habitat quality and its ecological function in more than 50% of the areas currently occupied by the habitat in the Portuguese Natura 2000 network;
- To increase the area of the habitat through reconstruction of favorable adjacent areas;
- To decrease or eliminate the major threats to the habitat according to the Portuguese sectorial plan, by implementing management measures against fire and invasive alien species, thus contributing indirectly to increased habitat resilience to climate change;
- To evaluate the impact of a series of management practices on the conservation status of the habitat, as well as to demonstrate new methodologies and approaches to management;
- To enhance motivation, skills and cooperation of local people and regional authorities in the preservation of Portuguese laurel relics;
- To ensure dissemination and transfer of project results, increasing the chances of replication at other sites; and
- To enhance local nature-based tourism, especially through the implementation of hiking trails and communication measures.

Expected results:

- Improved quality of areas currently occupied by the habitat, Arborescent matorral with *Laurus nobilis*, over at least 11 ha (8 ha of *Prunus lusitanica* and 3 ha of *Rhododendron ponticum* communities, i.e. at least 50% of the area for the former and 70% for the latter), to reverse the deterioration process of the habitat in Portugal and, in the medium term, change it from an inadequate to a good conservation status within the objectives of the Habitats Directive;
- Increased habitat area by 20.5 ha (10.5 ha of *Prunus lusitanica* and 10 ha of *Rhododendron ponticum*);
- Reduced area occupied by invasive alien species, by at least 4 ha, meeting the objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020;
- Decreased risk of fire by increasing the area of native forest habitats (Galicio-Portuguese oak woods with *Quercus robur* and *Quercus pyrenaica*; and *Quercus faginea* and *Quercus canariensis* Iberian woods) over 11.4 ha;
- The effectiveness of all implemented management techniques and methods tested, and replicated in at least two sites in Spain;
- Increased awareness, motivation, skillsets and cooperation of local people and regional authorities relating to the target habitat, involving at least 20 local authorities and 50 national organisations, as well as at least 1 000 students;
- Increased local nature-based tourism, with the establishment of one pedestrian pathway in each municipality involved;
- Local economy boosted by incoming finance and the creation of jobs (at least five); and
- In the medium and long term, improved ecological function of the project area as a result of reforestation, including the increase of carbon sequestration and increase of soil organic matter content.

Results

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Environmental issues addressed:

Target Habitat types

- 9230 - Galicio-Portuguese oak woods with Quercus robur and Quercus pyrenaica
- 9240 - Quercus faginea and Quercus canariensis Iberian woods
- 9260 - Castanea sativa woods
- 5230 - Arborescent matorral with Laurus nobilis

Natura 2000 sites

SCI	PTCON0014	Serra da Estrela
SCI	PTCON0037	Monchique
SCI	PTCON0051	Complexo do Açor

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Beneficiaries:

Coordinator	Universidade de Évora
Type of organisation	University
Description	The University of Évora promotes the increase, transfer and application of knowledge, and combines learning and research with an international perspective. Its research programmes are focused on sustainable solutions that are directly applicable to society. Among the university's main research areas are nature conservation and biodiversity; and landscape, environment and planning.
Partners	Câmara Municipal de Seia, Portugal Câmara Municipal de Monchique, Portugal Centro de Investigación Científicas y Tecnológicas de Extremadura, Spain ADRUSE - Associação de Desenvolvimento Rural da Serra da Estrela, Portugal

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Administrative data:

Project reference	LIFE16 NAT/PT/000754

Duration	01-OCT-2017 to 30-SEP -2022
Total budget	1,654,899.00 €
EU contribution	1,219,078.00 €
Project location	Centro(Portugal) Alentejo(Portugal)

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